



## EFL Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Skill in Lower Secondary School

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**Abstract:** Reading is a receptive skill that students require, and it takes work to teach reading. Thus, teaching strategies for reading skills attracting students' interests are the keys to better reading comprehension. This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' strategies in teaching reading skills in lower secondary schools, how they implemented the strategies in teaching reading comprehension, and the student's responses. The method of this research was a qualitative design. The subjects of this research were six EFL teachers of SMPN 28 Tangerang, Banten. The instruments of this study were observation and interview. The study results showed four strategies the EFL teachers used in teaching reading skills: Scaffolding, Think-aloud, Question Answer Relationship (QAR), and Teacher as a Center. Thus, it is suggested that EFL teachers use various teaching strategies for reading skills to improve students' reading skills. The variety of EFL teachers' strategies would provide more pleasant and exciting learning atmospheres, encouraging the students to be interested in reading English texts.

**Abstrak:** Keterampilan membaca adalah salah satu keterampilan reseptif yang dibutuhkan oleh siswa, dan tidak mudah bagi guru untuk mengajar membaca. Dengan demikian, strategi pengajaran keterampilan membaca yang membuat siswa tertarik adalah kunci untuk memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik dalam membaca. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui strategi guru dalam mengajarkan pemahaman membaca di sekolah menengah pertama, bagaimana mereka menerapkan strategi dalam mengajarkan pemahaman membaca, dan tanggapan siswa atas pembelajaran yang dilakukan oleh guru. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah enam guru Bahasa Inggris di SMPN 28 Tangerang, Banten. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah observasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada empat strategi yang digunakan guru Bahasa Inggris dalam pembelajaran membaca: Scaffolding, Think-aloud, Question Answer Relationship (QAR), dan Teacher as a Centre. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar guru-guru Bahasa Inggris senantiasa menggunakan beragam strategi pengajaran membaca sehingga keterampilan membaca siswa meningkat. Strategi pengajaran guru Bahasa Inggris yang beragam ini akan memberikan suasana pembelajaran yang menarik dan menyenangkan dan berdampak pada minat membaca teks Bahasa Inggris.

## A. Introduction

The strategies in teaching English are essential. Teaching strategies have a strong relationship with instructional objectives. This relationship can be seen from the description of the behavior and competencies that students must possess during and after class hours in the way that must be taken to accomplish these goals. Nowadays, teaching strategy is one of the essential components in the learning system and cannot be separated from other components that are influenced by factors, including learning objectives, teaching materials, students, facilities, time, and teachers.

Related to teaching strategies for improving reading skills, EFL teachers are required to anticipate their teaching competencies better. It is stated that teaching reading is not easy to do (Moats, 2020). It was found that more students felt bored practicing English as they could not understand the reading texts. They needed to gain more vocabulary to know the meaning of the texts. In addition, they could not infer the information after receiving the text.

From the problems above, it is essential that EFL teachers need to be equipped with strategies to teach reading comprehension to help students cope with the difficulties in practicing English reading texts. One of the best ways to help students practice reading and improve their reading skills is through reading itself, and to increase their reading fluency and meaningful reading is through rereading (Stoller, 2015).

In the context of EFL Teachers in schools, they also face several problems in teaching reading comprehension. Many teachers taught about reading comprehension by explaining the text, main idea, and purpose of the text. In the instructional technique effectively, anyone who teaches the need to understand the principles and assumptions upon which each specific design is based. The problem was also found that many EFL teachers did not receive adequate professional development to use this knowledge, which could be said that teachers might not be knowledgeable about the basic linguistics construct required for literacy development (Luo et al., 2020; Joshi et al., 2009).

Talking more specifically about reading skills, reading English texts is very important for students for their careers, study purposes, or pleasure. Reading texts also provides students with opportunities to learn and practice language that includes vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar (Harmer, 2008). There are kinds of teaching strategies used by EFL teachers in teaching reading skills. According to Dwiningtyas et al (2020), the strategies for teaching reading could be brainstorming, reading aloud, and asking for specific information. In addition, they mentioned the use of dictionaries, reading aloud, rereading to check comprehension, evaluating comprehension in particular tasks, and asking questions for specific information. Nguyen (2022) proposed that teachers could use reading strategies such as questioning, predicting, retelling, and picturing to enhance students' reading comprehension. Meanwhile, Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) argued that there were some strategies in teaching reading, such as activating and using background knowledge, generating and asking questions, making inferences, predicting, summarizing, visualizing, and comprehension monitoring. However, only some EFL teachers should be

involved in teaching students how to apply reading strategies to comprehend EFL reading texts to contribute to learning independently. They must become more familiar with reading strategies (Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2014).

This current study emphasized how EFL teachers implemented strategies in teaching reading skills. Some relevant studies, such as what (Dwiningtyas et al., 2020; Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2014; Mistar et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2020) did in their studies. This study is rarely conducted in the context of education level, that is, on EFL teachers of lower secondary schools. Thus, this research investigates the EFL teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension in lower secondary schools, how they implemented them in teaching reading comprehension, and the student's responses.

