

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, important points, the research question to be answered, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definitions of key terms, and the last is the research report organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

English plays a vital role as an international language used for communication, education, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and has become a key subject in secondary schools. English instruction aims to develop students' competence in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading is considered one of the most important, as it enables students to acquire information, expand their knowledge, and develop their language abilities. According to Harmer (2015), reading is an active process in which learners interact with written text to construct meaning. Similarly, Brown and Lee (2015) state that reading goes beyond mere word recognition; it involves comprehending, interpreting, and responding to the information contained within a text.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental objective in English language learning. Students are expected not only to grasp the literal meaning of a text but also to interpret ideas, draw inferences, analyze information, and evaluate the author's message. Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with

written language. Similarly, Grabe and Stoller (2020) explain that successful reading comprehension requires various cognitive processes, including vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, inference-making, and comprehension monitoring. However, many students still struggle to comprehend English texts due to limited vocabulary, low reading motivation, and inadequate reading strategies, often resulting in passive participation during classroom instruction (Nguyen, 2022).

To address this challenge, teachers play a crucial role in facilitating students' reading comprehension. Harmer (2015) explains that teachers act as facilitators, organizers, assessors, tutors, and resources, creating meaningful learning experiences for students. Brown and Lee (2015) also emphasize that effective teachers must provide appropriate guidance and encourage students to become active participants in the learning process. One theoretical framework supporting teacher guidance is Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory specifically the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which posits that students learn more effectively when receiving support from a more knowledgeable other. Daniels (2017) further argues that teacher guidance and classroom interaction are essential elements in fostering students' cognitive development.

One learning approach derived from Vygotsky's theory is scaffolding. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) define scaffolding as temporary support provided by teachers to help students complete tasks they cannot accomplish independently. This support is gradually reduced as students' learning abilities and confidence

grow. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) further explain that scaffolding is a flexible learning process in which teachers continuously adjust their support to meet students' learning needs. Among the various scaffolding techniques, questioning is considered one of the most effective because it encourages students to think actively, express ideas, and build understanding through classroom interaction.

Questioning strategies are a crucial component of effective teaching, as they enable teachers to stimulate student thinking, monitor comprehension, and foster meaningful classroom interaction. Richards and Lockhart (1994) identify questioning as one of the most powerful techniques in language instruction. Furthermore, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) suggest that teachers structure questions progressively, starting with lower-order thinking skills and gradually advancing to higher-order thinking skills. This instructional approach is known as the Scaffolding Questioning Strategy, wherein teachers provide structured questions, prompts, and feedback to guide student understanding before gradually encouraging independent thinking (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Through this strategy, students are expected to become more active readers and develop a deeper understanding of English texts.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at one of the MTs in Malangbong, the researcher found that English teachers frequently use questioning during reading lessons to guide students' comprehension. Rather than providing immediate answers, teachers encourage students to identify information, interpret meaning, and express their opinions through a series of questions and prompts. Although previous research has addressed scaffolding in

reading instruction, most studies have focused on general scaffolding techniques or student learning outcomes. Limited research has specifically explored how English teachers implement Scaffolding Questioning Strategies in teaching reading comprehension particularly in Islamic junior high schools using a qualitative approach. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the levels of questioning employed by English teachers and to explore how they implement Scaffolding Questioning Strategies during reading comprehension instruction at one of the MTs in Malangbong, Garut.

1.2 Research Question

1. What levels of questions are employed by the teacher in implementing the scaffolding questioning strategy in teaching reading comprehension?
2. How does the teacher implement the scaffolding questioning strategy in teaching reading comprehension?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the levels of questions used by the teacher in implementing the scaffolding questioning strategy in teaching reading comprehension.
2. To investigate the role of the teacher in implementing scaffolding questioning strategy in teaching reading comprehension

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give much significances, especially to the theoretical practical, professional, and padagogically.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of English language teaching (ELT), particularly with regard to scaffolding strategies and reading comprehension questions. The study provides empirical evidence on how the role of the teacher and structured questions function as cognitive scaffolding, facilitating students' transition from supported to independent comprehension.

Practically, this study provides evidence-based guidelines for the application of scaffolding questioning strategies in the classroom context. The study can help English teachers develop and use targeted questions to promote student engagement, comprehension, and critical thinking during reading instruction.

Professionally, this study supports the ongoing professional development of teachers by promoting reflective and informed teaching practices. The study encourages educators to question their questioning techniques and their role as scaffolders, thereby strengthening their pedagogical skills and decision-making in reading instruction.

Pedagogically, this study underscores the value of a student-centered, interactive approach to reading comprehension. The study highlights how systematic scaffolding through questioning can promote higher-order thinking skills, student autonomy, and meaningful engagement with the text.

