

Improving Students Reading Skills through Peer-Scaffolding to The Tenth Grade of Senior High School

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to improve the students' reading comprehension skills by using Peer-Scaffolding strategy. This research was conducted at the tenth grade of SMK Persada Bandar Lampung in the academic year of 2020/2021. The subjects of this research were thirty five students. The problem of this research was students reading comprehension skills need to be improved. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. In getting the data, the researcher used formative test and documentation. The research findings indicate that there is a significant improvement from cycle I to cycle II. The mean score of cycle I is 67.8 by percentage of students' successfulness 40%. Then, the average score of cycle II is 75,4 by percentage of students' successfulness 80%, so it has progress up to 7,6 points. Based on the result is showed that indicator of success has achieved by 85% with the Minimum Criterion of Passing Grade at least 73. So, it can be concluded that using Peer-Scaffolding Strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension skills. It can also improve students' learning motivation in learning English, especially in learning reading.

Keywords: *Reading, Teaching, Peer Scaffolding, Strategy.*

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I. Introduction

Reading has a very important social role in human life of all time. It is used by the reader to obtain information and messages, which will be conveyed by the author through the medium of words or written language. Fluent readers create hypothesis about the text that they will read based on what they have read, their knowledge in that field, and their knowledge of the language.

In addition, reading is a good thing in life because it is a factor of great importance in the individual development and the most important activity in school. It is also needed in every level of field of study. Particularly in cases where students need to read English materials for their own special subject.

Reading is the most important skill of all for most students of English throughout the world. It means that they are not only expected to understand the grammatical structure but also to comprehend the meaning of the text. By reading the students are able to access much information which might have otherwise been unavailable, especially English textbook.

Suryanto (2017) states that students in Indonesia still face many barriers culturally in order to gain good reading comprehension skills. Culturally, students should face the culture that older know better in their relations with their teachers. In addition, spoken culture that is more dominant in society seems becoming a determining factor on the students' low habit in reading. Students in Indonesia have also to handle issues related to their teaching and learning processes. In terms of the student themselves, they are relative passive in learning, has practiced inadequate reading strategies, and achieve low attainment in English learning.

Based on observation, interview and questionnaire in the preliminary research at SMK Persada Bandar Lampung, the writer found that students' reading comprehension skills need to be improved. They thought that reading was the most difficult of learning English because they had problems when they read English texts. Most of the students still got difficulties in comprehending English texts when they found many new words. The students also tended to be passive during the teaching and learning process. They did not engage actively in the learning activities.

To improve students' reading comprehension, the writer implemented Peer-Scaffoldings strategy in reading classes. Peer-Scaffolding is a strategy that involves changing the levels of support for learning. A teacher or a more advanced student adjusts the amount of guidance that a student receives, and this helps fit the student's existing performance level. This idea comes from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development is the array of tasks which are too complex to master alone but they can be performed and mastered with assistance from adults and or more advanced students. When the task at hand is new the adult or more skilled peer may use direct instruction with the student. As the student learns to master

the task less guidance is then needed.

Peer-Scaffolding is recommended to be done in five ways: offering explanations, inviting students' participation, verifying and clarifying students' understanding, inviting students to contribute clues and modeling of desired behaviors suggested by Roehler and Cantlon in Hogan and Pressley (1997). The writer proposed two research questions namely:

- (1) How does Peer-scaffolding improve students' reading comprehension?
- (2) How does Peer-Scaffolding improve students' learning activities?

II. Literature Review

The Concept of Reading

Fauziati (2015) states that learners need to be familiarized with how sentence are functionally exploited to carry meanings in a discourse and how they are manipulated to form a paragraph through analysis in interpreting meanings or ideas carried by the reading text. Understanding something is the main goal of reading skill. It cannot be denied that teacher also plays an important role in enhancing students' reading comprehension and mend their reading habit. As reading comprehension is an essential skill, it also has complicated problems. The writers gathered some information by doing some interviews with English teachers and some students. The writers reach a conclusion that first, some teachers consider that reading is not a favorite activity for most students. Second, students have less motivation to read which leads into another problem that cause the students' evaluation are dissatisfying. The last problem, students are lack of vocabularies, so the students are not able to neither comprehend nor answer the questions from the text they have been read.