## B. Method

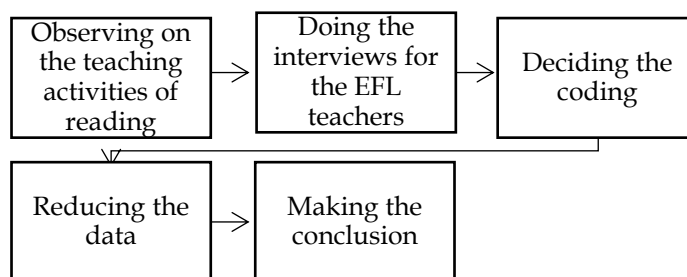
The method used in this research was a descriptive qualitative design, as it focused on a specific teaching and learning process in a school environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). There were two stages in conducting the research. First, the teacher's and student's activities in the teaching and learning process in class were observed. Secondly, EFL teachers were interviewed to have deeper information on the strategies for teaching reading skills. Therefore, the instruments of the research were the researchers. The research was done at State Lower Secondary School (SMPN) number 28, Tangerang, Banten. Six EFL teachers were the subjects of the research labeled as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6. The following are the demographics of the participants.

**Table 1.** The Demographics of The Participants

Categories		Number of participants (N=6)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	6	100
	Male	0	0
Age	<25	1	17
	25-30	4	66
	>30	1	17
Length of teaching	<3 years	1	17
	3-5 years	5	83
	>6 years	0	0
Education qualifications	S1 (Bachelor)	3	50
	S2 (Master)	3	50

From the table above, it could be seen that all the participants were females and predominantly aged 25 to 30. All of them were considered EFL junior teachers, as they had at most six years of teaching. Their education backgrounds were three teachers who graduated from undergraduate programs and three other teachers who graduated from graduate programs or master programs in education.

After the data were collected, the researchers used a qualitative data analysis technique. This technique included four steps: coding, data reduction, and concluding. To have more precise and more valid data, triangulation was used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019). The following is the figure on the research flowchart design.



**Figure 1.** The Research Flowchart Design

## C. Result and Discussion

### Results

#### EFL Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Skill

This research aimed to investigate EFL teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension in lower secondary schools, how they implemented them in teaching reading comprehension, and the student's responses. In an educational context, a teaching and learning strategy contains activities to achieve specific educational goals. Teachers have an essential role in making learning activities more effective and fun so that students become active and interested in learning, especially in learning reading comprehension. Teachers must consider various aspects to create practical learning activities as school facilitators. Teachers must consider the strategy in teaching reading comprehension as it will determine the results of teaching and learning activities.

Based on the result of the first observation, it was found that the teaching reading strategies that six participants implemented there was the same strategy they implemented: Scaffolding, Question answer relationship strategy (QAR), Think-aloud, and Teacher as the center.

#### *Scaffolding Strategy*

The first strategy that the teachers used was scaffolding. This strategy was used by teachers when students got difficulties. Thus, teachers provide tailored help to the needs of the students, like teachers doing the classroom, and teachers gave help the students to know how to read the text correctly. As it is found in the interview section as stated by T2:

*"... Actually, I just heard the names of the strategies, but based on the explanation regarding the learning steps of the scaffolding and think-aloud strategies, it seems that I often apply them during the reading comprehension learning process. These strategies have become my*

*main strategies for teaching reading comprehension because they can make students more active while learning. For example, I separate students into two large groups, some groups already understand the material, and there are groups of students who do not understand the material. Then I guide the two groups with different understandings to make it easier for them to find the main idea in a reading text. Moreover, I teach seventh-grade students who are still very active, so I provide more support and guidance by using non-monotonous learning tools, for instance, visual materials in the form of pictures, reading texts, and interactive videos. These strategies certainly make students stay focused and active when learning reading comprehension and also trigger them to think hard. One of the ways is by having a question-answer relationship between teacher and students." (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Based on the interview with T2 showed that she used a scaffolding strategy to help or facilitate students in understanding the reading text. Scaffolding helped the students read correctly and then told the students to read the text to find the main idea in a reading text. The interview section below shows that T2 also used a scaffolding strategy dealing with student boredom when studying:

*"The strategy I use when students are bored in learning reading comprehension is to motivate and encourage students. In addition, I utilize various learning tools and media that students like to support their learning process. The last way is usually I choose a place to study that is comfortable and different from usual, such as studying outside the classroom or in the schoolyard. I think these ways are included in the category of scaffolding strategy". (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

It is also found in the interview section as stated by T1 as an English teacher:

*"I also often use strategies that make students active, such as giving students time to discuss their assignments and asking students to find out difficult vocabulary before starting the lesson. I also provide interesting reading texts to students to support my class strategies. So, I used the scaffolding strategy". (Interview with T1, on March 16, 2022, 09.32–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Besides T2 and T1, T4 also implemented the scaffolding strategy in teaching reading comprehension, which can be seen in the following part of the interview:

*"First, there must be practiced in the learning process, and reading also includes writing. So, when the students read, they not only read, but also ask them to write the difficult words, and then I train them to say the words they say in sentences. Second, I provide facilities for students to facilitate the learning process by providing reading material in the form of recount text, so it is easy for teachers to monitor students when teaching reading comprehension and*

*also giving time for them to discuss". (Interview with T4, on April 18, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Part of the interview above shows that T4 has implemented a scaffolding strategy in teaching reading because, based on the description of the strategy implemented by T4, it was a scaffolding strategy in teaching reading comprehension. They started by helping students solve specific problems by writing difficult words to provide learning support, namely facilitating students' learning by giving recount text. The results of interviews with several students also show that it became easier to understand reading texts with the facilities the teacher provided in the learning process. Collecting difficult words and interpreting them makes students quickly understand the reading text.

Following the results of the observations, the researcher saw that T4 provided recount text to students as learning materials, which included the use of scaffolding strategy, namely, the teacher providing support to students in the reading comprehension learning process in the classroom in the form of reading texts. T4 asked the students to write difficult words from the text they read because she helped them to understand new words to help them complete plating their assignments. Students' responses based on observations and interviews on the scaffolding strategy that the teacher applied showed that this strategy could make students more focused and active when learning reading comprehension.

Not only T2 and T4 have implemented a scaffolding strategy, but based on the results of the interviews as well, T3 also implemented a scaffolding strategy. It can be seen in the following part of the interview:

*"I have implemented the scaffolding and question-answer relationship strategy while teaching at this school. I have implemented various strategies to teach reading, such as instructional conversation, reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, and question-answer relationship. However, based on my teaching experience, a strategy that can make students active in a more effective way is using a scaffolding and question-answer relationship strategy because it does not take much time to prepare for learning but quickly makes students understand the material provided. I also provide guidance and knowledge, and facilitate students' learning by giving material in other forms such as videos or printed images. Moreover, teacher and students' question-answers can make students actively think and analyze". (Interview with T3, on April 05, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The interview result with T3 explained that the scaffolding strategy was effective and efficient in the various strategies for teaching reading comprehension implemented in the classroom. Additionally, in the observations with T3, it was found that she executed a scaffolding strategy when providing recount text material in learning reading comprehension.

The results of interviews and observations with six participants show that they used collaborative strategies, and one of them is the scaffolding strategy in teaching reading comprehension. They interpret scaffolding as providing structured learning support early to encourage students to learn independently. Based on the observation of the participants in this research, the provision of learning support was carried out sparingly. Still, with the increase in students' abilities, the teacher gradually had to let students learn independently. If students have yet to achieve independence in their learning, the teacher continuously provides support to help them until they can achieve independence.

#### *Question Answer Relationship (QAR)*

The second strategy was a QAR. The teachers used a question-answer relationship strategy for students to learn reading comprehension. In this strategy, the teachers gave several questions during the lesson or at the end of the study. According to the teachers, this strategy was used to provide material to students so that students readily accepted the material provided by the teacher and also to measure their understanding of the material they read.

Teachers used this strategy to determine if students understood the contents of the reading text or the material the teachers provided. It is found in the interview section as stated by T1 as an English teacher in the ninth grade:

*"I think the question-answer relationship strategy is very effective when teaching reading comprehension because all students get to ask or answer questions about the reading text or material I provide. That way, I, as a teacher, will find it easier to know whether students understand the content of the reading text or not. Also, in my opinion, this strategy is more efficient and does not take much time to monitor and determine the level of student understanding of a reading". (Interview with T1, on March 16, 2022, 09.32–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The QAR strategy is an effective strategy to be applied when teaching reading comprehension because, based on the interview excerpt above with T1, it was stated that all students could ask and answer questions about the reading text. Student responses during observations and interviews took place, and students actively answered every question the teacher gave. Also, students were more focused on reading the text as they were motivated by the teacher's support. This strategy also Effie should have spent more time monitoring and determining students' reading comprehension levels.

Based on the student's responses, they also stated that they felt focused in the learning process when there was an interaction between the teacher and students because they were motivated to read and understand each reading text. This interview section also shows that T1 uses a QAR strategy in post-reading activities:

*"So after reading activities, I will give questions to students and will be collected in written form. I also provide reviews to students regarding the material that has been discussed". (Interview with T1, on March 16, 2022, 09.32–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Not only T1 and T2 have implemented collaborative learning strategies, including a QAR strategy, but based on the results of the interviews, T3 also implemented collaborative learning strategies. It can be seen in the following part of the interview that T3 also used a QAE strategy:

*"I have implemented the scaffolding and question-answer relationship strategy while teaching at this school. I have implemented various strategies to teach reading, for example, instructional conversation, reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, and question-answer relationship. However, based on my teaching experience, a strategy that can make students active in a more effective way is using a scaffolding and question-answer relationship strategy because it does not take much time to prepare for learning but quickly makes students understand the material provided. Provide guidance and knowledge, and facilitate students' learning by providing material in other forms such as videos or printed images. Moreover, teacher and students' question-answers can make students actively think and analyse". (Interview with T3, on April 05, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The QAR strategy was an effective and efficient strategy from various reading comprehension teaching strategies that the teacher had applied in the reading comprehension class. Additionally, in the observation with T3, the researcher found that she executed a QAR and scaffolding strategy when providing recount text material in learning reading comprehension.

