

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING TEACHER'S SCAFFOLDING

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### **Abstract**

*This classroom action research aimed to improve student's reading comprehension of descriptive text by using the teacher's scaffolding, especially in the aspect of vocabulary, finding the detailed information and main idea, determining pronoun reference, and using correct language features. This research was conducted in three cycles, with 32 students of the VII E class in SMP Negeri 03 Sungai Raya as the subject. The collected data were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were gathered from the observation checklist and field notes, and the quantitative data were collected from the reading test. The findings showed that the use of teacher's scaffolding in teaching reading comprehension text was encouraged students to determine the language features and pronoun reference, completing the detailed information and main idea and, increasing students' vocabulary. The students became more active, enthusiastic, motivated and, confident in the reading comprehension class. The students enjoyed reading descriptive text and followed the learning activities. Based on the quantitative data, the students' score of cycle 1 was 65,59, increased to 78,84 in the second cycle and 83 in the third cycle*

**Keywords:** Teacher's Scaffolding, Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text

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### INTRODUCTION

Reading cannot be split from comprehension because comprehension is the main point of reading. Comprehension is the process of creating meaning from the relation of words, sentences and, connected text to get the information and understanding a

text. Besides of giving information, reading provides a good model for writing, encourage the students to gain their vocabulary, knowledge in grammar and punctuation, also demonstrated the way of the sentences, paragraph, and the text in the target language constructed. Therefore, the writer expects the students to be able to understand the reading text by identifying the following aspects of reading comprehension, especially a descriptive text.

In the preliminary observation during the teaching-learning process of Seventh-grade E students in SMPN 3 Sungai Raya, the writer and, the English teacher found some problems that emerged in students' reading comprehension of descriptive text. The students had difficulties in identifying the meaning of vocabularies in descriptive text. Besides, the students had difficulties in finding the detailed information and the main idea. The students also had difficulties in determining pronoun reference and language features of descriptive text.

Based on the interview and observation, the writer concluded the basic problems that have been faced by the students during the teaching and learning activities is lacking vocabulary. The writer found that many students did not understand every word when they read the text, they did not know enough vocabulary and they need a dictionary all time. Consequently, the students lose interest and the pleasure of reading.

Considering about the condition, the writer offered a solution to the teacher to overcome the problems by using Teacher's Scaffolding in improving students' reading comprehension. Scaffolding is assistance giving by the teacher to help students easier in understanding and problem solving, since the students already mastery the content and process of teaching-learning, the assistance will remove. Vygotsky (1978) in his concept named Zone of Proximal Development defines that scaffolding as the space between the child's level of independent performance and the child's level of maximally assisted performance and it is one of the keys to successful learning in the teaching-learning process. From the concept, the writer realized that the students need a teacher to help them in developing their knowledge or skill, and the writer believes Teacher's Scaffolding is suitable to use in supporting students' improvement in reading comprehension of descriptive text.

The main purposes of applying teacher's scaffolding in reading comprehension may help a teacher to know students' weaknesses in learning, so the teacher can build up the students' knowledge by using appropriate technique or media. Furthermore, it supports the notion that reading comprehension is a process that involves growth, development and, learning as well as a product. It also helps students become actively involved in assessing their needs, progress, achievement, and effort. According to Chedo (2018), in her research finding indicated that the strategy of scaffolding encouraged the students to be more active and motivated in the teaching reading, especially in text type.

Finally, by using Teacher's scaffolding the improvement of students' reading comprehension in descriptive text had been reached. Previously, the students felt difficult to understand the meaning of the text, but by using Teacher's Scaffolding as a help they were easier to get the points and comprehend the text. Previously, most of the students rarely responded to the teacher in the teaching-learning process and they were lack of communication and difficulty to share their mind with their friend and teacher, but when Teacher's Scaffolding was applied it made them enthusiastic on learning, and they felt enjoy and competitive with other by working cooperatively. On the other hand, the implementation of Teacher's Scaffolding could improve the students in finding the detailed information, main idea, pronoun reference, and language features. This strategy also improved the students' enthusiasm and motivation in learning.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method conducted in this research is classroom action research. The writer chooses the classroom action research because it was suitable method to solve the problem in her research. This research was intended to improve the teaching-learning process and to help the students in improving their reading comprehension on descriptive text through teacher 's scaffolding. Koshy (2005) argues that action research is about creating new forms of understanding since action without understanding is blind. It means the writer needs to understand well about the problem and the increases between one cycle to another cycle.

