TESL TRAINEES FOCUS IN TYPES OF QUESTIONS USED FOR TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION DURING THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

TESL TRAINEES FOCUS IN TYPES OF QUESTIONS USED FOR
TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION DURING THEIR TEACHING
PRACTICE

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This study was conducted to investigate the TESL trainees focus in types of questions used for teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice. It was aim to find out the question type used by the trainees, frequency of each question type be used and the amount for each type of question used by trainees for teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice. The sample participants for this study consisted of 22 trainees which each of them given one lesson plan specifically on teaching reading comprehension. Data for this study was based on the lesson plans analysis. The findings showed that the main comprehension question that used by TESL trainees in teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice was literal comprehension. TESL trainees frequently used this question type as most comprehension tests focus on literal comprehension and required students to recall only fact from the text because it is the easiest to test students' understanding on the text that they read.

ABSTRAK

TUMPUAN PELATIH TESL TERHADAP JENIS-JENIS SOALAN PEMAHAMAN
YANG DIGUNAKAN UNTUK MENGAJAR PEMBACAAN PEMAHAMAN
SEMASA LATIHAN MENGAJAR

Siti Noor Suzanni Ab.Rahman

Kajian ini dijalankan bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti tumpuan pelatih TESL terhadap jenis-jenis soalan yang digunakan untuk mengajar pembacaan pemahaman semasa latihan mengajar mereka. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti jenis-jenis soalan yang digunakan oleh para pelatih, kekerapan setiap jenis soalan yang mereka gunakan dan bilangan setiap jenis soalan digunakan oleh setiap pelatih dalam pengajaran mereka semasa latihan mengajar. Sample untuk kajian ini terdiri daripada 22 orang pelatih di mana setiap orang pelatih akan memberikan satu rancangan khusus berkenaan pembacaan pemahaman. Data untuk kajian ini adalah berdasarkan analisa yang dibuat ke atas rancangan mengajar berkenaan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa soalan pemahaman yang paling utama di gunakan oleh pelatih untuk mengajar pembacaan pemahaman adalah soalan fakta. Pelatih TESL kerap menggunakan jenis soalan ini adalah kerana kebanyakan ujian pemahaman tertumpu pada soalan fakta dan memerlukan pelajar untuk mengingat fakta dari teks yang mereka baca.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0   Chapter Overview

The first chapter for this study is an introduction to the study in terms of background of the study and the statement of the problem. This is followed by the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, conceptual and operational definition of terms used in this study and the scope of the study. Finally, the summary of this chapter is also included.

1.1   Background of the study

Most people think that reading comprehension as a simple, passive process that only involves reading words in a linear fashion and internalizing their meaning one at a time. However, reading is actually a very complex process that requires a great deal of active participation on the part of the reader.

"Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, of course, is vital in reading, just as the ability to anticipate what has not yet been heard is vital in listening."

Kenneth Goodman, 1967 (as cited in Chen, 2005)

"Reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read or the process of constructing meaning from a text. Comprehension is a construction process because it involves all of the elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind.

Partnership for Reading, 2005 (as cited in wikEd, 2008)

"Although comprehension cannot be observed directly, numerous research studies, theories, and models provide probable explanations to its components and development. Most of the explanations view reading comprehension as a number of skills and abilities that are interdependent"

Heilman, Blair & Rupley (1990)

From the definitions given above, it clearly shows that reading comprehension is not as simple as people thought. Reading actually requires much effort from the readers to comprehend what they are reading and make sense of it in their mind. Furthermore, reading is a guessing game as readers need to deduce on the meaning of the text and relate it to their background knowledge. Readers need to give more effort in comprehending the text that they read and they also are required to connect the idea from the text to their own background knowledge in order to get the whole understanding of what they read.

Reading research has demonstrated that readers do not simply perceive the meaning that is in a text. In fact, expert readers co-construct meaning with a text (Wilhelm, 2008). This is the reason why in the last several decades, theories and models of reading have changed immensely, from seeing reading as primarily receptive processes from text to reader to interactive processes between the reader and the text (Adams, 1990; Eskey and Grabe, 1988; Perfetti, 1985; Samuels, 1994; Stanovich, 1992; and Swaffar, 1988) as cited in Yolande M. Benito, Christy L. Foley, Craig D. Lewis and Perry Prescott (1993). The research base shows that reading is a transaction in which the reader brings purposes and life experiences to bear to converse with the text. This meeting of the reader and the text results in the meaning which is comprehension. Comprehension always attends to what is coded or written in the text, and in addition it also depends upon the reader's background experiences, purposes, feelings, and needs of the moment. Therefore, reading is not a simple process but a complex process that required students' effort to comprehend the text and as well as teacher to guide them in order to do so.

Hence, teaching reading comprehension not a simple process too. In reading comprehension lessons, teacher wants students derive messages from the texts that they have read. But the question now is how can the teacher engage the students with the text and how can teacher assess students' understanding on the text that they have read?