Demissie (2018) states that there are many factors, directly and indirectly, effects the learning comprehension skills of the students. It is not very easy to become a proficient comprehend for everyone due to persistent problems. One factor that might be attributed to students' low comprehension achievement more than others is the efficacy of the instruction. Effective instruction is one of the powerful means of developing proficient comprehend and averting reading comprehension problems. More broadly, comprehension instruction gives students access to culturally important domains of knowledge and provides a means of pursuing effective and intellectual goals.

Grabe (2009) views that reading is an interactive process. It is the process of combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text. In this view the reading process is not simply a matter of extracting information from the text. Rather, it is one in which the reading activities a range of knowledge in the readers mind that he/she uses. Thus, reading is viewed as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text. Reading is consider as the core of skill. Brown (2001) mentions that reading ability will be developed best in the association with writing, listening and speaking activities. Teachers try to find ways to improve learners language learning. One of ways is to scaffold students in their language achievement. The role of teacher as facilitator in English teaching learning process, especially on conducting the scaffolding strategies, must be developed. By being a good facilitator, the teacher can stimulate the students to be active in teaching learning process.

The Concept of Scaffolding

Scaffolding was derived from Vygotsky's insights suggesting that learners are not going to reach their potential performance through input alone, but rather through an interactive process. Its central idea is now well-known as 'zone of proximal development'. It is a zone between what he calls actual development, i.e. what the learner can do independently and potential development, i.e. what learner can do in the future, with the help of others now. Furthermore, Instructional scaffolding is a teaching strategy that emphasizes the teaching of new skills by engaging students collaboratively in tasks that would be too difficult for them to complete on their own. Scaffolding has been prompted to convey temporary assistance set up by the teachers to their students to help them complete tasks or construct comprehension so students can do the tasks alone. Maybin, *et al.* (1992) describes "scaffolding as the temporary but essential nature of the mentors assistance" in helping students to do the tasks successfully. From what experts state, scaffolding is teacher's assistance or support to students in learning in the classroom and it is quite sure that many teachers and instructors have done it to their students.

From a sociocultural (Vygotskian) perspective, learning is a socially situated activity and what a learner at first accomplishes only in a social setting; she or he will eventually be able to do independently (Lantolf, 2005). We learn not as isolated individuals, but as active members of society, what we learn and how we make sense of knowledge depends on where and when, such as in what social context, we are learning (Yang and Wilson, 2006).

This view of learning as a collaborative process was firstly defined by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) who coined the term scaffolding. Since that time many researches (for example Burner, 1975; Cazden, 1988; Danto, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 1997; Hammond, 2002; Daniels, 2001) have demonstrated the gains produced by scaffolding.

Recent works (Sahadi and Ghaleb, 2012; Pishghadam and Ghardiri, 2011; McKenzie, 2011; Mehdiian, 2009) have implemented scaffolding for teaching reading by creating the conditions where meaningful learning is fostered requiring, an appropriate instructional strategy, where students need to elaborate, or generate activities, such as selfquestioning, semantic mapping, summary writing, monitor learning, and construct meaning from a reading text. Such strategies can be considered effective in reading comprehension (McGriff, 1996). If provided with appropriate assistance, students can attain a goal or engage in a practice or task that is beyond their reach. Reiser (2004) points out that in scaffolding learners receive support and assistance to successfully perform certain tasks and move to more complex ones. Without such assistance, these tasks would be beyond their ability; therefore, building on the acquired experience and skills, students reshape their knowledge and improve their performance. Similarly, Vacca (2008) suggests that when guided, supported, and provided with the necessary attributes, students become more responsible for their learning, more motivated, and more successful. Instructional scaffolding is, therefore, an effective model for teaching reading, and such an instruction influences the development of higher functions and skills beyond the confines of a learner. Taken together, these studies reflect the importance and effectiveness of scaffolding instruction on developing students' reading, and writing skills as well (e.g., using graphic organizers, mapping, working in pairs and groups, questioning, thinking-aloud, planning, monitoring, evaluation, inference). In sum, it can be concluded that scaffolding literacy enhances the students' self-confidence, self-regulation, improves critical thinking and higher order skills, and has an impact on the students' progress and teaching practices. It is also noted that oral questioning scaffold is evident in improving writing, but concerning reading comprehension the advancement was questionable only in Anthony's study (2007).