Based on the research design that has been explained, the writer acted as the collaborator who analyzes and observing the situation during teaching-learning processes. The procedures of classroom action research include planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The four stages can be represented as follows:

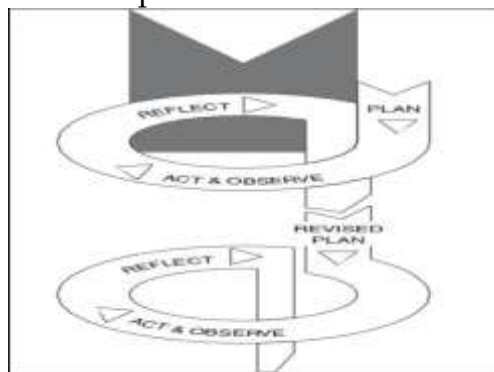


Figure 1. The cycle of classroom action research

The first stage is planning. In this stage, the writer designed a plan to resolve the problem in the teaching-learning process. The writer prepared the instrument to collect data consists of the lesson plan, teaching media, teaching strategy, teaching material, assessment, observation checklist, and field notes.

The second stage is acting. In this stage, the teacher research in the classroom to solve the problems that has been found by using the teacher's scaffolding and the writer acted as

the collaborator to observe the situations by gathering the data with some instrument that have been made before like observation checklist and field notes.

The third stage is observing. In this stage, the writer wrote all activities which happening in the classroom such as teacher's performance, class situation, students' response, and also carry out observation toward implementation of the action using field note or observation checklist.

The fourth stage is reflecting. In this stage, the teacher and the writer discussed the result of observation. This reflection was determined by the writer after implementing the action and observation outcomes. If there are still found some problems. The teacher and collaborator need to continue to the next cycle until it is solved.

The participant of this research was Seventh-grade students of SMPN 03 Sungai Raya in the academic year 2018/2019. This research was implemented by the teacher in class E which consists of 32 students. They were 18 males and 14 females. The writer and the teacher choose this class because the students had problems with English subjects among other classes. One of the problems was deal with reading comprehension on descriptive text.

In this research, the writer was collected the data to support the study. The writer collected the observation data using field notes and an observation checklist to measure the qualitative data, and the measurement of reading comprehension test as the quantitative data. Field notes consisted of the description of the condition, time management, and all of the things that happened during the teaching-learning process. Field notes were used by the writer for taking notes about the improvements, the weaknesses, the problem, and the whole activity that happened in the teaching-learning process. The observation checklist was used by the writer to observe the teaching-learning process by putting a checklist in the observation table for the statements of activity prepared by the writer when the activity was done.

A test was given by the teacher used multiple choices test and cloze test and its aimed to assess how well the students comprehend the descriptive text after using the teacher's scaffolding on each cycle. According to Alderson & Bachman (2000), Multiple-choice tests are a common instrument that allows the writer for testing students' reading comprehension. The questions of multiple-choice tests consisted of 15 items which include to the aspect of reading comprehension, the generic structures of descriptive text, and the characteristics of descriptive text.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted in three cycles. Based on the result of observation and the analysis of students' reading comprehension score, teacher's scaffolding improved students' reading comprehension in understanding vocabulary meaning, main idea, detailed information and determining language features and pronoun reference of descriptive text. The teacher's scaffolding was used in each cycle. Students gave some positive responses. Students look interested when learned by using the teacher's scaffolding. Based on the indicators of student's reading achievement, it could be

shown that students actively participated in the teacher's scaffolding implementation. The students also showed improvement from the activity in the classroom. From the students' scores, the students reading comprehension of descriptive text was improved from the first cycle to the third cycle. All of the aspects of reading comprehension included in the test item have improved, such as vocabulary, main idea, detailed information, pronoun reference, and language features.

