

THE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING SKILL FOR EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Reading is one of the important skill should be taught by EFL students, because through reading students will get many informations about anything. But, the problem is they complicated to understand the text was given by the teacher. The EFL students getting confuse to comprehend what the information of the reading text that actually wants to be delivered by the writer. It was indicated by the lack of vocabularies, less of background knowledge, and the different of English language structure with their first language or their mother tongue. In this case, the EFL students need an appropriate strategy to solve their problem. The teacher must apply some appropriate strategies to teach reading in order to make the reading activities in classroom become interesting in order to EFL students have the way to comprehend the text easily. Therefore, this article explains some alternative strategies that can be applied by the teachers to improve the students' reading skill.

Key words: Teaching Strategies, Reading Skill

Abstrak

Membaca adalah salah satu keterampilan penting yang harus diajarkan kepada pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, karena melalui membaca pelajar akan memperoleh banyak informasi tentang banyak hal. Tetapi, masalahnya adalah mereka sulit untuk memahamai text yang diberikan oleh guru. Siswa sebagai pelajar bahasa asing mengalami kebingungan untuk memahami informasi yang ingin disampaikan oleh penulis yang sebenarnya, hal ini dikarenakan kurangnya kosakata, kurangnya pengetahuan tentang text yang dibaca, dan struktur dari bahasa Inggris yang berbeda dengan bahasa pertama mereka atau bahasa ibu mereka. Dalam hal ini, pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing membutuhkan sebuah strategi yang tepat untuk memecahkan masalah mereka. Guru harus menerapkan beberapa strategi yang tepat untuk membuat aktivitas belajar membaca didalam kelas menjadi menarik agar pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing mempunyai cara untuk memahami teks secara mudah. Oleh karena itu, di dalam artikel ini memuat beberapa strategi alternatif yang dapat diaplikasikan oleh guru untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: Strategi Pengajaran, Keterampilan Membaca

INTRODUCTION

In English there are four skills that should be taught by the EFL students; they are reading skill, listening skill, writing skill and speaking skill. Reading is one of the important skill should be taught by them, because through reading students will get many informations from the reading text. Reading is include into receptive skill. When we are reading, our mind will record some informations from the text that we have read. There is a term that more reading more knowledge. So, it is mean that the EFL students will be rich in knowledge if they read as many as possible.

According to Nunan (2003: 68) reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from the text and their own background knowledge to build meaning. Reading skill is very important for daily live and gives information for the students to comprehend the text, because the goal of reading is comprehension. By reading, the students can increase their knowledge such as social, culture, politics, and so forth. In addition, it

can also be called as a tool for the students to get a comprehension about what they have already read so far. It does also help the students to refresh their ideas and they can understand many types of words and sentences which can improve their ability in reading.

In addition, Johnson (2008:3) states that reading is the practice of using text to create meaning. The two key words are creating and meaning. If there is no meaning being created, there is no reading taking place. So when the reader read, she or he combines visual and non-visual information to create meaning of the text.

Furthermore, according to Burnes (1985: 45) in Purwanti (2017:82) reading is comprehend written discourse. It is an interactive process in which the readers engage in an exchange idea with the author via a text. In other words, the readers catch the author's idea from the text is kind of exchange idea with the author

From the explanations above, it can be conclude that reading is one of the important skill in English,

beside to get information, EFL students also able to get new vocabularies when they were reading. Reading is a skill that the teacher can not be avoid to teach for their students. In curriculum, in teaching English there three types of text that should be taught in the classroom, there are transactional text, functional text, and monologue text. Among the various of text, the teacher mostly concerned to monologue text. Monologue text belong to narrative, descriptive, recount, descriptive, procedure, exposition, news item text, and report text.

Even though, the students have been taught the various types of texts in reading activities, they still faced some problems to comprehend the text. Westwood (2001: 25) in Maizarah (2018:59) states that reading is a very complex skill and for this reason it is not surprising to find that some children encounter difficulties in learning to read. In this case, the EFL students had difficulties in identifying the generic structure, finding main idea, finding factual information, finding

supporting ideas, finding the meaning of vocabulary, and identifying references. Those difficulties are caused by some of the following problems; lack of vocabularies, do not master the grammatical enough, do not know to back up their background knowledge about the materials. Whereas all of them are very important to understand and comprehend the written text.

Based on the problem faced by the EFL students in reading skill, so it is necessary to inform the reader especially the English teachers about some alternative strategies that can be applied in teaching reading skill in order to help the EFL students improve their reading skill. The teacher should be creative in choosing the appropriate reading strategy. Therefore, by applying the appropriate strategies, it is hoped that the teaching reading can be done effectively.

