

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILL FOR ASIAN COUNTRIES STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study focuses on how senior high school students in Asian countries learning English as a second language, explore their comprehension in reading skill. There are some factors mentioned about how the application in reading comprehension skill have a main important role in studying and learning English as a second language and learning other subjects. The skills in reading comprehension; knowing and understanding the vocabularies, skill coding, the preparation contextual materials or modules must be appropriate and suitable with the situation and background of the country which is learning English as a second language taking place. How the learning strategies influence English learning especially in reading skill by focussing on the learning strategies of female and male and how this skill in learning English influence the students' performance science in their school. With all these reasons it will be summarized with Langan's numeration about how to have a good reading comprehension in eight skills mentioned and there are some skills related to these journals taking from five Asian countries will be analysed.

Keywords – Reading Comprehension Skill, High School Students, Asian Countries

INTRODUCTION

Reading Comprehension in learning a language is very important, in knowing and understanding the language as a means of communication, and comprehension is the reason for reading. If students can decode words accurately but do not understand what

they are reading, they are not really reading. Good readers are purposeful and active. To make sense of what they are reading, good readers engage in a complicated process. They use their vocabulary, background knowledge, and prior experience as readers and listener to make sense of a text. Reading research has shown that comprehension instruction can help students do a better job of understanding and remembering what they read. One misleading idea that some students have about reading is that comprehension should happen all at once. They believe that a single reading of a textbook selection should result in a satisfactory understanding of that selection. But such students do not realize that good comprehension is usually a process. Very often comprehension is achieved gradually, as you move from a general feeling about what something means to a deeper level of understanding (Langan, 2002). In reading and writing, we can begin to see how the brain process; all of the eight bits of intelligences have the important part to play (Amstrong, 2003). So it is very important for ones to learn and know something. We can understand another science by reading, we can explore around the world by reading, even we can learn about something we do not know also by reading. Research questions; how the high school students of Asian countries experiencing comprehend the reading text according to their learning in their school? There will be the exploring of high school students of five Asian countries in experiencing how they learn English as a second language especially in reading comprehension skill.

Vocabulary and Skill Decoding

In reading comprehension, the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge has been well recognised in the first language (L1) situation and this has been appeared to be true of second language (L2) setting as well (Zhang& Annual,2008). However in relation to a social-cultural context such as Singapore, where English is designated as an L1 in the school curriculum but the majority of students still learn it as an L2 (Chen, 2004; Gopinathan; 2004, Pakir; 2004), little is known about how vocabulary knowledge could affect reading comprehension. With thirty-seven students from a neighbourhood secondary school. Using the data collection; vocabulary Level Test Version2 (Schmitt, and Clapham 2001). It was observed that an ability to recognize words in the text and the presence of high density of unknown words in a text may impair comprehension (Chall; 1987; Curtis 1987; Nation 2001). There are more complex as knowing a word involves more than mapping concept to its referent, or form to meaning. (Rechard,1976) made several assumptions on world knowledge, which included knowledge of word meaning /semantic, usage, constraints, its morphology, associations, and contextual meaning, even in many

respects it is still not comprehensive enough. Laufer and Sim, (1985: 409) report that for success in academic reading, L2 readers' most urgent need is vocabulary, be it 'conceptual' or 'semantic'.

Vocabulary is a strong and stable predictor of reading comprehension. Another significant finding (Anderson and Freebody, 1983:249) as the effect of vocabulary difficulty on comprehension is concerned, was that when difficult words were placed in unimportant preposition students' summaries were better than when difficult words were placed in key preposition. With the research questions it comes to the point of summarizing that the role of the vocabulary in reading comprehension is complex. After having the result the students have to extend adequate mastery of the high frequency words, and it does not enable them to cope sufficiently with an expository text that contains low frequency words. The present study lends support to (Qian, 1999, 2002) claim that depth of vocabulary knowledge is important in reading comprehension. The students need to explore and know and understand more vocabulary. At last, the result is the suggestion for the teacher, is to make available words at the 5,000 level to students so that students can be exposed to these words in their daily reading or entertainment literacy encounters.

