

TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstrak:

Sebagai medium komunikasi dan alat belajar, reading menyajikan sebuah fungsi yang diperlukan dalam masyarakat. Dalam mengajari bahasa, seorang guru harus mempunyai persiapan keprofesionalan secara umum dan ilmu pengetahuan yang khusus di bidang bahasa asing yang dia ajari. Mengetahui bahwa teknik mengajar adalah penting dalam menentukan keberhasilan proses belajar-mengajar, menyajikan materi dengan efektif dan bertujuan. Guru selalu mencoba menggunakan bermacam-macam teknik untuk membantu murid belajar biasa membaca materi English dengan mudah dan dengan banyak mengerti.

Kata kunci:

techniques, reading comprehension, teaching

INTRODUCTION

English is taught in Indonesia as a foreign language. It has to be recognised as a language by all members of the Indonesian community. It is taught as a compulsory subject in school. This subject includes the four languages skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The stress is particularly on reading comprehension.

Reading is a good thing for language student and at the very least, some of the language sticks in their minds as part of the process of language acquisition. Reading text also provide opportunitie to study language; Vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences paragraph and text. Lastly, good reading

text can introduce interesting topic and stimulate discussion (Harmer, 1998: 68)

The materials for reading comprehension and exercises constitute an important parts in learning process. The reading material include periodical or scientific and technical journal written in English.

This articles is mainly concerned with the techniques in teaching reading comprehension. According to Christine Nutal cited in Hafilia's paper (2003: 1) says that different people use the terms in different way, which can cause much confusion.

What are you ideas about reading?

1. Decode, decipher, identify, etc.
2. Articulate, speak, pronounce, etc.
3. Understand, respond, meaning, etc.

The writer believes that the success of foreign language teaching depends on many factors such as the students motivation in learning target, the material selected to be used last but no least a clearly defined objective of that foreign language teaching. A lot also will depend on who the students are. If they are all business people the teacher may well want to concentrate on business texts. If they are science students, reading scientific texts may be a priority. But if, as a often the case, they are a mixed group with differing interest and careers, a more varied diet is appoopriate. Among the thing the teacher might want them to read are magazine articles, letters, stories, manus, advertisements, reports, play extracts, recipes, instuctio, poems, and reference material. (Harmer, 1998:69) based on these, English should be thought effectively and purposefully.

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it is important ti difine the key words used in this study.

The word technique the way reading comprehension conducted including the materials presented in class.

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|-------------------------|---|
| Teaching: | Discussion a subject of topical interest (as help in a college with students, staff or other speaker) (Hornby, 1974:886). |
| Reading Comprehension : | Is specified to the understanding the concent of English reading comprehension means the ability to grasp the meaning of |

written materials effectively.

The description is expected to be the basic for selecting techniques teaching reading comprehension to help the students become accurate, efficient, rapid, and independent readers.

DEFINITION OF READING

Reading is defined as the act of responding to printed symbols so that meaning is acquired. D. Marison Jen Kinson (1973) in his book teaching of reading says :

Reading is one of the prime modes of receptive learning, but it will only become a fuctional learning tool of readers are both critical and discriminating.

Another view is from R. Mecullough strang (1975) in his book the improvement of reading says :

Reading proficiency is the royal read to knowledge ; it is essential to the success in all academic subjects. In modern life learning depends largely upon one's ability to interpret the page accurately an fully.

The definition of reading of reading in this chapter includes the definition of reading in general, both in the native and foreign language.

THE PROCESS OF READING

Before getting deeper into reading, the teacher must know the concept of reading because the teacher's overall concept of reading influences his methods of teaching reading, the techniques suitable for the

students and teacher's problems in teaching reading.

Reading is a very complex process. It requires concentration. Reading is visual thing. The printed words must produce meaningful thought units, not only must the readers see and identify the symbols in front of him, but he must also interpret what he is reading in the light of his own background, associates it with past experience, and projects beyond this terms of ideas, a judgements, application and conclusion. According to R. Mecullough Strang (1975) in his book the improvement of reading says:

Reading is more than pronouncing printed words, and recognizing the meaning of isolated words, it requires some thinking, feeling and imagination.

THE NATURE OF READING

Psychologists and reading experts have been conducting extensive researches in the nature of reading and the sequential development of language skill. Their findings have altered some older ideas about what reading is and how people learn reading. The most important discoveries of the research in reading, as stated by Lewis dan Sisk (1963) in their book teaching English, Teaching reading an overview are :

1. Reading is not a single skill but an interrelated process of many skills.
2. Reading is a developmental process. In other words, reading skill develops sequentially as students nature.
3. There are general developmental patterns from grade to grade and

from year to year, but variation in reading abilities exist students in any age grade.

4. There are no basic reading skills which can be taught, learned once and for all ; there are merely simpler or more difficult levels of reading proficiencies, which can be taught to the students who are ready to learn them.

READING SKILL

The native reading skill that the students already have would make reading in English a simple task. Unfortunately, it does not work that way. As Wilge Revers (1973) points out in his book Teaching Foreign Language skills, almost all students can transfer their skill in reading netive language to foreign language.

A. Word recognition skill

According to strang (see above) "word recognition skill is the ability to pronounce and recognize the meaning of unfamiliar words". Word recognition skill is very important in comprehension; is helps the reader recognize unfamiliar words. The larger the numbers of vocabulary a person has the more rapidly and fluently he reads.

Word recognition can achieved by applying: 1) context clauess, 2) phonics, 3) structure analysis and the use of a dictionary.

B. Comprehension skill

The objectives of reading is comprehension of the material that is read. Comprehension embraces the total reading process.

