

THE PERCEIVED CHALLENGES IN READING OF YOUNG LEARNERS

Hojiqulov Shukrullo

Senior teacher

UzSWLU

English in primary Education Department

ABSTRACT

Reading is deemed to play a key role in the learning of English as a second language (ESL) among rural learners who have limited opportunities to hear or speak the language. However, they often come to ESL classrooms with the ability to read the text fluently, yet fully comprehend it. The past literature illuminate that these less skilled readers can be taught to employ appropriate reading strategies to construct the meaning from the text, and eventually aid their comprehension. Henceforth, this action research was conducted to explore how the twelve-week explicit strategy instruction via scaffolding approach helps improve eleven. The findings of this study revealed that all the some strategies play their own role in helping the participants to become active in creating meaning from the texts given, and thus enhancing their reading comprehension. Besides, the learners believe that the use of the strategies learnt improves their reading comprehension, promotes their higher order thinking skills, as well as motivates them to read. It is recommended that the explicit strategy instruction can be incorporated in teaching comprehension to primary ESL learners to aid their reading comprehension. The present paper is a report on a small classroom based research study. The teacher-researcher assigned two passages dealing with two different social issues and set in two different contexts, i.e., foreign and local, for comprehension to the students in the classroom. The classroom experience indicated that activating and building on the students' background knowledge did help in facilitating their reading comprehension skills. The paper thus recommends it as an effective strategy to develop the young learners' reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: background knowledge, reading comprehension, strategy.

Reading comprehension research has a long and rich history. There is much that we can say about both the nature of reading comprehension as a process and about effective reading comprehension instruction. Most of what we know has been learned since 1975. Why have we been able to make so much progress so fast? We believe that part of the reason behind this steep learning curve has been the lack of controversy about teaching comprehension. Unlike decoding, oral reading, and reading readiness,

those who study reading comprehension instruction have avoided much of the acrimony characteristic of work in other aspects of reading.

Reading is an inseparable part of studying, as readers, a lot of reading awaits you, and reading does not only means magazines or books reading, but also browsing the internet to read the digital books and magazines. It is a skill which some of us take for granted. It is through understanding how we read that we can be able to fix our poor or below average reading habits which are responsible to slow us down. Speed reading is an activity that helps fluency development. Speed Reading is linked to greater comprehension, better understanding, and greater enjoyment from reading (Macalister, 2010)

Young learners develop oral language proficiency by listening and speaking (including through experiences with other languages), which lays a solid foundation for reading. Strong reading comprehension occurs when students derive meaning from oral language and combine it with fluency in reading words and texts. Oral language continues to impact reading proficiency as children progress through school and build a growing vocabulary. Knowing how language is structured is key to developing early reading skills. Students learn that words on the printed page represent language, that each word has meaning, and that words can be broken down into syllables, which are made of letters and letter combinations (graphemes) and represent sounds (phonemes). The development of phonological skills includes being able to identify the number of words in a spoken sentence. Phonemic awareness involves identifying and manipulating the smallest sound units in language (phonemes), such as identifying where the /c/ sound is in “cat.” Alphabet knowledge, which refers to knowing the relationship between letters and the sounds they make (more precisely referred to as grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence), develops alongside phonological skills and phonemic awareness. Combined, these skills lead to proficiency in decoding words, learning to read words accurately and quickly, and language comprehension, eventually building strong reading comprehension and spelling skills. Strong reading comprehension is only achieved through language comprehension and decoding, not one or the other in isolation (Ehri, L.C. 2014).

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning a second language. The success of language learner is largely influenced by his/ her reading practice. “Reading is useful for language acquisition...the more they read, the better they get. Reading also has a positive effect on students’ vocabulary knowledge, on their spelling and their writing” (Harmer, 2007, p.99). Therefore, teacher must develop reading habit in students in order to help them enhance target language efficiency. This can be done by motivating young learners to read, especially by giving them reason to read. Neyman (2002), states that instead of waiting until later grade, extensive reading should be

provided as early as possible so that they can use the facility that children have up to certain age. As a matter of fact, learners must feel the need of reading only then they can read on their own. In short, reading stands as bedrock for learners' success in learning a second language, therefore it is language teachers' responsibility to cultivate reading culture in students.

Preparing appropriate task is very crucial in teaching reading text. The success and failure of the lesson depends on the activities we design for any text. Even an interesting text can be boring if we cannot engage students in right kind of tasks and the vice versa. It needs great effort on the part of teachers while preparing reading tasks. They need to read a text several times to design proper activities in order to engage students successfully in it. It is task that helps students in using their knowledge of the world to understand the text. Therefore, a reading task must be designed very carefully.

The facts of teaching reading in secondary schools have brought problems to the English teachers is because of some existence conditions. Traditionally, the problems arise from the condition of ineffective classroom. Scholars of Indonesian teaching, such as Sadtono (1997) and Baradja (1984) have put several problems that are responsible on this matter. The problems include: big class size, limited frequency of teaching, low motivated students, unprofessional teachers, and limited teaching facilities.