The Concept of Peer Scaffolding Strategy

Belland (2017) states that Peer-scaffolding refers to the provision of scaffolding support by peers, and it leverages the strength in numbers of peers in classrooms. But it can also involve older children providing scaffolding support to younger students. For example, students with strong English-speaking abilities can use questioning and prompting to help English as a New Language students improve their English-speaking abilities. In another example, third grade students provided scaffolding support to help preschool students create crafts projects Peer-scaffolding requires that a framework be provided that guides scaffolding. Such a framework can guide scaffolding providers with strategies to use and when to use them. The framework can be embedded in computer-based scaffolds. For example, students can be encouraged to provide feedback through the embedding of a peer feedback mechanism in computer-based scaffolds, as well as guidance on how to provide peer scaffolding in this way. Doing so can help college students regulate each other's learning behavior.

Implementing Scaffolding for Teaching Reading

Scaffolding can be presented in many ways for teaching reading, however similar to any other strategy its success or failure depends highly upon its implementation by practitioners. Techniques used for scaffolding in literature can be viewed as general techniques used for language teaching and specific ones used or defined for teaching reading.

Bradley and Bradley (2004) are two other scholars who believe that scaffolding is an effective strategy for teaching content to L2 learners in inclusive classrooms if teachers acknowledge the three types of strategies discovered the most effective for working with L2 learners: (a) language should be simplified so that the students can understand; (b) teachers must make sure students complete assignments and do not accept incomplete work; and (c) make sure an abundance of visuals are used with L2 learners. Walqui (2006) is another researcher who believes that scaffolding instruction is good for helping L2 learners get to where they should be academically. She identifies six main types of scaffolding instruction in teaching English: (a) Modeling where the teacher uses verbal explanations and body language as he/she elaborates and demonstrates the new material; (b) bridging where students activate prior knowledge. This helps create a personal link between the student and the subject matter; (c) contextualizing which can be offered in various forms; (d) schema building that can be defined as clusters of meaning that are organized and interconnected; (e) re-presenting the text can be one of the ways to encourage students to start the appropriation of new language; and (f) developing metacognition that refers to learners' awareness of their own knowledge and their ability to understand, control and monitor their level of understanding and manage their thinking process in order to decide when it is adequate.

Regarding the scaffolding strategies that are used for reading classrooms, Gibbons (2002) described strategies and activities that mainstream teachers can incorporate into the classroom to help enhance reading skills through scaffolding. Gibbons stressed that the activities used should serve two purposes: (a) to make sure the readers understand what they are reading and (b) to the readers should know what ongoing strategies should be used with other books. Some of the strategies that can be used to teach English Language Learners (ELLs) to read through scaffolding pertain to lessons being taught before, during, and after reading a book (Gibbons, 2002). Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) also described scaffolding as another way to teach L2 learners using texts

which makes learners to read easier because modeling is involved in teaching. Some of the alternatives they suggested for teachers to implement using scaffolding for reading instruction can be examined under three headings: pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities. These three-phase strategies were also implemented in the current study, so they will be elaborated on in the following sections.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Scaffolding

Rachel (2002) states that there are some advantages and disadvantages of using scaffolding in teaching reading. One of the primary benefits of scaffolding instruction is that it engages the learner. The learner does not passively listen to information presented instead through teacher prompting the learner builds on prior knowledge and forms new knowledge. In working with students who have low self-esteem and learning disabilities, it provides an opportunity to give positive feedback to the students. This leads into another advantage of scaffolding in that if done properly, scaffolding instruction motivates the student so that they want to learn. Another benefit of this type of instruction is that it can minimize the level of frustration of the learner. This is extremely important with many special needs students, who can become frustrated very easily then shut down and refuse to participate in further learning during that particular setting.