Teachers' selection readings from newspaper or magazines that are useful but of low frequency will be equally beneficial to students' development of sensitivity to new words and to various ways of inferring new word meaning based on contextual or co-textual clues (Zhang, 2002b). Through teacher scaffolding, students may learn how to infer meaning of low-frequency but useful words and this is particularly helpful, as research has shown the importance of the connection between word recognition and reading as well as the significance of learning strategies in language learning. (Adam 2004; Zhang 2002, 2003, Zhang, Gu and Hu 2007 in press). Consistently systematic pedagogical practice of this kind will help to improve students reading comprehension in long run (Zhang 2008). Teacher should also encourage students to engage in extracurricular extensive reading activities (Zhang 2001b, 2003).

Related to the reading comprehension skill, in Korea, the researchers saw it differently by focussing more on skill decoding and reading fluency. By taking the participants from two hundred twenty two Korean EFL learners in their second year of high school. (Huh, Moon, Park, 2014) have the conclusion that both decoding skills and reading fluency were strongly correlated to the reading comprehension. Moreover, between the two fundamental reading sub-skills, decoding skill outperformed reading fluency in explaining reading comprehension, making a unique contribution beyond the effects of reading fluency. Decoding skill is the ability to transform printed words into phonetic

codes and to read them accurately (Perfetti,1985; Stanovich,1986). The researchers stated that the decoding ability is significant predictor of reading comprehension for those in lower grade levels, whose language and literacy abilities have supposedly developed relatively less than those in upper grades (Gough et al.1996), even there is also opinion agreement about it. Besides skill decoding, there is also reading fluency influence one's reading comprehension. As (Kang 2011) argues that reading fluency is more than reading with speed and accuracy, as it also includes the "comprehension" component at the word and sentence level, albeit not at the discourse level (p.88).

The expanded definition of reading fluency including reading accuracy, speed, and comprehension are adopted in this study. It is distinct and in depended from decoding skills. There are so many researchers argued that the two skills, skill coding and reading fluency are influenced one's reading comprehension, but the skill coding is affected so much in reading comprehension. By using reading fluency test of the standardized of Woodcock-Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery (WJIII, Woodcock, Mather, and Schrank, 2004). Asking them to read, given sentences quickly and accurately and to verify the veracity of the sentence by circling 'yes' or 'no.' ex; "A mouse can fly". Decoding test also is using to, by matching the correct word according to the picture, reading comprehension test, PKSAT (Preliminary Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test) as a control variable in this study in controlling for their generalreading proficiency, and oral comprehension test. The findings from this study indicated that decoding skills are reading fluency both significantly correlated with the students' performance on reading comprehension. Decoding skill was identified as having more significant predictive power than reading fluency in explaining their reading comprehension outcomes. With this solution (Dai and Liu, 2012; Fukkink, HUlstjn & Simis, 2005), the finding of the present study also suggests the need of extensive training on the decoding skills for better reading instruction even within secondary EFL curricula in Korea, in order to develop students reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension and Students Performance in Science

The strategies in developing reading comprehension by seeing to the skill in reading comprehension from the Singaporeans and Koreans students performed that vocabulary and skill decoding are the most skills which are taking so much influence in reading comprehension itself. In other parts of the influencing of reading skill and strategies, reading comprehension is also having so much influence for students to performance themselves in science level. How (Imam, Mastura, Jamil, Izmail, 2014)

describe their research about it. In the context of six elements of reading comprehension skill; understanding vocabulary, identifying main idea, noting details, making inference, predicting outcomes, and drawing conclusion. Most of those skills positively correlated with science performance of students 666 first year students responded from 18 identified public and private high school in the division of Cotabato city, Central Mindanao, Philippines, although the strength of relationship was considered weak. Prior research has shown the importance of domain knowledge (Dochy, Segers, Buehl, 1999), reading skill (Voss & Silfies, 1996), and reading strategy knowledge (O'Reilly & McNamara, 2002) for science comprehension. Regarding to the six elements in reading comprehension were considered as significance skills in science. The ability to read the text is one of the key aspects of teaching and learning science which involves and in depth interaction with the text (Norris & Phillips, 2003). Students may have the ability to read and know the words, identify and locate information, and recall content but may be unable to analyse, summarise, or critique the text when asked to do so. This is experience from elementary level until the middle high school, which produces negative impact on science learning (Carnie & Carnine, 2004).