Based on the interview and observation results, T4 showed that she applied a QAR strategy in post-reading activities. This statement can be seen in the interview section below:

*"In post-reading activities, I usually apply a question-answer relationship strategy after the students finish reading or understanding the text. There is a question-answer session between the students and me or between students and their friends. So, this strategy helps me to find out how far students understand the content of the text reading that I gave". (Interview with T4, on April 18, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

T4 believed that using a QAR strategy in post-reading activities could show the students' understanding of the reading text. With this strategy, teachers could find out how far their students' level of understanding of the material given to them is. This strategy was not only helpful in knowing the level of students' understanding of the reading material but also the class became more lively when she used the QAR strategy, as said by T5 when interviewed:



*"I use the question-answer relationship strategy when learning reading comprehension. The question-answer relationship strategy can make the class more lively because students actively participate in expressing opinions during reading comprehension learning activities. In addition, students can follow the learning in an orderly manner and work independently". (Interview with T5, on Mei 30, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The explanation above shows that T5 used a QAR strategy when teaching reading comprehension. She believed that this strategy could make students actively think and express opinions. Based on the results of observations and interviews with students, the researchers also found that students who responded to this strategy were very enthusiastic in asking questions and answered that they were not bored when the learning process took place. After pre-reading activities and during reading activities took place using a collaborative strategy, T5 also provided a QAR strategy in post-reading activity:

*"During post-reading activities, I usually ask students questions about the text or material discussed, also known as a question-answer relationship strategy. After the students read the text, I asked them to retell it briefly in English. I choose this strategy in post-reading activities because I can determine the students' understanding of the text I have given". (Interview with T5, on Mei 30, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Based on the interviews, the researcher found that several teachers used a QAR strategy in their post-reading activities: T1, T4, and T5. They have the exact reason for using this strategy in post-reading activities to determine the student's understanding of the reading texts the teachers provide. It makes it easier for them to identify information, find main ideas, identify communicative functions, and make predictions.

#### *Think Aloud*

The third strategy was think-aloud. Teachers used a think-aloud strategy on students when learning reading comprehension in class. In this strategy, the teacher helped students monitor their flow of thinking while reading so that the teacher could direct the flow of thinking so that students' reading comprehension was maximized. Based on the teacher, this strategy was used to teach students how to reread sentences, read to clarify or search for meaning contextually according to the text they read. As in the following part of the interview with T2:

*"In post reading activities section or at the end of the lesson, I ask again what students have gained during the learning process. During the reading process, I usually give the text from their book. After that, I ask the students to make a conclusion about the text they have read and read aloud the text". (Interview with T2, on March 23, 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The interview section above shows that T2 used the think-aloud strategy during reading and post-reading activities by asking students to make conclusions about the text that the students had read and read aloud so that students could verbalize the conclusion or thoughts that students had obtained. In that way, the teacher taught students to clarify or search for meaning contextually according to the text they read.

According to the strategy description, T2 has implemented the think-aloud strategy when teaching reading comprehension. Besides, the observations showed that she provided reading texts to students in the form of descriptive texts when learning reading comprehension took place. The text was given as reading material, and students analysis of descriptive text material. This strategy could make students more confident to say what they were thinking when understanding the text.

The teacher also gave some reading texts to the students, and then they brainstormed about the meaning of the reading title. After that, the students found the main idea and topic sentence in the reading, and they could discuss it with their classmates but still use their thinking. Then, the students looked for difficult words in the text so that students were able to think aloud about the reading text. It can be seen in the following part of the interview with T4:

*"Yes, I have used the think-aloud strategy. Whenever I give a reading text to students in the form of descriptive text, recount text, or report text, I ask the students first about the meaning of the reading title. After that, the students find out the main idea and topic sentence in the reading so that students able to think aloud about the reading text. Think aloud strategy is also one of the strategies I use to make students confidently say what is in students' minds when understanding the text". (Interview with T4, on April 18, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

T4 used a think-aloud strategy to make students think hard about the meaning of the reading title and find the text's central idea. Another purpose of this strategy was to make students more confident when they said what they understood about the reading text. T5 also implemented the think-aloud strategy by asking students to make interconnected sentences based on the pictures they see to make them into one paragraph. Then, the teacher tried to optimize students' thinking levels by asking students to ask questions about the picture.