> *"Reading is asking questions of printed text. In addition, reading with comprehension becomes a matter of getting your questions answered."*
>
> Frank Smith, 1997 (as cited in Chen, 2005)

"Approaches to the teaching of foreign language reading have attempted to reflect this development through interactive exercises and tasks"

Day & Park (2005)

The excerpt from scholars above shows that one of the strategies to teach and assess students' comprehension on reading is by using questioning. They focus on what and how students learn is particularly problematic in the case of comprehension, given the invisibility of the comprehension process (Nuttall, 1996). Therefore, getting students to answer questions is one way for the teacher to get some access to what is going on in their minds. By using the right question in order to teach reading comprehension, students not only get the answer that they need but they also can comprehend the text better. Therefore, the use of questions is an integral aspect of such activities and well-designed comprehension question does actually help students interact with the text to create or construct meaning. Furthermore, by using questioning teacher also can assess students' understanding on the text that they have read.

However, what are types of questions that teacher should used in order to teach reading comprehension? How frequent is it used in a lesson and what is the number of questions that the teacher usually used to teach reading comprehension? For this reason, this study was carried out to seek the types, frequency of questions used and number of questions used by TESL trainees for teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study focused on the types, frequency and number of questions used by TESL trainees to teach reading comprehension during their teaching practice. Questioning is one of the way for the teacher to get some access to what is going on in students' minds. Generally, enabling students to interact with and construct meaning for the text is the main goal of reading comprehension. The concept of reading comprehension has been expanded to include prior knowledge, text structure, flexible use of knowledge, readers' habits, fluency, automatic word recognition, automatic word knowledge and the orchestration of skills that support each other in varying ways (Heilmen, Blair & Rupley, 1990). Therefore, the purpose of teacher used questioning is not only to make students aware of the way language is used to convey meaning and of the strategies they can used to interpret texts but also integrated with other aspects as mentioned by Heilmein, Blair & Rupley (1990) above.

Thus, the types of questions that used to teach reading comprehension was very important. This is because from the questions used, then teacher can evaluate the students' performance in comprehending the text during the reading lessons be held. For example, some simple questions may result in scanning or skimming activities. Others may direct readers' attention to diagrams or other non-linear features that will help them to interpret the text. Some questions may promote the use of word attack skills. But, the focused of most questions was the text attack skills which lead to the ultimate goal, understanding the text as a whole.

Looking back at the history, early comprehension taxonomies such as Pearson and Johnson's taxonomy (1978) and Barrett's taxonomy (1984), first classified questions by types. Pearson and Johnson (1978), labels questions based upon the demands they make on reader. In the other

words, the Pearson and Johnson taxonomy categorizes questions according to the relationship between the question and the answer generated from the questions. The Pearson-Johnson comprehension taxonomy recognizes three categories of questions which are textually explicit, textually implicit and scriptally implicit. On the other hand, Barrett's taxonomy (1984) of cognitive and affective dimensions of reading comprehension, categorizes comprehension questions under five categories. According to Barrett's taxonomy, the five categories are literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential question, evaluation, and appreciation.

However, the new taxonomy of reading comprehension from Day & Park (2005) came out with six categories of comprehension questions. Their taxonomy has been influenced in particular by the work of Pearson and Johnson (1972) and Nuttall (1996). The new taxonomy of reading comprehension by Day & Park (2005) more or less same with the Barrett's taxonomy but slightly differs with addition in categories of questions types. The six categories of comprehension questions in Day & Park's taxonomy are; literal questions, reorganization, inference, prediction, evaluation and personal responses. Day & Park (2005) added one more type of question which is personal response in their taxonomy as reading is an interactive process which is not only rely on the text itself but more than that and required students combined the information in the text and their own knowledge. Therefore, the question based on the personal response also important to be asked to the students for teaching reading comprehension.

Thus, this study is carried out to reveal about the types of questions that teacher used in actual reading comprehension based on the Day & Park's taxonomy of reading comprehension (2005). This study is based on analyzing lesson plans used by TESL trainees for teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to look into the real teaching reading comprehension which is focus on the types of questions used by TESL trainees for teaching reading comprehension during teaching practice. For the purpose of this study, the data gathered through the lesson plans analysis. The objectives of this study were;

i) to identify the types of questions and frequency each question type used by TESL trainees in teaching reading comprehension.

ii) to find out the number of questions for each question type used by TESL trainees in teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice.

1.4 Research questions

There were several questions that constructed by researcher in order to guide this study and to get the intended data. The research questions for this study were;

i) What are the types of questions used by TESL trainees in teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practices?

ii) What types of questions that are frequently used by TESL trainees in teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice?

iii) How many questions for each type of comprehension question basically used in teaching reading comprehension?

1.5   Significance of the study

For this study, types of reading comprehension questions used in teaching reading comprehension was the main focus and seen as comprehension processes that enable readers to construct meaning from the printed page most effectively. The use of the right question for teaching reading comprehension is very crucial as the question used can be the point in measure students' understanding on the text that they have read.