1. Reading Skill

Reading is a skill that enables readers to acquire knowledge and information from the text that they

have read. Seyler (2004: 185) defines reading as the process of obtaining or constructing meaning from a word or clusters of words. It means that reading is a process of combining words and sentences to make the reader can get meaning from the words. Then, word cluster as a tool for students that make them easier to understand the ideas from the sentences. In the word clusters students can predict the main ideas of the sentences, without reading all of the texts.

Furthermore, Kozak M (2001:7) explains reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected. Moreover, Woolley (2011:15) in Maizarah (2018:8) defines reading comprehension as the process of making meaning from text. The goal, therefore, is to gain an

overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences.

In addition, Bennette (2001:23) defines reading as a visual process - vision is a symbolic process of seeing an item or symbol and translating it into an idea or image. Images are processed into concepts and whole dimensions of thought. The visual process of taking in information visually and translating that into dimensions of thought is very rapid. It moves at the speed of thought.

In conclusion, reading is the process of inteprete the meaning of words and understand the information of the text. Reading is not an easy job, reading is a complex process. In reading process the reader must be able connect their thinking to the writer's idea and they must use their background knowledge in order to help them undertstand and get the information was delivered by the writer.

2. *Teaching Reading in the Classroom*

Reading is an important skill in English as a Second language or Foreign language. EFL students who possess a good reading skill will be able to make a great progress in most academic areas. Therefore, the English teachers must facilitate students to learn the reading skill in order to help the students engaged with the text they read in a meaningful way. Understanding main ideas, predicting outcomes and guessing vocabulary from the context are some of the reading skills that students need to acquire. In order to teach students these skills, teachers need to consider the strategies they can use in helping the students during the teaching and learning reading.

In teaching reading, there are three main exercises that should be considered by the teacher. Exercises aimed to teach receptive skills required for detailed reading comprehension can be divided into several groups depending on the purpose you want to achieve. Kozak

M (2001: 7) argues that the exercise of teaching reading includes:

a. Pre Reading Exercise

While doing pre-reading exercises the students should see all the tasks before reading the text. The following questions may be used.

- 1) Can you guess what the text is about judging by the title?
- 2) What do you think the following names, figures or dates (if there are any) have to do with the story?
- 3) Note: the teacher can arrange what the students say in a column on the blackboard and then give the task to look through the text quickly to prove if their guesses were true or false.
- 4) What do you know or what have you heard about the subject you are going to read about?

b. While Reading Exercise

The next group of exercises aims to teach the students to extract specific information. These are while-reading exercises.

- 1) The students should scan the text to extract the information which the tasks demand. They do not have to pay attention to the parts of the text they do not understand.
- 2) Previewing for the topic. Ask the students to read the first sentence of each paragraph and the last sentence of the passage and guess what the text is about, or what the general idea is.
- 3) The teacher offers some statements and the students are to find out if they are false or true.
- 4) The students may be given some questions to answer.
- 5) Note: the students may be divided into groups, each group given the same number of questions to make the work more competitive.

c. Post Reading Exercise

These exercises are more concerned with summing up the content of the text, investigation into the writer's opinion and may entail some kind of follow-up-task

related to the text. Here you can use the following tasks:

- 1) Find the most important sentence in each paragraph.
- 2) Match each sentence of the jumbled summary with the correct paragraph.
- 3) Use your imagination and write your end of the story.
- 4) Express your attitude to the story, etc.
- 5) What is your attitude to the story? Write a letter to the editor.
- 6) Organize a press conference.

All the exercises described here can be used in whatever combination the teacher chooses but the succession of the types of exercises should be as offered here.

3. Some Alternative Strategies for Teaching Reading

According to Farris, Fuhler & Walther (2004), teachers must know a wide range of instructional strategy and how to apply them depending on the needs of the students. Teachers should have various teaching reading

strategies and apply the strategies in the classroom in order to facilitate students in their learning.

Some strategies can be used by the English teacher in teaching reading as follow:

a. Metacognitive strategy

Zhang (2013:55) defines metacognitive reading strategy is the strategy which is designed to increase readers' knowledge of awareness and control, to improve their reading comprehension, and evaluate whether their attempt at comprehension has been achieved. Thus, metacognitive reading strategy plays an important part in achieving readers' comprehension.

Metacognitive is a key for success in reading. The purpose of metacognitive instruction is to help readers become more aware of their own thinking during the reading process. During instruction, teachers provide explicit instruction on the use of metacognitive reading strategies that students can employ while reading. Explicit teaching of comprehension strategies begins

with a teacher clearly explaining and modeling the strategies, followed by discussion about when and how a reader should apply the strategy while reading, and finally moving to provide scaffolded student practice of the strategies during reading. Modeling strategies often occurs through teacher think-aloud methods. Through this instructional cycle, gradual transfer or release of responsibility from teacher to student is possible. Over time, students gradually become able to independently initiate and utilize that particular strategy. The cycle repeats with another strategy.