*"After the scaffolding strategy, I also triggered students to think aloud by asking students to make sentences related to the picture and then read them aloud. I believe that applying a collaborative strategy at one time can make students more enthusiastic about asking questions and collecting information about the pictures I provide as study material. The strategy can also measure the level of student focus when learning reading comprehension". (Interview with T5, on Mei 30, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Finally, based on the interviews and observations, the researchers found that T6 also implemented the think-aloud strategy in learning reading comprehension. T6 used several steps when implementing the think-aloud strategy. First, she gave the reading text to the students and then asked them to read it. Second, she asked students to rewrite the meaning of the text they had read. The last, she asked the students to read their writing aloud. These steps that T6 applied when learning reading comprehension have proven effective in developing students' vocabulary in English:

*"Think aloud is a strategy I often use in teaching reading comprehension. I apply several steps when teaching reading comprehension. The first is to give students a reading text and then ask them to read it. Second, ask students to rewrite the meaning of the text they have read. Finally, I asked students to read their writing aloud. These are the steps that I always apply when learning reading comprehension and have been proven effective in improving students' vocabulary". (Interview with T6, on Mei 19, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Based on interviews with students, this study shows that students felt more active in thinking with the teaching or learning model provided by their English teacher when they used the think-aloud strategy. The results of class observations of student learning show that students focused on paying attention to the teacher when the teacher read the text aloud and also explained things that students had to do while reading to reconcile their understanding of the text.

#### *Teacher as a Center*

Based on the results of interviews and class observations, the researcher found the last strategy used by one of the teachers at SMPN 28 Tangerang, namely, the teacher as a center. In this strategy, the teacher played a significant role in the learning process, and the teacher talked more in class, such as explaining a reading text. When attending lessons or listening to lectures, students were limited to understanding while taking notes for those who felt they needed it. The teacher played a central role in achieving student learning outcomes and was the only source of knowledge. T2 applied this strategy when teaching seventh-grade students reading comprehension. First, the teacher read the text and explained the parts contained in the text. Secondly, she distributed the text to students and gave them time for students to understand the contents of the text. Third, when students understood the reading text, the teacher returned to explain the reading text by asking several questions related to the information contained in the reading text. This statement can be seen in the part of the researcher's interview with T2:

*"I often use traditional strategy, so I still focus on the teacher as a center because I teach in seventh grade. Students are just beginning to read what is called a text, which starts with a descriptive text, so I sometimes provide the text first, which I distribute to students, and then*

*I ask them if they have read English like that. Then I ask questions, give students explanations, and then ask them to find their information about the reading through discussion." (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

From the explanation above, the researcher can conclude that the teacher as a central strategy used by T2 was a teacher-centered learning process, meaning that the teacher determined the learning process as the teacher was the only source of learning. From all interviews with English teachers at SMPN 28 Tangerang, it can be concluded that all English teachers interviewed as informants in this research used collaborative strategies, including scaffolding, question-answer relationship, think-aloud, and teacher as a central strategy. Not only that, four of the six teachers said that the use of these strategies could make students think actively about reading comprehension learning materials.

### **The Implementation of EFL Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Skill**

The teacher opened the class by saying greetings and asking about students' conditions. The teacher checked the presence list of students one by one to ensure students were present. The teacher also asked the students about the previous subject matter and explained the lesson's topic. After that, the teacher-led to pray before starting the lesson.

In the opening learning activities in the classroom, the teachers inculcated polite, religious, and logical thinking. In the initial activity, the teacher entered the classroom and greeted politely, both in English and Bahasa, by smiling at students and saying "Assalamu'alaikum" or "good morning/good afternoon." After that, the teacher instilled a religious attitude by leading the prayer together according to the religion and beliefs of each student before starting the lesson. The teachers asked students about their past activities or the beginning of learning regarding the material previously in Bahasa. However, only a few students remembered the material at that time. The teachers explained the material beforehand and then moved on to the following material.

In the core activities, the reading material which would be taught was a descriptive text for seventh-grade students, a recount text for eighth-grade ones, and the report text for ninth-grade ones.

#### *Scaffolding*

In implementing strategies in teaching reading comprehension to students of SMP Negeri 28 Tangerang, the ways that teachers did was to make direct instruction in the classroom when learning took place regarding what students would do as stated by T5 as an English teacher:

*"After entering the English learning class, the first step I took was to provide learning media to students, such as pictures. Second, I asked questions about the picture and asked them to make sentences related to the picture I gave. Lastly, after they understand what material will be discussed, I immediately move on to the core material, reading comprehension, by asking*

*students to read out what they have written. In this way, the teacher can also find out about the level of students' understanding and their focus on the material media provided. Therefore, the first thing I do as a teacher is thinking about the appropriate strategies for recount text. Second, make instructions to be explained directly in class". (Interview with T5, on Mei 30, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

T5 distributed learning media in the form of pictures to students. After that, T5 asked students to make sentences related to the picture, and the teacher gave an example of how to read clearly and pronounce it properly and correctly. Then the teacher asked students to read aloud the sentence they had made about the picture the teacher gave. T5 used the scaffolding strategy because T5 helped students how to read well. Besides, T5 also helped students by saying words that students could not pronounce. In line with T5 statement, T1 also stated that:

*"Actually, it is not easy for teachers to provide understanding to students during the learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, every teacher must know the right strategy to teach reading comprehension, where students need more focus to understand the texts they read. Usually, before learning activities, I give stimulation or activities to encourage students to focus on learning, such as singing together, playing games, and motivating students. After that, I instructed students to find the difficult words in the text, and then gave them time to discuss the reading text. At the beginning and end of the lesson, I gave a question-answer session to determine students' understanding of the text or material they were studying." (Interview with T1, on March 16, 2022, 09.32–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The interviews and observations above showed that T5 and T1 used this strategy when learning began with a scaffolding strategy in pre-reading activities, such as providing motivation and learning media in pictures or reading texts. After that, they gave instructions to students to do tasks related to images or texts that had been given, such as making sentences, reading conclusions, writing difficult words, and providing time for students to discuss. The teachers used this strategy when the researcher observed in class, and the researcher analyzed that the teacher asked the students to read the sentences they made. Afterward, the teacher asked the students to find difficult words in the sentences. The students marked the words they did not know in the text. In the interview section, T5 and T1 also stated that the teaching strategies in the classroom had to be appropriate to the student's understanding, especially when teaching reading comprehension, where students needed more focus to understand the texts they read.

T2 also explained how she implemented the scaffolding strategy during the learning process:

*"The way I implement the strategy of teaching reading comprehension is by giving descriptive texts to students. After that, I ask students whether they have read English texts like what I*

*gave or not. Then I give time for them to read the text. I ask them questions, explain them, and instruct them to look for information from various sources about their reading text. That's the collaborative strategy I apply, starting from scaffolding by providing learning media and explaining the material to students". (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Furthermore, T4 has a similar explanation for implementing strategies in teaching reading comprehension:

*"First, I explain the material by guiding students to understand the material being studied. Second, I gave some questions to build interactions to stimulate students' learning and enable students' abilities to develop mentally and intellectually. Third, I instruct them to read the recount text in their book, and at the same time, I ask them to take notes on difficult words". (Interview with T4, on April 18, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

From the interview above, it can be concluded that T2 and T4 implemented the same strategy in teaching reading comprehension, namely the scaffolding strategy. The strategy sequence was also the same, starting from scaffolding by facilitating students' learning by providing reading text, then encouraging students' thinking power to solve problems related to the text they read, and training students to be confident in reading English. The following is the implementation scaffolding strategy of T3 and T6 strategies when teaching reading comprehension:

*"Usually, I start learning directly in class, praying, checking student attendance and explaining the learning objectives and the material to be studied. First, before entering the core material, I gave a question and answered session with students to review the previous material. Second, I went into the core material by providing explanations and motivating students to encourage students to focus on learning which is part of the scaffolding strategy. Third, I gave students a picture and asked students to describe things related to the picture I gave. After that, I instructed the students to read their writing aloud. At the end of the lesson, I usually give a question-answer session to ensure the level of students' understanding related to the learning material." (Interview with T3, on April 05, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

In line with T3, T6 also implemented scaffolding and think-aloud strategies:

*"Think-aloud is a strategy I often use in teaching reading comprehension. There are several steps that I apply when teaching reading comprehension. The first is to give students a reading text and then ask them to read it. Second, ask students to rewrite the meaning of the text they have read briefly. Finally, I asked students to read their writing aloud. These are the steps that I always apply when learning reading comprehension and have been proven*

*effective in improving students' vocabulary". (Interview with T6, on Mei 19, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Based on the interview above, T3 and T6 implemented the scaffolding strategy in collaboration with the think-aloud strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

#### *Question-answer relationship (QAR)*

The second strategy teachers implement at SMP Negeri 28 is the QAR. The method used by the teachers in implementing the QAR strategy was by giving understanding questions to students and also giving students time to ask the teacher about their understanding of the reading text, as said by T1:

*"At the beginning and end of the lesson, I gave a question and answer session to determine students' understanding of the text or material they were studying." (Interview with T1, on March 16, 2022, 09.32–10.00 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

During reading activities, after students knew how to read the text correctly, the teacher asked the students one by one what the meaning of the text was. The teacher even asked the meaning of each word in the text to ensure students understood or did not understand the material they were studying. At the end of the learning in the class, the teacher appointed one of the students to answer the questions the teacher gave. For example, what was the meaning of *binatang*? *Burung* be? *Lumba-Lumba*? *Ikan*? *Gigi*? *kelompok*? After that, the students answered "animal," "parrot," "dolphins," and "fish," but when the teacher asked again, "what is the meaning of experience?" only seven students knew the meaning of experience. In the above situation, the researcher analyzed that T1 used the QAR strategy. T1 used this strategy with the aim that students could understand the reading text, and students were guided to focus more on the reading text.