There are a lot of definitions of comprehension given by experts. Mecullough and Tinker M.A (1975) in their book teaching Elementary reading say:

Comprehension depends on grasping word meaning, grouping words into unitary thought complexes, that is grasping the relation between words in the sentence, between sentences in the paragraph in a large whole.

Bourmuth (1969) in his book teaching reading states that:

Comprehension is thought to be a set generalized knowledge acquisition skill which permit people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a consequence of reading the printed page.

Bourmuth looks at comprehension from general points of view. He does not go deep into details.

In order to be able to comprehend better, the reader must know the basic comprehension units in reading. They are words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and whole selection.

1. Words

Edward R. Sipay and Albert J. Harris (1980) in their book techniques of Teaching Reading say:

The first and the most important in comprehension is the difficulty in vocabulary.

Words are very crucial for reading comprehension. Since reading is getting the meaning, lack of vocabulary will lead to great difficulty understanding the content of the reading material.

2. Phrases

To understand a sentence, someone needs more than just knowing the meaning of words. Understanding phrases will be a great help. According to R. Mecullough Strang (1975) in his book the improvement of reading that to know phrases is ability to read them as meaningful or thought units.

3. Sentences

In addition to knowing the meaning of words, the reader must know other skills in order to understand sentences perfectly. Roe Burn (1980) in their book better ways to Teach reading state that sentence includes phrases, punctuation and the structure of the sentence itself.

4. Paragraph

Comprehension of paragraphs is essential in all reading as stated by R. Mecullough Strang (1975) (see above) below :

It consists of identification of the topic sentence, the sentence that

contains key ideas, and the interpretation of its details.

5. Whole Selections

Roe and Burn (1980) in their book *better ways to Teach reading state*

Understanding whole selections can not be achieved easily without understanding the prerequisite.

The understanding of whole selections depends on the understanding of the smaller unit word, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

Longmen (1975) in his book *reading skill* says :

Skill of comprehension describes into four :

1. literal reading.
2. interpretive reading.
3. critical reading.
4. creative reading.

C. Rate of Comprehension

Marison Jen Kinson (1973) in his book *teaching of reading* says:

The rate of comprehension is perhaps more accurate than the one who has received the greatest usage rate of reading. There is a little value in skimming quickly word and pages.

TECHNIQUES OF PRESENTING READING

The teaching of reading comprehension usually consists of the following aspects: vocabulary, reading text and comprehension questions.

As mentioned above, most of the materials for reading comprehension have same patterns, that is reading text, vocab, and comprehension questions. These materials are set up for the following teacher-student interaction:

- The teacher assigns a reading passage, either to be done in class or at home.
- The students read the selection the teacher has chosen.
- The students answer the comprehension questions.
- Constructed by the author of the reading selection.
- The teacher then tells the students whether they have answered the question correctly. After that the teacher gives exercises on vocabulary, etc.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING READING

Principle 1: Reading is not passive skill

Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, see the pictures the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if we agree with them. If we do not do these things-and if students do not do these things-then we only just scratch the surface of the text and quickly forget it.

Principle 2: Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged

with the reading text-not actively interested in what they doing-are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them.

Principle 3: Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of reading text, not just to the language.

Of course, it is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the number of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the texts, is just as important and we must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way. It is especially important that they should be allowed to express their feelings about the topic - thus provoking personal engagement with it and the language.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor in reading

When we read in our own language, we frequently have a good idea of the content before we actually read. Book covers give us a hint of what's in the book, photographs and headlines hint at what articles are about and reports look like reports before we read a single word.

The moment we get this hint-the book cover, the headline, the word processed page -our brain starts predicting what we are going to read. Expectations are set up and the active

process of reading is ready to begin. Teachers should give student 'hints' so that they can predict what's coming too. It will make them better and engaged readers.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic

We could give students hamlet's famous soliloquy 'To be not to be' and ask them to say how many times the infinitive is used. We could give them a restaurant menu and ask them to list the ingredients alphabetically. There might be reasons for both tasks, but on the face of it, they look a bit silly. We will probably be more interested what Hamlet means and what the menu food actually are.

Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read, we need to choose good reading tasks-the right kind of questions, engaging and useful puzzle etc. The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate question; the most commonplace passage can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks.

Principle 6: Good teachers exploit reading text to the full

Any reading text is full of sentences, word, ideas, descriptions etc. it doesn't make sense just to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks,

using the language for *Study* and later *Activation*

THE ROLES THE TEACHER IN TEACHING READING (Hafilia, 2003 : 3)

1. Readers are made by readers which means that as a reading teacher :

- Show you are a readers by carrying books around
- Refer to books as you teach, reading out brief passage that may interest your students, talking about what you are reading at the moment and handling books as if you loved them.

Being a reader means reading !

You are a model interpreter and model thiker !

2. The teacher is the most important element in a reading class, for her attitude influences students and their performance. A reading skills teacher should praside her student :

- An anxiety free atmosphere so they will feel free to experiment with a new reading style
- Practice so they will master the skills (reading strategies)
- Pressure in the froms of persuasion and timing.

CONCLUSION

The writer would like to know more about the techniques and the materials used in teaching reading to their students. The writer hopes that it will be use for English teachers in their attempt to improve the quality of

teaching English, especially, reading comprehension, by using suitable techniques and materials.

In teaching reading comprehension, the English teacher uses the techniques presented in the teacher's manual and the materials based on the curriculum.

We have also talked the reason for using reading text in class, for language acquisition as opportunities for language study and of course, for practice in the skill of reading. And also about definition reading, the process reading and the nature reading. We have come up with six prinsiples of teaching reading, four techniques of presenting reading and two the roles of teacher in teaching reading.

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