Theoretically, the strategies specific to reading can be classified in the following three clusters of metacognition: (1) planning; (2) monitoring; and (3) evaluating strategies (Israel, 2007:436). Planning strategies are used before reading; activating learners' background knowledge to get prepared for reading is an example of planning strategies. Also, previewing a title, picture,

illustration, heading, or subheading can help readers grasp the overview of the text. Readers may also preview the general information in the text and its structure. Learners may check whether their reading material has a certain text structure, such as cause and effect, question and answer, and compare and contrast. Further, setting the purpose for reading can also be categorized as a planning strategy.

In summary, metacognitive reading strategies are classified into three groups of planning (pre-reading), monitoring (during reading), and evaluating (post-reading) strategies, and each group has a variety of strategies that require readers' metacognitive processing.

a) Planning Strategies

Planning strategies are metacognitive strategies that the reader does early on in the reading process (before reading) to increase reading comprehension. The following planning strategies are utilized

by metacognitive readers before reading: (1) activating prior knowledge; (2) overviewing information in the text; (3) relating text to text; and (4) relating text to self.

b) Monitoring Strategies

Monitoring strategies—usually occurring during the reading of a text help the reader pay attention to meaning construction as well as correct breakdowns in comprehension. The following monitoring strategies are utilized by metacognitive readers during reading: (1) determining word meaning; (2) questioning; (3) reflecting, (4) monitoring; (5) summarizing; and (6) looking for important information.

c) Evaluating Strategies

Evaluation strategies used after reading that allow the reader to think critically about the text and make a cognitive or affective judgment. The following evaluating strategies are utilized by metacognitive readers after reading: (1) thinking like the author; (2)

evaluating the text; (3) anticipating use of knowledge; (4) monitoring for meaning, knowing when you know, knowing when you don't know; (5) using and creating schema, making connections between the new and the known, building and activating background knowledge; (6) asking questions, generating questions before, during, and after reading that lead you deeper into the text; (7) determining importance, deciding what matters most, what is worth remembering; (8) inferring, combining background knowledge with information from the text to predict, conclude, make judgments, interpret; (9) using sensory and emotional images, creating mental images to deepen and stretch meaning; and (10) synthesizing creating an evolution of meaning by combining understanding with knowledge from other texts/sources.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that metacognitive strategy is one strategy that can be applied by the teacher to help the students success in reading. According to Eilers and Pinkley (2006), metacognitive strategy is applied and taught to students to enhance the understanding of a text that has been read. The application of the metacognitive strategy during reading and comprehension lessons is also believed to help students to think methodically in all three levels of reading processes, namely before reading, during reading and after reading. As conclusion, by using metacognitive strategy learners can organize, plan, and evaluate their own learning. Metacognitive strategies are used to coordinate the learning process. Strategies involve thinking about learning, monitoring one's own

production, and evaluating comprehension.

b. Affinity Strategy

The second strategy that can be considered to be applied by the English teacher is affinity strategy. Fernandez and Rodgers (2010:1) in Siti states that affinity is a brainstorming approach that encourages less verbal members of a group to participate. First, all members of the group write responses to the problem or question on separate cards, then the cards are silently grouped by each member while the others observe. After a discussion, the agreed upon arrangement is recorded as an outline or diagram.

Moreover Berg, Ellen et al (2003:111) in Sari (2010:3) explain that affinity strategy is a strategy to help the students to organize their ideas, using others ideas to generate a deeper understanding or more details, presenting, constructing rationale by referencing text for proof, categorization and organization. As conclusion that affinity

Strategy is the strategy that use in a small group in which the student can organize the text using their knowledge and write into a sticky note in order they easy to find out generic structure/characteristic the text and make conclusion using their own word after reading.

Vacca (2005:74) in Sari (2010:3) clears that the procedure in teaching reading through affinity strategy is as follow:

- a) The teacher will have to model the strategy for the students as a group activity before they will be able to do it themselves. And then give the instruction for students' to read the text assigned.
- b) As before reading activity, students could write down all they know about the topic of the text they are presented with on post-its. Write as many details as they can remember from their reading on sticky notes one detail on each sticky note.
- c) They should arrange the post-it notes into groups then name

the groups to create categories, like characters, setting, conflict, resolution etc. Place your sticky notes on the chart paper quickly without talking with other group members.