In addition to determining the level of students' understanding of the text, the QAR strategy also encouraged the students to be able to describe the information obtained from their reading. QAR strategies could improve students' ability to answer comprehensive questions by providing a systematic tool. The teacher used this strategy to see if students understood the contents of the text they had read. If students could answer the questions given by the teacher, they would already understand the contents of the text they were reading, and if they could not answer the question, it meant that students did not understand the text they were reading. Also, the teacher explained to students to answer questions related to the text after students wrote their answers in their books. Based on the observations, the researcher also documented the form of the text given by T2 to seventh-grade students as a descriptive text in which answers to the comprehension questions that the teacher gave could be found in the reading text, usually as phrases in one sentence:

*"I ask students whether they have read English texts like what I gave or not. Then I give time for them to read the text. I ask them questions, explain them, and instruct them to look for information from various sources about their reading text". (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

The same as T2's explanation, T4 has the same explanation for implementing the question-answer relationship strategy in teaching reading comprehension:

*"I gave some questions to build interactions to stimulate students' learning and enable students' abilities to develop mentally and intellectually. Then, I instruct them to read the recount text in their book, and at the same time, I ask them to take notes on difficult words. After that, I applied the think-aloud strategy by asking students about the title of the text; then, I asked them to find out the main ideas and topics of the text, then verbalized what they had thought, so students could think hard and focus. Finally, I usually implement a question-answer relationship strategy by asking questions to students and discussing between students to ensure their level of understanding of the material". (Interview with T4, on April 18, 2022, 09.00–10.00 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

T2 and T4 believed that the question-answer relationship strategy could be used to measure students' ability level toward a reading text. However, the implemented QAR strategy still used a less varied strategy, so the expected results could have been more appropriate. Based on the results of interviews with participants, the learning process could have gotten a better response from some students. Students felt bored and less enthusiastic. The success or achievement of good reading comprehension skills laid in applying relevant learning strategies and the teacher's mastery of these strategies.

#### *Think Aloud*

The third strategy implemented by EFL teachers at SMP Negeri 28 was the think-aloud strategy. They implemented the think-aloud strategy by giving time and facilities for students to read texts. After that, they instructed students to rewrite with more straightforward sentences and use students understanding of the text they had read. Moreover, finally, the teacher asks students to read the results of their understanding in a loud voice.

The interviews with several teachers also revealed that when students expressed their thoughts, they solved a problem. When teachers reflected on their learning process, they discussed with students the difficulties they faced and how they tried to solve them with the results of their thoughts on a reading text.

*"Think-aloud is a strategy I often use in teaching reading comprehension. There are several steps that I apply when teaching reading comprehension. The first is to give students a reading text and then ask them to read it. Second, ask students to rewrite the meaning of the text they have read briefly. Finally, I asked students to read their writing aloud. These are the*



*steps that I always apply when learning reading comprehension and have been proven effective in improving students' vocabulary". (Interview with T6, on Mei 19, 2022, 09.30–10.30 am, in office SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

Based on the interview above, T6 implemented the think-aloud strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

Meanwhile, based on the observations, the researcher knew activities that show that the teacher used the think-aloud strategy when the researcher observed in class. The researcher analyzed the teacher's way of facilitating students by giving reading texts and then asking students to read the entire text. After that, students wrote briefly the meaning of the contents of the text they read, such as the main ideas and topics in the text, while when students were writing the importance of the reading text, the teacher offered some help to students who did not understand or have a weak vocabulary. The teacher gave time for students to ask difficult words and opened a dictionary to collect difficult words after asking the teacher. Finally, the teacher instructed the students one by one to read aloud the writing they had made.

#### *Teacher as a Center*

The final strategy at SMP Negeri 28 Tangerang, which was implemented in learning reading comprehension, was the teacher as a central strategy. T2 used the teacher as a central strategy in the learning process by modeling teacher-centered learning. First, the teacher began learning with storytelling activities between the teacher and students. Second, the teacher started the reading comprehension learning activity by explaining the essential parts of the descriptive text and reading some examples of descriptive text. At the same time, the students understood the teacher's explanation and recorded the essential things that the teacher conveyed. Third, the teacher asked the students to read the descriptive text in their textbooks, after which the teacher gave several questions related to the text and the parts contained in the descriptive text. Finally, the teacher re-explained students' understanding or answered about descriptive text to help students find it challenging to understand.

*"I often use traditional strategy, so I still focus on the teacher as a center because I teach in seventh grade. Students are just beginning to read what is called a text, which starts with a descriptive text, so I sometimes provide the text first, which I distribute to students, and then I ask them if they have read English like that. Then I ask questions, give students explanations, and then ask them to find their information about the reading through discussion." (Interview with T2, on 23 March 2022, 09.30–10.00 am, in an office of SMPN 28 Tangerang).*

To reassure the students' understanding of the descriptive text they read, the teacher gave assignments to students to find information about reading comprehension through discussions with their friends. The achievement of this strategy was the successful transfer

of knowledge when teaching reading comprehension and how the teacher taught and explained well so that learning was centered on the teacher.