The role of the teachers in improving the primary reading and writing instruction process is very important. In today's classrooms, a thoughtful and flexible approach to literacy instruction is required (Vaughn M, Parsons SA, Gallagher MA, Branen J, 2015)

It is essential that teachers work in an environment where they feel self-confident, can express themselves, their demands and opinions are regarded, and are provided with an opportunity to express the difficulties they experience in order to increase their performance in the process of reading and writing literacy education, which is a difficult and rewarding experience for teachers (Flores, M. A., & Day, C. 2006), and to ensure that they can work happily in this process.

Teaching reading comprehension as a strategy of improving teaching of reading forms basis for academic learning. The common approaches to teaching reading in schools are sight-vocabulary instruction and instruction and phonics (McCray & Vaughn, 2011). Sight instruction attempts to teach random lists of words, usually with flash cards. As the flashes the card, the learners pronounce it. The learners go through the cards repeatedly until they have memorised them, as evidenced by their ability to pronounce each word presented.

Manning and Manning (1984) state that teachers can monitor learners when they read texts that are appropriate in terms of their difficulty levels. The teacher's duty

therefore, would be, to teach learners how to coordinate the use of different strategies as mentioned above when interacting with the texts. Teachers should always encourage the re-reading of texts because this would improve reading comprehension for learners. Teachers should allow learners to read in pairs as this would assist to master reading comprehension well.

Flanagan (1997) states reading is considered as a translating process and the teaching of reading should concentrate on the translation of the units of written language to units of spoken language. Pretorius (2002) contends that phonic approach is not necessary to the teaching of reading since it is not adequate for learner development to read. She further explained that learners who are able to translate might be able to read with confidence and correct pronunciation, but have no idea what they are reading. Reading is about understanding what you are reading.

Teaching is a challenging job. Due to rapid development of science and technology, it also brings challenges in teaching. So, there were various challenges to teach English language teaching in lower secondary level. The English language teachers faced many problems during the teaching of English as a foreign language. Some of the major challenges of teaching English were different abilities of students, large class size, less use of student centered techniques, low participation of students in the class, less use of instructional materials, less transfer of training in ELT class into practice and classroom management. The challenges faced by lower secondary level English teachers during teaching can be minimized or eradicated through the use of pair work, group work, role play, discussion, question answer, etc as student centered techniques, to develop students language skills and systems, then apply different language games in the class to teach students with fun, using instructional materials daily in the class; it save time to teach and encourage students to participate in speaking; it reduces use of mother tongue in the ELT class.

Students today are faced with ever increasing demands to read and read well. McNamara and Kendeou (2011) stress the importance of teaching reading as a process and that strategy instruction has been found to impact students' appreciation of reading as a process, the goal of which is to understand what is being read. But the ultimate objective of comprehension instruction should be student ownership of the strategies and skills, knowing when comprehension breaks down and how to address the problem and repair the breakdown. Teaching students to use a repertoire of comprehension strategies and skills can set them securely on the path to becoming lifelong readers. Many opportunities to read independently allow students to begin to coordinate the strategies they have learned; to adjust, modify, or change strategies and skills until they are able to make sense of text. The higher order thinking of strategic readers also enhances their reading experience and responses to literature and informational text.

And once students take ownership of the process, they take it one step further—they take what they know, apply it to the unknown, and become creative thinkers who are able to assess problems from the comfortable position of knowing they have the skills and can acquire the knowledge they need to solve any problem with which they are faced.

REFERENCES:

1. Baradja, M. F. 1984. *Kapita Selektta Pengajaran Bahasa*. Malang: IKIP Malang
2. Ehri, L.C. (2014) Orthographic mapping in the acquisition of sight word reading, spelling memory, and vocabulary learning. *Scientific Studies of Reading* 18(1), 5-21.
3. Flanagan, W. 1997. *Reading and Writing in Junior classes*. Maskew Miller Longman: Cambridge.
4. Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 219-232.
5. Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach english*. London: Pearson Longman.
6. Neyman, P. F. (2002). Helping children learn to think in English through reading storybooks. *The internet TESL journal*, VII(8). Retrieve from
7. Sadtono, E., 1995. *Perspektif Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia*. FPBS KIP Malang: Seksi Kajian Bahasa dan Seni.
8. Macalister J.(2022) *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing by I.S.P. Nation*, Volume 34, No. 1, University of Hawaii National Foreign Language Resource Center; Center for Language & Technology
9. Manning, G.L. and Manning, M. 1984. What models of recreation reading make a difference? *Reading World*, 23: 375-380
10. McRay, A. D. and Vaughn, S. 2001. Not all students learn to read by third Grade: middle school students speak out about their reading disabilities. *The Journal of special Education*, 35(1): 17-30.
11. McNamara, D.S. & Kendeou, P. (2011). Translating advances in reading comprehension research to educational practice. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 2011, 4 (1), 33-46
12. Vaughn M, Parsons SA, Gallagher MA, Branen J (2015). Teachers' adaptive instruction supporting students' literacy learning. *Reading Teacher International Literacy Association*. 69(5):539-547