Students' vocabulary on reading comprehension of descriptive text improved by applying picture scaffolding. Picture scaffolding helped students to identify the correct vocabulary. For every meeting and cycle, the teacher always used picture scaffolding as a medium for teaching reading comprehension, especially in teaching vocabulary. In the first, second, and third cycle, the writer and the teacher agreed to use picture scaffolding which combined to list of vocabulary in the first cycle, comprehension questions in the second cycle, and clues in the third cycle to made students easier when learned new words. In the picture scaffolding combined with the list of vocabulary of the first cycle, the teacher presented a list of vocabulary related to the text of descriptive text entitled *My Lovely Cat* and asked the students to match the vocabularies with the suitable pictures.

Most students were attracted to following the activity and they matched the word and the picture very well. In the picture scaffolding with comprehension question of the second cycle teacher presented pictures and vocabularies related to the text of descriptive text entitled *My Lovely Father* following some questions below it such as; A person who worked in a governmental agency called...? So, the students answered the questions based on the picture and vocabulary which was written by the teacher. The students were happy and enjoy the activity, they also could answer the questions very well. In the picture scaffolding with clues of the third cycle, the teacher presented pictures and vocabularies following with some words as a clue which related to the descriptive text entitled *Paris City*. From the clues, the students guessed what is the suitable picture which matches with the clues.

This activity attracted students' attention to following the teacher's instruction in answering and guessing the pictures based on the clues. It also gave a good progression from cycle to cycle. As the result the students' ability on understanding the new vocabulary had improved after conduct a scaffolding of picture as a media in the teaching-learning process which combined to list of vocabulary, comprehension questions, and clues. The picture's scaffolding had push students' motivation on the teaching-learning process and capable of interacting with students' interest in the classroom. The research findings showed that the students' mean score in improving the vocabulary of the first cycle was 78, then the students' mean score of the second cycle was 82.7, and the students' mean score of the third cycle was 85. It can be concluded that the improvement of reading comprehension especially in vocabulary by using picture scaffolding in the first cycle was categorized as good, second and third cycle was excellent.

In improving the detailed information the teacher applied a scaffolding of note-taking strategy in the first cycle. At the beginning of the activity, the teacher presented the text of "My Lovely Cat". In this activity, the teacher and the students read the text together and while reading the text the teacher guided the students to identify the important information of the text including the characteristic of Cats such as color, size, or weight. After identified the text, the teacher asked the students to take a noted detail and specific about the cat. Then, the teacher pointed some of the students to read their note-taking. Unfortunately, most of the students' note-taking about My Lovely Cat were not good enough, the important point of the text was not written completely. So, the students failed in finding the detailed information on the descriptive text by using scaffolding of note-taking strategy.

Many students also complained about the teacher's scaffolding by using note taking strategy because in understanding the meaning of the text the students need to read the text repeatedly, whereas the time to taking a note was not enough for them. For the second cycle, the writer applied the teacher's scaffolding of summarizing strategy in finding the detailed information on descriptive text. In this activity, the teacher gave the text entitled My Lovely Father text to students. Then, the teacher presented the explanation about how to make a good summary by identifying and underlining the important point of the text, the teacher also explained the steps of summarizing. After that, the teacher asked the students to make the summary together based on the teacher's explanation.

After finishing summarizing the text, the teacher asked the students to submit their summary. Finding the detailed information by using summarizing strategy was not show a good result, most of the students who were sat on the back not focus on reading the text, they were played around and talked each other. This strategy was not interesting for them, so they did not motivate in learning, and because of a noisy situation in the classroom, some of the students also could not make the summary completely. For the third cycle, the teacher applied the scaffolding of W+H questions strategy in finding the detailed information on a descriptive text entitled of Paris City, the teacher asked the students to underline the important point of the text related to the W+H questions such as: What is the topic about? where is the location? or how is it looks like? then the students wrote the important point based on the W+H questions. The students were interested and enthusiastic in the learning process.