By using the reading comprehension skills as the independent variable and science performance as dependent variable, the performance level of first year high school students in reading comprehension and their science achievement test was described. The main research tool used in the study was a test questionnaire (competency-based test instrument). According to the researchers after the validation test, the instruments were pilot tested for their reliability testing were a total of 30 students (15 from public school and another 15 from private school) participated in and were then excluded in the final administration of test. The test instruments were administered twice to the same students with one month interval using the test-retest method. Scores of students in the first and second test were correlated using Pearson Product Moment coefficient of correlation to test consistency of scores. The results showed that the scores were significantly correlated: Reading Comprehension Test ($r=670^{**}$, $p<.05$) and Science Test ($r=682^{**}$, $p<.05$). Referring to this result there are suggestions for the government and other concern agencies which can initiate some bold steps towards improving both reading and science achievements of students by considering the following initiatives: For the DepEd should continuously examine and apply a dynamic and relevant curriculum to address the pressing needs and problems of high schools regarding science education. As much as possible, all elements all elements of reading skills should be developed well in the first year high school. Develop more pedagogy in reading instructions and science content. English and science

teachers are working together in delivering of instruction and conduct the remedial teaching. And the participants of the school, teachers and parents are very important in supporting these programs.

Learning Strategy Influence Reading Comprehension

With the seventy eight senior high school students' learning English as foreign language in Malaysia. (Lu Fang Lin, 2010) made a research that learning strategies taking so much role in learning English, and it influenced so much in the process of learning and most especially in the skill of reading comprehension. To make this research more significant to the readers she made a comparison in her research to the male and female students. By giving them *test*, and *post reading questionnaires*; each participant filled up a questionnaire which contain the same questions and had the same format. The questionnaire consisted of three strategies questions about four strategies they used among three strategies such as the word meaning (WM)strategy, the sentence structure (SS) strategy, and the world knowledge (WK) strategy. In using this test and these strategies WM strategy was employed the most frequently, WK strategy, WM and SS the least. Both genders mainly relied on local linguistic level of strategy. They tended to figure out the word meaning. Moreover there was a significant difference in WM strategy use between male and female strategy use; that is, females applied WM strategy significantly more frequently than males. This attributes to females' high interest and motivation in reading and they would like to read the story in detail. Female participants learn how to flexibly use strategies which employ their word, sentence, and word knowledge and consequently perform reading efficacy. The aforementioned result indicated that the more difficult the text is, the more strategies female find out and the better comprehension they perform.

The story discussion displayed females interest in reading in this further supported(Elley,1994) and (Longan and Johnston, 2009) opinion that girls' interest and positive attitude to reading, resulted in their high score in reading comprehension. For the mail they have low achievement because they are not patience enough in learning especially when they found difficult words they try to use in Chinese language, try to connect each word together. Without Chinese meaning, he could not continue to read the story any more so hestopped, and looking a way by asking his friend. So as a result the Chinese definition is an essential element to these participants' understanding of English test. These research found out in the conclusion that eventually students are trained to have an understanding Chinese definitions-English words correspondence, the instructor should teach the students a concept of using strategies flexibly in extensive reading instead of

using only one strategy focussing on analysing linguistic information in the text. For the students, how to help them to find the right time in using the proper strategies according to their needs. The world knowledge that they know will help them to foster their graded readers.

Module for Reading Comprehension

In reading comprehension, there are so many factors influence the person to achieve it which are coming from a person or from outside. In this case, (Mohamad, Eng, Mohamed, 2015) research in the teaching and learning process, focussing on the reading comprehension how the module influence the learners in grasping the reading that they are reading. Reading Comprehension Modules (RCMs) for Malaysian ESL teacher to facilitate different reading abilities of ESL students effectively. It is very important to diverse texts of varying length were adopted from various authentic sources, for ESL students in having different reading abilities. Reading comprehension is an interactive process between the reader and the text. During reading process, the reading extracts meaning from the text by utilizing his/her previous knowledge through employing effective reading comprehension strategies (Orasanu & Penny, 1986). As regard the statue of the English language in Malaysia, it is taught as second language in all Malaysia schools in line with the Malaysian Education Act (1966). As regards the teaching of the English language, reading is the most important skill among others (Gu, 2003). A lot of efforts were done by the teachers to find a good ways for the goal. (Hassan and Selamat, 2002) identified that, in Malaysia, the ESL teachers have to sort out material from other sources such as internet and newspapers because the textbooks are either too difficult or too easy and do not match to the abilities of different students. The teachers try to find out the material readings according to the needs of the students, but they are facing the one challenging issues that are they are facing the lack of standardized RCMS and appropriate guidelines for teaching reading comprehension (Ortega, 2009).