Thus, the result from this study is hoped can give benefit to the educators of education program specifically in Unimas in order to ensure that trainees can make use of each type of reading comprehension questions for teaching reading comprehension. Beside, the result from this study is also hope can be used as the device to measure what is lacking for teaching reading comprehension in terms of questions used.

The information in this study also expects to enable educators to spend more time to teach on the types of reading comprehension questions to other trainees in future. This is because trainees should know and make used each level of reading comprehension question for teaching reading comprehension in school during their teaching practice.

Furthermore, it is also hoped that this research can give knowledge and insights to the educators. The result from this study provided the authentic situation on the used of question type for teaching reading comprehension and it will give the educators hint on the lacking in using only several type of questions and not make used all types of questions. It also aims that trainees can make use of the different types of reading comprehension questions in order to promote different aspects and level of comprehension among the other students in future.

1.6 Conceptual and operational definition of terms

1.6.1 Reading

According to Heilman, Blair & Rupley (1990), "reading is a process of constructing meaning from written text in relation to the experiences and knowledge of the reader." Meanwhile, Frank Smith, 1997 (as cited in Chen, 2005), defined "reading is asking questions of printed text. In addition, reading with comprehension becomes a matter of getting your questions answered."

1.6.2 Reading comprehension

As defined by *Partnership for Reading* (2005), reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read, or the process of "constructing meaning" from a text. Comprehension is a "construction process" because it involves all of the elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind. Although comprehension cannot be observed directly, numerous research studies, theories, and models provide probable explanations to its components and development. Most of the explanations view reading comprehension as a number of skills and abilities that are interdependent (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1990)

1.6.3 Teaching practice

A teacher education programme designed to foster teacher efficacy must include training experience enabling pre-service students to develop the human relations skills essential for establishing and maintaining trusting relations with and encouraging autonomy in students (Ashton, 1984)

1.6.4   Types of questions

The types of questions refer to the level of the questions used for teaching reading comprehension in school. Day & Park (2005) categorize questions under 6 types. There are;

i) Literal comprehension - involves understanding and obtaining explicit information presented in the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, and times, questions of literal comprehension can be answered directly and explicitly from the text

e.g: How many type of pollution discussed in the text?

ii) Reorganization - based on literal comprehension; students need to make use of their comprehension from different parts of the text and combine it for additional understanding, questions that address this type of comprehension are important because they teach students to examine the text in its entirety and help them move from sentence-by-sentence consideration of the text to a more global view

e.g: How old was Tunku Abdul Rahman when he died?

iii) Inference - requires students to identify meaning that is in the text but not explicitly stated. This involves combining what is provided with personal experience and intuitions

e.g: Are the author experienced language teachers?

iv)   Prediction - involves being able to determine what might happen next in the flow of the text. To do this, readers are supposed to use both their understanding of the text and their personal background knowledge used during the while-reading and post-reading stage

e.g : Do you think they will stay married? Why or why not?

v) Evaluation - involves being able to make a judgment about the entirety or some aspect of the text

e.g : How will the information in this article be useful to you?

vi) Personal response - necessitates a level of comprehension that enables readers to express a personal opinion about the text and subject the answer are not found in the text, they come strictly from the readers and must relate to the content of the text and reflect a literal understanding of the material

e.g : what do you like or dislike about this article?

1.7 Scope of the study

Due to time constraint, this study only focused on the TESL trainees' focus of teaching reading comprehension skills during their teaching practice. This study focuses on one skill of reading which was reading comprehension. The researcher only analyzed the reading comprehension lesson plans that collected among the TESL trainees in Unimas in order to get the data. Therefore, this study not covers other reading skills in teaching English language at school.

This study only focused on the actual lesson plans that used by TESL trainees for teaching reading comprehension during their teaching practice at secondary schools. Thus, this study not involved other teachers or other trainees such as ESL trainees. The main focus of this study was to find out the types of questions that TESL trainees used in order to teach reading comprehension. Thus, the finding for this study only applicable for TESL trainees and educators that teaches the trainees and cannot be applied for others from the other field.

1.8   Chapter review

The first chapter presented in details the focus in this study through the background of the study, the statement of the problem and the aim and objectives of the study. Then, followed by research questions, significance of the study and the conceptual and operational definitions of terms and scope of the study. The following chapter which was chapter two, dealing with review of literature that is related to this study.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses related literature on the types of questions used for teaching reading comprehension. The literature review be divided into three sub-topics which are; context of the research topic, the importance of teaching reading comprehension and types of questions used to teach reading comprehension. The related taxonomies of reading comprehension also are discussed in this chapter in order to make clear on the types of comprehension question used in teaching reading comprehension. The last part in this chapter is the chapter review.

2.1   Context of the research topic

Most people think that reading is a simple, passive process that involves reading words in a linear fashion and internalizing their meaning one at a time. But reading is actually a very complex process that requires a great deal of active   participation   on   the   part