1.5 Scope of the Study

To make this study easier, the researcher limits the problems that are going to be studied. That is, to know teachers' ways in implementing scaffolding questioning strategy in teaching reading comprehension at one of the junior high schools in Malangbong.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding concerning of the terminology of the title in this study, the researcher deems that it is necessary to explain each terminology used in this research as follows:

Scaffolding is a pedagogical concept referring to the temporary instructional support provided by teachers to help learners complete tasks they cannot perform independently but can accomplish with appropriate guidance. This concept is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory specifically the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which posits that learning occurs most effectively when students receive assistance from a more knowledgeable individual. Building on this idea, Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) introduced the term "scaffolding" to describe a process in which teachers provide structured support and gradually withdraw it as learners gain competence and independence. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) further emphasize that scaffolding is dynamic and responsive, requiring teachers to continuously adjust the level of assistance based on students' learning needs. In the context of this study, scaffolding refers to the instructional support provided by English teachers through guided questioning to facilitate students' reading comprehension.

Questioning strategies refer to the deliberate and systematic use of questions by teachers to stimulate student thinking, monitor comprehension, encourage classroom interaction, and facilitate meaningful learning. Richards and Lockhart (1994) state that questioning is one of the most important teaching techniques because it fosters active participation while enabling teachers to assess student understanding during classroom instruction. Walsh (2011) also argues that effective questioning creates productive classroom discourse that supports language learning and cognitive development. Furthermore, Chin (2007) explains that well-designed questions encourage learners to justify their ideas, develop reasoning skills, and engage in higher-order thinking rather than merely recalling information. In this study, questioning strategies refer to the sequence of questions used by teachers to guide students progressively from literal comprehension to deeper interpretation and critical analysis of reading texts.

The Scaffolding Questioning Strategy is an instructional approach that combines scaffolding principles with systematic questioning to support students' cognitive development during learning. Instead of providing direct explanations, teachers guide students by asking questions of gradually increasing complexity while offering hints, cues, feedback, and clarifications as needed. Fisher and Frey (2014) explain that scaffolded instruction follows the principle of the gradual release of responsibility, enabling students to become increasingly independent learners. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) further argue that scaffolded questioning allows teachers to respond flexibly to students' learning progress by adjusting instructional support throughout classroom interactions. In this study, the

Scaffolding Questioning Strategy refers to the teacher's use of sequential and structured questions to help students build understanding and independently improve their reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is defined as the process of constructing meaning through interaction with written text by integrating textual information with the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, and cognitive strategies. Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as the simultaneous process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and engagement with written language. Similarly, Kintsch (1998), through the Construction-Integration Model, explains that readers actively construct a coherent mental representation by linking new textual information with existing knowledge stored in memory. Grabe and Stoller (2020) also emphasize that reading comprehension involves various cognitive processes, including vocabulary recognition, inference making, interpretation, critical evaluation, and strategic monitoring of comprehension. In this study, reading comprehension refers to students' ability to understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate English reading texts through the implementation of the Scaffolding Questioning Strategy.

The teacher's role encompasses the various responsibilities undertaken to facilitate, guide, motivate, assess, and support students throughout the teaching and learning process. Harmer (2015) explains that teachers assume multiple roles such as controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, tutor, and resource depending on learning objectives and classroom context. Similarly, Brown and Lee (2015) state that effective language teachers continuously monitor student

progress, provide constructive feedback, adjust teaching strategies, and create a learning environment that fosters active participation. In the context of this study, the teacher's role involves planning and implementing the Scaffolding Questioning Strategy, facilitating classroom interaction, providing learning support, and encouraging students to become independent readers.

1.7 Research Report Organization

The writer divides the research into five chapters namely; Chapter I is Introduction, which consists of the background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms, and research report organization. Chapter II is Literature of Review, which presents the theoretical review of the main subject, and also contains several previous studies related to this research. Chapter III is Research Methodology, which contains of the research design, research participants, research site. Data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter IV is Finding and Discussion. The last Chapter V is Conclusion and Suggestion.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the general foundation for the study regarding the implementation of the Tiered Questioning Strategy in teaching reading comprehension. The study's background highlighted the importance of reading comprehension and the challenges students face in understanding texts—particularly concerning vocabulary, prior knowledge, and higher-order thinking. The chapter also introduced the Tiered Questioning Strategy as an instructional

approach that enables teachers to guide students through questions ranging from basic comprehension to more complex levels of thinking. Furthermore, research questions and objectives were formulated to investigate the levels of questioning employed by English teachers and how the strategy is implemented in reading comprehension instruction. The significance and scope of the study clarified the research's contributions and limitations, while definitions of key terms provided a clear understanding of the main concepts used throughout the study. Thus, this chapter established the conceptual and research foundation for investigating the use of the Tiered Questioning Strategy in teaching reading comprehension at an Islamic Junior High School (MTs) in Malangbong. Theoretical perspectives and previous studies supporting this research focus are discussed in the subsequent chapter.