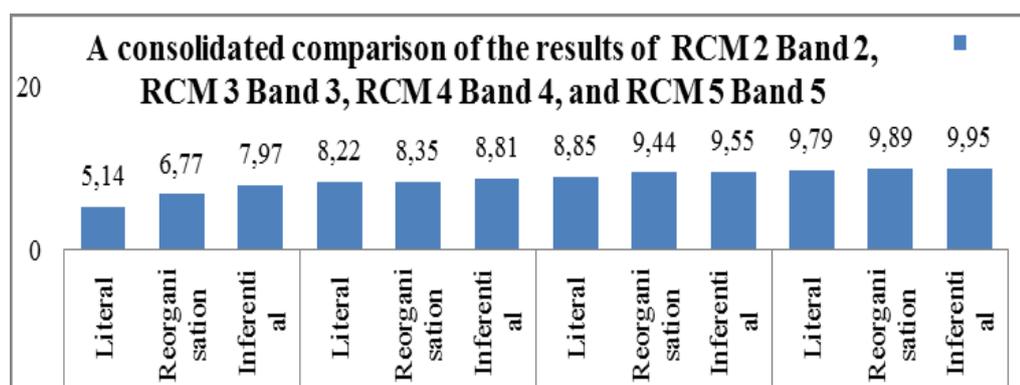
By using Pebble in the Pond Model (Meril, 2002), consist of different phases namely; problem, progression, analysis, strategy, design, and production, It was used to develop the RCMs since it is remarkable and significant model in the field of designing materials. After developing the prototype RCMs, there is testing of the validity and reliability of it. After that, it was examined by the experts, TESOL university teachers. By having the feedback from the examiners, experts suggested to replace some of the text that were not familiar to the Malaysian students' cultural and contexts, regarding the level of difficulty and length of the text. Some of the questions were not constructed appropriately

in line with the selected skill categories. Correcting the spelling and grammatical error in the textual materials. The consistency and uniformity between sentence and paragraph. After checking the content validity, the reliability of the prototype RCMs was determined. As regards the matter of determining the reliability, RCM 2 band 2, RCM 3 band 3, RCM 4 band 4, and RCM 5 band 5 were used in order to conduct a pilot study. Eighty ESL students of Form Four were selected through purposive sampling from a selected secondary school in Penang Malaysia.

Before applying the prototype RCMs, the reading comprehension test developed by Abdul Rashid et al. (2010) was used in order to determine the students' reading ability. The scores/bands based on the pilot study are presented in Table below:

Bands	Raw scores for each Band	Number of Students for Each Band (N= 80)
1	00-06	00
2	07-18	18
3	19-29	26
4	30-41	19
5	42-53	17
6	54-60	00

In the first process, the ESL students' scores represent that they fall only in band 2, band 3, band 4, and band 5. Contrarily, none of the ESL students got band 1 or band 6. Therefore, RCMs 2 to RCM 5 were employed to conduct the pilot study to the students who attained band 2 to band 5 respectively. The pilot study of the prototype RCMs was conducted through different stages during twenty-four working days. Text 1 of each Part of each RCM was taught by using reading strategies proposed in the RCMs and text 2 and text 3 of each part of each RCM were given to the participants as tests to test their level of comprehension. After teaching the selected texts, KR-20 was used to determine the reliability of each skill category of the prototype RCMs. The calculated reliability values are stated in Table below.



The implication of this research, the purpose is for the Malaysian secondary school teachers to teach students how to answer literal, reorganisation, and inferential comprehension questions according to the students' reading ability.