The activity also helped students in memorizing what they have read and determined the essential ideas of the text. So, from the W+H Questions strategy, the students learned how to recognize detailed information. As a result, the third cycle was improved students' understanding of finding the detailed information, and fortunately, the mean score of the third cycle was better than the second cycle. The research findings showed that the students' mean score in improving detail information of the first cycle was 60, then the students' mean score of the second cycle was 69,4 and the students' mean score of the third cycle was 78. It can be concluded that the categorized of the first cycle and second cycle were at a low level, and the third cycle was at a good level.

Students' ability in finding the main idea of reading comprehension on the descriptive text was improved by applying some teacher's scaffolding. Some of those scaffoldings

were identifying and underlining keywords by using scanning and skimming strategy which divided into three cycles for the application. In the first cycle, to find the main idea the teacher applied the scaffolding of identifying and underlining keywords by using a scanning strategy for students, first of all, the teacher presented the text entitled *My Lovely Cat*. Then, the teacher guided the students on how to read in scanning. In finding the main idea, the teacher asked the students to only focus on reading the text in searching the keywords which related to the topic sentence, so the students need to read silent and faster, that they identified and underlined the keywords which related to the topic sentence of the text. identifying and underlining keywords by using a scanning strategy was not improve students' understanding in finding the main idea of descriptive text.

At the beginning of the scanning activity, there were got some students were talked and played with each other, they were not serious in learning and ignored teacher instruction in identifying and underlining the keywords of reading text. They were just reading the text without knowing the purpose of reading. In the second cycle, the teacher and the writer applied scaffolding of skimming strategy to scaffold students' improvement in finding the main idea. Before skimming the text of *My Lovely Father* text the teacher instructed the students to just focus on reading about what they want to search because in this stage was focusing on finding the main idea, so the teacher and students read and underlined the title first, after that they found the topic sentence of the text by reading the first, the middle, or the last sentence of the paragraph, then they read only the amount of the text necessary to determine a section of main idea, the last the teacher and the students watched for signal words and phrased the words which indicate to the descriptive text direction.

In this cycle, the student's reading comprehension in finding the main idea by using skimming scaffolding was improved, skimming strategy was efficient to use for students because they did not need to read the whole of the text, the students only read the beginning, the middle of the last of the paragraphs in finding the main idea, and this strategy was accurate to use because the main idea on text commonly located on the beginning, on the middle, or the last paragraphs. In the third cycle, the teacher did the same strategy with the previous cycle to students. The teacher applied the skimming strategy as a students' scaffolding. In this cycle, the students improved their understanding in finding the main idea of descriptive text by using *Paris City* text. Fortunately, the mean score of the third cycle higher than the previous cycle. Same with the previous cycle, the students skimming the text, only focused on reading about searching the main idea on the text, so they read the title first, then reading the beginning, the middle, or the last of paragraphs to find the information of text which include to the main idea. Most of the students were satisfying using skimming's scaffolding because they were easier to founding the main idea without knowing the whole meaning of the text. They also did not need more time to find the main idea, so they enjoyed the teaching-learning process. The research findings showed that the students' mean score in improving the main idea of the first cycle was 60, then the students' mean score of the second cycle was 74 and the students' mean score of the third cycle was 76,9. it can be concluded that the categorization of the first cycle was in low level, the second and third cycle was in good level.

Students' reading comprehension on determining pronoun reference improved by applying the teacher's scaffolding of coloring pronouns. In the first cycle, the teacher applied the scaffolding of coloring pronouns. In this activity, the teacher explained about types of pronouns related to the text of *My Lovely Cat* text, then the teacher asked the students to read the text and color the pronoun words of the text together. After that, the teacher asked the students to classified the pronoun based on the types. According to the data of field note, coloring pronoun was effective to use for students on determining pronoun reference of descriptive text because many of students were understood about how to use the types of pronouns, they were also could to classifying the types of pronouns. By coloring pronoun, the students were motivated in following the activity of the teaching-learning process on determining the pronoun reference. In the second cycle, the writer and the teacher agreed to apply the same scaffolding on determining pronoun references of descriptive text. The teacher used coloring pronouns strategy to the students.