Scaffold is individualized so it can benefit each learner. However, this is also the biggest disadvantage for the teacher since developing the supports and scaffold lessons to meet the needs of each individual would be extremely time-consuming. Implementation of individualized scaffolds in a classroom with a large number of students would be challenging. Another disadvantage is that unless properly trained, a teacher may not properly implement scaffolding instruction and therefore not see the full effect. Scaffolding also requires that the teacher give up some of the control and allow the students to make errors. This may be difficult for teachers to do.

Finally the teachers' manuals and curriculum guides that I have been exposed to do not include examples of scaffolds or outlines of scaffolding methods that would be appropriate for the specific lesson content. Although there are some drawbacks to the use of scaffolding as a teaching strategy the positive impact it can have on students' learning and development is far more important.

The Phases or Activities of Peer-Scaffolding in Teaching Reading

Gibbons (2017) states that many reading activities that take place in classrooms are those that occur after a text has been read. They often focus on assessing students' comprehension by finding out how much has been understood. The activities below, however, are primarily focused on teaching about reading rather than testing what has been read. Classroom reading activities should generally aim to fulfill two major functions:

1. They should help readers understand the particular text they are reading.
2. They should help readers develop good reading strategies for reading other texts.

In other words, it's important that the instructional activities the teacher uses for helping learners to comprehend a particular text also model the way effective readers read. For example, simply preteaching all the unknown words before children read a text does not help them to know what to do the next time they come to an unknown word. On the other hand, giving students strategies about what to do when they meet an unknown word not only helps them in that instance but it also makes explicit the strategies that can be transferred to other reading contexts. This reflects the discussion about scaffolding, and the notion that scaffolding should not only support students to complete a particular task but also develop students' autonomy so that they can later complete similar tasks alone. A useful way to think about using a text with the class is to divide the planning into three sections (Wallace 1992): (1) What the teacher will do before the reading, (2) What the teacher and the children will do together while the reading is going on, and (3) What the teacher will do after the book or text has been read.

In line with the activities of peer-scaffolding in teaching reading comprehension, Gibbons (2017) states that there are three phases or activities that should be followed by the teachers when they scaffold the students, namely: Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading.

Before Reading Activities

One way of understanding the purpose of these activities is to see them as representing "bridges" between the learner and the text they are going to read. Barriers to reading are those linguistic, cultural, and conceptual difficulties that you have identified in your own close reading of the text. The bridges are the interventions that occur through the scaffolding the teacher provides, enabling students to get over these potential hurdles.

Gibbons (2017) states that Before-reading activities aim to do the following. They:

1. Develop knowledge in relation to the overall meaning of the text (not every unknown word)
2. Prepare students for potential language, cultural, and conceptual difficulties
3. Remind students of what they already know (activate prior knowledge)

4. Support students to make predictions about the text. As schema theory suggests, if students come to the text with a sense of

During Reading Activities

Gibbons (2017) states that during-reading activities Once students have some idea of the genre and content of what they will be reading, it is time for the reading itself. During-reading activities aim to do the following. They:

1. Model good reading strategies and make explicit what mature readers do unconsciously
2. Engage readers actively with the text
3. Help learners understand how to read more effectively themselves.

Gibbon (2017) states that there are several activities that can be done by the teacher in the *During Reading Activities*. The following activities are not intended to represent any particular teaching sequence, since not all would be used at all levels or with all kinds of text.

After Reading Activities

Gibbons (2017) states that the following activities are based on the assumption that students are already familiar with the text and no longer have basic comprehension difficulties in reading it. The activities use the text as a springboard for new learning and may fulfill any of these three major purposes:

1. To use the now-familiar text as a basis for specific language study, such as to focus on a particular item of grammar, vocabulary, idiom, or phonemic or phonic knowledge that occurs in the text.
2. To allow students an opportunity to respond creatively to what they have read, such as through art or drama activities.
3. To focus students more deeply on the information in the text, such as by using information transfer activities that represent the information in a different form (e.g., a time line or a diagram).