- d) During and after reading the text, students add more information on sticky notes and try to gather at least twenty post-its notes. Once that is done, they can recognize their categories or add more categories based on the information they have gathered. Working in a group, start organizing sticky notes that seem to be about the same thing. Look for ideas that have something in common, and put those ideas/sticky notes together in groups. Do not talk during this step.
- e) The students could write as much information as they can remember without looking at their notes. Then they could check their notes to see what they forgot and add that information. Now talk with group about category titles for

each cluster of sticky notes on the chart. Answer or ask questions about why certain details are on the chart or why they were grouped a certain way. Be sure to go back to the reading selection to prove why your detail should be on the chart or in a certain group if anyone asks.

- f) Then they could categorize the cards and give each category a name. Once your group has decided on titles or headings for each group of sticky notes, write these on the chart at the top of each group.

In short, affinity strategy is one way to help students organize and think about their reading. Students brainstorm details from their reading, then work together to organize details by main ideas. Working in teams, students piggyback on others' learning to increase comprehension.

c. Literature Circle Strategy

Daniels and Steineke (2004) in Lisa Taylor (2012:12)

states literature circles (interchangeably called book clubs or reading groups) as small, peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same article, poem, book or novel and to talk about it with each other. This definition tell us that literature circle is providing engagement in reading through interaction with a text, as well as interaction with other people who have read the same text.

In addition O'Brien (2007) in Miranda Ashley (2015:9) states literature circles are strategy that could generally be described as collaborative, group interaction related to reading texts-texts that are interesting and allow for discussion.

Furthermore Daniels in Katie Covert (2009:16) defines literature circle as temporary discussion groups between students who have chosen to read the same book. The groups of students choose to read a predetermined amount of their book and participate in specific roles throughout their reading.

Upon completion of the pre-determined reading and reading role, students then come together to discuss what they have read.

According to Patt Elliot (1999:4) the roles which using in literature circle strategy as follow:

a) Discussion director

Your job is to make a list of question that your group might want to discuss about the part of the book/reading that you just did

b) Summarizer

Your job is to briefly tell what happened in the part that you just read. Just give a quick statement to retell the **main** events. The other members of your group are counting on you to help them keep the important parts straight. If there are several main ideas, number them in order of importance.

c) Connector

Your job is to find connections between the section you read and the world outside. This means you must relate the book or passage to your own life, to

other books/movies/shows etc., or to other people of whom the book reminds you. There are no right or wrong answers. The reading will make different people think different things.

d) Literary luminary

Your job is to find a few special passages in the section you read that your group would like to hear read aloud. You want to help your group recall certain sections of the book. The passages may be interesting, funny, and important or demonstrate a literary device such as simile or alliteration. You can read the sections yourself, or ask another group member to do so

e) Word Wizard

Your job is to find 2 or 3 meaningful words from the reading selection. The words could be interesting, descriptive, challenging, or unusual. If it is a word that you did not know the meaning of, be sure to look it up in the dictionary and share the definition with the others. Tell

the group the page and paragraph where they will find the word. Tell what part of speech it is and try to write your own sentence using the word.

f) Illustrator

Your job is to draw some kind of picture, or piece of art about the part of the book/reading that you just did. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, story map, storyboard, painting etc. Take time to do it carefully and include details. It should be on a full sheet of paper and usually will be in color.

g) Fact Finder

Your job is to find any reference in your reading passage that relates to an event or fact from history. (E.g., if one of your characters is a knight—you would confirm that knights did indeed exist during the middle ages and give a fact or two about them.)

h) Travel Tracer

Your job is to keep track of where the action takes place. This is particularly important

in a story where the characters move around a lot. Describe each setting in detail either in words or with a map or drawing. All members of your group should be able to image exactly what the places look like.

Based on the list of roles in literature circle strategy, it can be concluded that the main point of literature circle strategy is group reading and group discussion and then response about the text that they have read, find the depth comprehension of the topic. It is finding about the main idea, supporting idea or conclusion. Hill, et.al (2007:1) states that in literature circles, small groups of students gather together to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by students' response to what they have read. You may hear talk about events and characters in the book, the author's craft, or personal experiences related to the story. Literature circles provide a

way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books. Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. Students reshape and add onto their understanding as they construct meaning with other readers. Finally, literature circles guide students to deeper understanding of what they read through structured discussion and extended written and artistic response.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, the writer takes a conclusion that reading is the process of deriving meaning from text. Reading helps the readers to get the information from the text and easy to comprehend what the text contain about. But, in comprehending the text, the EFL students still found many problems. They had difficulties in identifying the generic structure, finding main idea, finding factual information, finding supporting ideas, finding the

meaning of vocabulary, and identifying references. So, in teaching and learning process the English teacher should also be creative to apply the strategies in order to minimize the reading problems in the classroom activities. Those strategies discussed in this article can be taken as one alternative for the teacher to teach and develop reading skill in the classroom atmosphere.

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