In this activity, the teacher explained the types of pronouns and showed the text of *My Lovely Father* text. Then, again the teacher asked the students to color the word which categorized to pronoun, after that the students classified the types of pronouns. Then, the teacher corrected it. Based on the data of field notes, students' understanding of determining pronoun reference of descriptive text by using coloring pronouns helped the students in classifying the types of pronouns. They could identify which one subject and object pronoun, singular or plural pronoun. The students also enjoyed and were excited about following the activity. The result of students' mean scores also improved. In the third cycle, the teacher did the same activity with the previous cycle to the students. The teacher applied coloring pronouns as scaffolding. In this cycle, the teacher explained the subject and object pronoun related to the text of *Paris City* text. The teacher and students together colored the words which contain the pronoun and classified their types. The students very enthusiastic, they could classify the pronoun very well. The research findings showed that the students' mean score on determining the pronoun reference of the first cycle was 73,1, then the students' mean score of the second cycle was 78 and the students' mean score of the third cycle was 80,60. The categorization of the first cycle and the second cycle was at a good level, and the third cycle was at an excellent level.

Students' reading comprehension on determining language features of descriptive text improved by applied teacher's scaffolding of crossword puzzle and examining text features strategy with true or false questions. In the first cycle, the teacher explained language features included in descriptive text such as action verb, adjectives, noun, and present tense. After that, the teacher asked the students to analyze the language features of *My Lovely Cat* text by using a crossword puzzle. The students filled the squares of the puzzle related to the questions of the language feature such as action verb, adjectives, noun, or present tense. the crossword puzzle was not effective to use for students, because the students faced the biggest challenge in completing the crossword puzzle, they felt difficult in interpreting the clues to the mean of the questions. On the other hand, the crossword puzzle also made the students spent much time finding the correct answer to the squares, and it made the students frustration because they did know the answer to the questions. In the second cycle, the writer and the teacher used the



scaffolding of examining text features with true/false questions. The teacher explained the language features included in descriptive text such as action verb, adjectives, noun, and present tense. After that, the teacher gave a text of My Lovely Father text to the students including the questions of true/false related to the language feature such as action verb, adjectives, noun, or present tense. Then, the teacher asked the students to answer the questions based on the language feature of the text, they write True for the correct statement and False for the incorrect statement. the students had a good improvement in determining the language features of My Love Father text. The students were able to classify the types of language features of the text such as action verb, adjectives, noun, or present tense. The students also enjoyed the activity, they were enthusiastic and serious in answering the questions by using the true/false questions. Most of the students could answer the question well. In the third cycle, the teacher and writer did the same treatment and same activity with the second cycle, the teacher and the writer used the teacher's scaffolding of examining text features with true/false questions to scaffold students in learning. Same with the second cycle, the teacher explained the language features of descriptive text such as action verb, adjectives, noun, and present tense. After that, the teacher gave a text entitled Paris City to the students including the questions of true/false related to the language features such as action verb, adjectives, noun, or present tense. Then, the teacher asked the students to answer the questions based on the language features of the text, they wrote True for the correct statement and False for the incorrect statement. The students could answer and participate very well in this activity, they could classify the language features of Paris City text. The research findings showed that the students' mean score on determining the language features of the first cycle was 62,85 then the students' mean score of the second cycle was 76, and the students' mean score of the third cycle was 80,60. it can be concluded that the categorization of the first cycle was at a low level, the second cycle was at a good level, and the third cycle was at an excellent level.