## Discussion

Based on the observations and interviews, the researchers found that the EFL teachers of SMPN 28 Tangerang used some strategies in teaching reading skills. The teaching strategies were scaffolding, Question-answer relationship (QAR), think-aloud, and teacher as a center.

One of the teaching strategies in reading comprehension was scaffolding. The English teachers of SMPN 28 Tangerang used this strategy to make it easier for students to learn by distinguishing groups of students who already understood better and those who did not understand the reading comprehension material. That means the teacher could quickly determine the support that had to be given to each group of students with their level of understanding to suit the cognitive potential of students. This helped teachers provide students not only assist students in completing their assignments but also support students in independently completing tasks they could not achieve. Therefore, effective teacher scaffolding prepares students for more complicated assignments, and with adequate support from teachers, it could be intensively necessary to safeguard the practice of reading comprehension (Li & Zhang, 2022). In other words, scaffolding effectively increased the students' reading comprehension (Tabrizi et al., 2019).

Another result showed that teachers used the QAR strategy in teaching reading skills. It was used to ensure that students read the text and then were asked to read by the teacher and clarify if they understood it. They could answer the question if they had already read and understood the text. This strategy helped the teacher to know how far students comprehend the text. Mohammadi et al (2022) pointed out that QAR instructional strategy was a comprehension strategy that encouraged students to find the information needed to respond to questions effectively. This view was clear that students could understand the text when necessary, and teachers need to accommodate relevant and suitable texts for students. Thus, it is believed that the QAR strategy has effectively taught reading skills (Afriani et al., 2020).

The think-aloud strategy is one of the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension. They used this strategy to make students think aloud and verbalize what they were thinking about the text that the teacher gave when they were trying to understand the text, solve problems or try to answer questions related to it. Therefore, teachers could easily measure the level of students' ability to think and understand the text given. This result was supported by (Carioli & Peru, 2019; Thu & Vien, 2022) who stated that the think-aloud strategy had a positive effect on the enhancement of students' reading comprehension for male or female students.

The last strategy in teaching reading comprehension was the teacher as a center. The teachers used it to manage the organization, teaching materials, and learning situations

(Hutasoit, 2021). If the material was good, it inspired and stimulated the students, and the assessment method was quick and easy.

Moreover, to implement the teaching strategies, the EFL teachers at SMPN 28 Tangerang viewed that they sometimes made any video to explain and used some instructions to describe the material in the classroom. However, they also made a lesson plan for teaching reading better. This study has some limitations in that the location of the research was only one school in Tangerang, Banten. Thus, the number of subjects and the analysis depth could have been improved.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this research and discussion, the strategies that the EFL teachers used in teaching reading comprehension in SMPN 28 Tangerang were four strategies, namely: (1) Scaffolding Strategy, (2) Think-aloud Strategy, (3) Question-answer Relationship, and (4) Teacher as a Center. Based on interviews and observations, the teachers use these strategies to make students understand the reading text and guide students to focus more on learning reading comprehension. Moreover, students can develop and understand the meaning of the reading text so that students can more easily do their work independently.

Dealing with how EFL teachers implemented the strategies in teaching reading skills at SMPN 28 Tangerang, the first strategy used by the teachers was the scaffolding strategy. It is believed to develop readable ideas and help students who have difficulty in the learning process to improve their understanding and skills. The assistance provided is in the form of instructions, warnings, encouragement, and describing the problem to allow students to be independent in completing assignments. The second strategy was the think-aloud strategy. Teachers applied the think-aloud strategy by asking students to say aloud what they think when reading, solving problems, or simply responding to questions posed by the teacher or other students. By listening in as students think aloud, teachers can diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. The third strategy used by the teacher was a question-answer relationship. It was demonstrated that when students finished reading the text, the teacher asked questions about the topic sentence, the main idea, and the meaning of the text. From the teacher's questions, some students knew what the teacher asked; this strategy was where the teacher asked students to answer questions in the reading test, like assignments in the book. The fourth strategy was the teacher as a center. Only one EFL teacher still applied the teacher as a central strategy when teaching reading comprehension. In the learning model learning system, the teacher did more teaching and learning activities in the form of lecturing. The teacher became the center of the role in achieving learning outcomes and was the only source of knowledge.

Based on this research, those strategies were effective in teaching reading comprehension as they could help students to comprehend the text. In brief, those strategies made an excellent contribution to teachers. Students who have difficulty in reading would be easier to master reading comprehension. With these strategies, teachers more easily give

the material to the students. Those strategies could help the teacher since the students were more active. Moreover, the students could exchange their opinion with their friends.

Based on the results, this research could improve the quality of EFL teachers and encourage them to consider a better way of teaching reading skills to enhance the student's reading ability. It is also expected to apply other strategies to determine learning goals during the teaching-learning process. In addition, it is hoped to motivate students to keep more responsive to the learning process. Students should also often practice reading comprehension to improve students ability to understand texts.

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