Gibbons (2017) states that well-designed after-reading activities should require students to keep returning to the text and rereading it to check on specific information or language use. She proposes several activities that can be used after the teacher has finished teaching reading.

III. Method

This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Karwati and Priansa (2015: 292) CAR is a research conducted on the behaviors and actions that occur in the learning process that takes place in class. CAR is carried out as an effort to improve the quality of learning done by teachers in the classroom, as well as to understand aspects relating to students and the environment around the class. CAR is not set up to disrupt the learning process, because it is done in a natural learning process in class, according to the lesson schedule.

While in Mills' point of view (2000: 6), action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in teaching/learning environment to gather information about the ways how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. Moreover, Nunan (1997:18) argues that action research has distinctive feature that is those affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on courses of critically informed action which seem likely to lead to improvement, for evaluating the results of strategies tried out in practice. Burns (1999:30) makes some characteristics of action research taken from some experts' definition as follows:

1. Action research is contextual, small-scale and localized. It identifies and investigates problems within a specific situation.
2. It is evaluating and reflective as it aims to bring about change and
3. It is participatory as it provides for collaborative investigation by teams of colleagues, practitioners and researchers.
4. Changes in practice are based on the collection of information or data which provides the impetus for changes.

Improvement in practice. CAR is situational, conceptual, small-scale localized, and relevant directly related to real situations in the classroom. CAR involves students and collaborators as teacher partners. Kunandar (2011: 46) that classroom action research is a scientific activity carried out by the teacher in his class by designing, implementing, observing, and reflecting actions through several collaborative and participatory cycles that aim to improve or improve the quality of the learning process in his class.

The research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle included into four steps. In the classroom action research, there were four steps suggested by Kemmis' model namely Planning, Acting, Observing, and

Reflecting. Technique of collecting data in this study consisted of four techniques that would be conducted by the researcher to collect data. They were as follows test, observation, documentation, and field notes.

IV. Findings And Discussion

The minimum Criterion of Passing Grade of English is 73. Based on the data analysis it is found that the mean score of Cycle I is 67.8 with 40% of student successfulness. The mean score of Cycle II is 75.4 with 80% of student successfulness. So, there is an improvement of mean score that is 7.6 points.

Based on the data analysis above, it can be concluded that using Peer-Scaffolding strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension skills. It is supported by Rachel (2002) that one of the primary benefits of scaffolding instruction is that it engages the learner. The learner does not passively listen to information presented instead through teacher prompting the learner builds on prior knowledge and forms new knowledge. In working with students who have low self-esteem and learning disabilities, it provides an opportunity to give positive feedback to the students.

Based on the observation, questionnaire, and interview with the students the writer concludes that using Peer-Scaffolding in teaching reading can create a conducive learning atmosphere. The students involved actively in the classroom activities. They learned reading enthusiastically with their peers or with their classmates as a whole.

V. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the writer concludes that Peer-scaffolding strategy can improve students' reading comprehension skills and students' motivation in learning reading at SMK Persada Bandar Lampung in the academic year of 2020-2021.

Based on the result of this research, the writer proposed some suggestion as follows :

1. For the teacher

Considering the strategy, the researcher suggests that the English teacher apply Peer-Scaffolding Strategy as one of the strategies in teaching reading comprehension skills. By implementing the Peer-Scaffolding Strategy, the students will be interested in reading the lesson, they follow the class and comfortable in learning with their friend.

2. For the students

In order to be more active in reading classes, the students should read various texts so that it can improve students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

3. For the researcher

The writer used Peer-Scaffolding Strategy in teaching reading comprehension skills at SMK. Therefore, the writer suggest other researchers to apply Peer-Scaffolding Strategy on other language skills such as, speaking and writing.

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