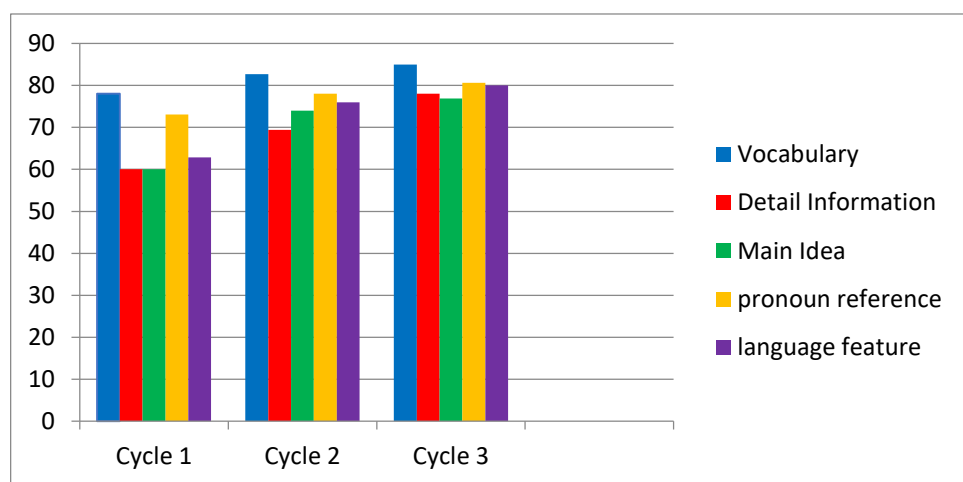


Figure 1. percentage of students' improvement in reading comprehension

There are some theories which supported this strategy, Gladys E. Huggins and Rota Edwards (2011) in their journal, indicated that scaffolding would make an impact on Students' reading, and also scaffolding tools in the classroom can help to improve reading comprehension. Chedo (2018) found that scaffolding strategy encouraged

students to be more active and motivated in teaching reading, especially in text type. By applying teacher scaffolding, the student's ability in every aspect of reading comprehension were improved and the students who were usually passive during the teaching-learning process become more active and motivated, as Larkin (1997) stated in his journal that, one of the benefits from scaffolding strategy is this teaching style allows the students to take a more active role in their learning.

The research findings showed that the first cycle into the third cycle had a great improvement. In the first cycle, the students' mean score was 65,59 which was categorized into a low level. It happened because the students were still confused about the strategy in that cycle. However, in the second and the last cycle, there was an improvement in the students' ability in reading comprehension. The mean score of the second cycle was 78,84, which was categorized into a good level, and the third cycle was 83, which was categorized into an excellent level. It can be concluded that the problems faced by the students have been solved.

In the observation checklist and field note, it was found that the students' actions such as students' activeness, students' confidence, students' enthusiasm, students' participant, and interest were also improved by using the teacher's scaffolding. Therefore, the students' reading comprehension had improved and the students' problems had been solved during this research, in conclusion, the research findings were satisfactory.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the use of Teacher's Scaffolding as a strategy in teaching reading comprehension, the students' reading comprehension of descriptive text from the first cycle to the third cycle had improved. According to the research findings, it was found that the students' reading comprehension on descriptive text, especially in identifying vocabularies meaning, finding main idea, detailed information, and determining pronoun reference and language features at the seventh-grade students in Class E of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya were improved. The teacher's scaffolding minimized the students' problems in comprehending the descriptive text, it made the teacher easier on the explanation of the reading comprehension aspects, at the same time it also provided the opportunity for the students to become more interacted when reading a text. Teacher's scaffolding can be applied for all genres of the text with a different topic in reading comprehension because the main purpose of teacher's scaffolding is to build the students' ability in learning. It also could change the condition and situation, by the teacher's scaffolding the students gave full attention in the teaching-learning process. The students showed their enthusiasm in reading a text, and they increased their participation when they were asked to carry out the content and the meaning of the text that they have read when doing a test.

The English teacher should apply the teacher's scaffolding in increasing the students' ability on reading comprehension because it can be used to support students when reading a text. Reading a text by using the teacher's scaffolding can help students to raise their motivation in learning because they can feel easier in comprehending a text and for further researchers can apply Teacher's Scaffolding to solve students' reading comprehension problems in others types of text, like descriptive, recount, or procedure.

it can give a positive contribution to overcome the students' difficulty in learning English. The teacher's scaffolding strategy can be a tool to attract students' interest and participation in reading comprehension.

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