DISCUSSION

According to (Langan, 2002) numerates some points of explanations and activities for the students in order to have a good comprehension in reading. There are already explained and mentioned by researchers from the journal of Asian countries, about how the students and the teachers playing role in order to achieve the skill of reading comprehension. Starting from the influence of the vocabularies, skill coding, the capacity of reading comprehension affected the students' performance in science. Continue with the how the students achieve reading comprehension by having a good learning strategy, and it was found out that female is incline to have a good achievement in reading than male because they always find ways and strategies everytime they face difficulties in reading. (Elley,1994; Langan and Johnston,2009) opinion that girls' interest and positive attitudes to reading resulted in their high score in reading comprehension score. In order to have a good comprehension in reading the content of the reading that will be provided for the students must be appropriate with the situations, needs of the students, that is way preparation for good material textual is also very important for the skill of reading comprehension.

The eight skills were numerated by (Langan, 2002); are not separated from the researcher' findings in reading comprehension of senior high school students in Asian countries. In his *first point* is recognizing definitions and example. The finding of (Zhang & Annual, 2008), is the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension. Definitions are often among the most important ideas in a selection. They are particularly significant in introductory courses, where much of your time is spent mastering the specialized vocabulary of the subject. You are, in a sense, learning the "language" of sociology or biology or whatever the subject might be. Most definitions are abstract, and so they are usually followed by one or more example that help clarify their meaning. Always select and mark off at least one example that helps make an abstract definition clear for you. (Langan,2002). Referring to that statement, it refers to the advance readers or learners who are using English language as their first language. For the most of Asian countries, English language is the second language, even in the school they are using English as a formal language, but beside English language, the nation is using their own language, For example,

Malaysia is using Malay, Philippine is using Tagalog, and other countries too. In Langan's statement, he still mention vocabulary, it means before advance in reading knowing and understanding vocabulary is the key to the giving of definitions of the sentences in reading, students or learners must first know the constructions of the sentences by knowing the vocabulary.

As Asian country, we still consider ourselves as learners in learning English, as a second language. *Second point* is recognizing enumerations, it is more or less related to the research of (Kang, Huh, Moon, Park, 2014). It is all about the role of decoding skill. How the students find out the main point of the reading and try to find out the meaning in a sentence and the meaning as a whole sentence and the paragraph. In the recognising the numeration is the action of the advance learner in decoding the word in a sentence and sentences in the paragraph. Langan published this book to let the readers, teachers, students, to have an idea how to have a skill in learning and reading English. So the preparation of a good material is very important for the learners to have a good purpose, to have a good achievement. With the researcher of (Javed, Eng, Mohamed, 2015). In Malaysia the high school students of secondary school Penang, they are using Reading Comprehension Materials(RCMs) which are examined by the experts were TESOL university teachers, to have a credible materials for reading text to achieve the goal of having a good comprehension in reading (Ling, 2010).

In her research emphasise the learning strategies of the students influence the students reading comprehension. By comparing the performance of the male and female, the research found out that learning strategies taking role in reading, by the high score result of the female compared to male. The reason why because the female is more interesting in finding the ways and strategies if they find difficulties in learning compare with the mail who easily give up. The constructions and the examples of reading materials numerated by Langan, actually a step of learning strategies for the students and learners to comprehend more reading in reading a text.

In the Philippine, (Imam, Mastura, Jamil, Ismail, 2014) found out the reading comprehension of students affect their performance in science. As the materials of learning is explained in English, so it is very important for the teachers in English and science to coordinate and elaborate to each other to build a good coordination in having a good materials and teaching and learning strategies so it will be a good result for the purpose of achieving a good aim in science and also in reading. (Langan, 2002) stated that his book might make the learners as an independent learner- a person able to take on and master almost any learning challenge. However, the book cannot help you at all unless you

have a personal determination to learn the skill. The more reading and study skills you master, the more likely you are not only to survive but also to do well in your course.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Reading as one of the English learning skills, taking a main role on the learning itself. In reaching to the process of learning especially in having a good comprehension in reading there are so many elements and factors contribute on that skill, even the most important thing is the learner and reader itself. By having this study researcher would like to see it from the perspective of Asian countries which are using English language as a second language. Applying of more or less five journals it was already seeing the many different elements in comprehend the reading, the influence of reading skill, the factors which support the reading skill itself. In this analysis, the researcher aims to share the importance of reading skill and at the same time to see the effort of teachers and English learning students in the struggles and joys of learning and teaching English as a second language. May this writing will share a little inspiration for the teachers and learners to have more enthusiasm in sharing the knowledge with the learners and, the learners will be more motivated to learn more especially English as a second language.

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