THE USE OF RETELLING STRATEGY IN ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION SKILL AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project paper is my own except for

quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to investigate the effectiveness of retelling strategy in enhancing reading comprehension. The study intended to find out if the use of Retelling Strategy can bring about improvement in the post-test scores after treatment as compared to the pre-test scores. The two-group pre-test post-test experimental design was adopted in this study in order to discover the effectiveness of Retelling Strategy in improving reading comprehension. Sixty four Form Three students of a National Secondary school served as samples in this study. Data in the form of scores from the pre-test and post-test were collected to be analyzed. A comparison of mean scores between the pre-test and post-test for both the experimental and control group showed an increment but the experimental group showed that the students have improved their test scores slightly higher after they were subjected to treatments using Retelling Strategy as compared to test scores before treatment. In addition, results from T-test conducted indicated that there had been a significant improvement in reading comprehension for both the experimental and control group but the improvement for the experimental group were higher compared to the control group. It was concluded that the Retelling strategy was effective in improving reading comprehension. Lastly, analysis of the questionnaire responses showed that students preferred and had positive perception of the Retelling Strategy. They also indicated that they were very motivated and had enjoyed English lessons using Retelling Strategy.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dilakukan untuk menyelidik keberkesanan pembelajaran menggunakan kaedah penceritaan semula untuk meningkatkan pemahaman dalam bacaan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan sama ada pembelajaran menggunakan penceritaan semula berkesan dalam memperbaiki pemahaman bacaan. Kaedah kajian eksperimen dua kumpulan ujian-pra dan ujian-pos digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk menetukan keberkesanan kaedah Penceritaan Semula dalam meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan. Enam puluh empat orang pelajar tingkatan tiga dari sekolah menengah kebangsaan dijadikan sampel dalam kajian ini. Data skor mentah dari ujian-pra dan ujian-pos direkodkan dan dianalisis. Perbezaan skor mentah dan juga skor min menunjukkan bahawa pencapaian pelajar dalam ujian-pos yang dijalankan selepas sample menjalani rawatan kaedah Pembelajaran Penceritaan Semula telah meningkat. Seterusnya, ujian-T dijalankan untuk memperolehi nilai signifikan. Di dapati bahawa penggunaan kaedah Penceritaan Semula didapati berkesan dalam meningkatkan kefahaman bacaan. Akhir sekali, satu soal selidik yang diedarkan memberi maklumbalas daripada sampel tentang persepsi mereka terhadap kaedah Pembelajaran Penceritaan Semula. Analisis respon terhadap soal selidik ini menunjukkan mereka mempunyai persepsi yang positif terhadap penggunaan kaedah ini dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with the background of the study. Then the need of the study and the

statement of the problem are stated. It is followed by the purpose of the study, research

objectives, research questions, five hypotheses and its limitations. The chapter ends with

the definition of the terms used in this study.

English language has become the means of gaining knowledge, due to which it is

very important and beneficial to master the English language. Due to this a lot of

emphasis and importance is given to English Language when formulating our education

policy. Under the Integrated Secondary School Syllabus (ISSS) the focus of teaching

English is to develop language proficiency in the four skills that is listening, speaking,

reading and writing. English is taught as a second language in Malaysia and that reading

in English is the most required language skill to achieve academic excellence.

Reading comprehension has become one of the sub skills in learning English

language. But the reading comprehension skill in the classroom today is where students

read and write answers to the questions. It has made the comprehension aspect of the English language very dull and dry (Weaver ,1995:198). Weaver (1995) states that situational and psycholinguistic context can aid learners in comprehending the reading text. In this aspect a student centered approach is more conducive than a teacher centered approach in enhancing students reading comprehension skills. The teacher should use strategy that would involve students individually in activities among the students in a reading comprehension classroom. Students if given the chances to express their understanding can enhance their thinking and comprehending ability.

Kissner (2006) also agrees that students should acquire and need good comprehension skills before proceeding to secondary school. Her study reveals that *"reading teachers and writing teachers united momentarily to agree that students should have already learned basically everything before arriving in middle school"* (p.4). Consequently, when students complete their primary school education and proceed to secondary school, the Malaysian National Education Policy makers expect students to *"understand and be able to enjoy simple written English, and be able to provide adequate vocabulary and a range of structures"* (Ministry of Education (MOE), 1973,p.1). But in reality not every child who goes through six years of primary education, would achieve the measure set by the policy makers.

The language learning environment in school therefore actualizes the real world. In this case Retelling strategy can be applied in the ESL classroom situation to make English language learning more interesting, motivating and which can accommodate the real world situation, which would involve students individually as the language users.

The Retelling strategy would benefit students in terms of achievement and self esteem, as stressed by the Ministry of Education (1991) towards 'students self direction'. Students will be able to make decisions in life, take steps to acquire knowledge, skills and experiences that would be needed to bring about the desired personal changes which will

help to achieve the goals of our National Educational Philosophy (Ministry of Education, 1991).

Teachers, due to time constrains, do not allow students enough time to state their thoughts. Roger Lee (2002) believes that, another perception among many of us is that student-centered approach can only be used with high achievers whose English is 'good' enough to take care of their own learning. Such belief has prohibited many teachers from putting their 'faith' on their students who may not be outstanding learners of English. Teachers should realize that without adequate time spent to make use of the language and also the opportunity to learn from mistakes, students would fail to acquire and understand the language concerned.

1.1 Need for the Study

It was needed to conduct this study since students were unable to comprehend the text read. Due to this, they lack confidence in their ability to answer comprehension question. Reading in English is important to ensure students' academic success in life. Students, who are unable to comprehend what they read, would be left behind. The importance given to the English Language is reflected in our education system, where reading skills are taught to students from the primary school level. Though the students may have mastered the skill of reading a text phonetically correct, they still lack understanding of what they read, and this syndrome if left unchecked, is carried on to higher forms and institutions of education.

The Perak Education Department has realized that students were unable to answer comprehension questions correctly, due to lack of understanding the text read. According to a research conducted by the Perak Education Department (2006), it is discovered that almost 48% of the Form 3 students, are able to read a given text, but do not understand the text read, due to which they are unable to answer comprehension questions based on a

given text correctly. Failure in doing so affects the student's academic performance, not only in schools but also at the national level.

Students in general are scoring low in comprehension evaluation which affects their overall performances and does not motivate them to read in English. Mainly, this is due to *the " less proficient readers" as* Siti Zaliha Mustapha (2005) has stated that "*reader's inability to instantiation or 'exciting' relevant information from long-term memory (LTM) usually results in a failure to comprehend parts or all of the text read*"(p.125). On the other hand, Kissner (2006) stated that "*being able to pick out one detail from a passage doesn't show that a reader has a well developed understanding of the passage*" (p.5). In comprehension, understanding factual and surface meaning of text as well as the implications, which involves making inferences and being sensitive to emotional tones and relationship of ideas, is important in order to be able to answer the comprehension questions correctly.

Educators in Malaysian schools employ various strategies and skills to teach reading. In the process of teaching the reading skills, teachers tend to forget the purpose of reading. Teachers often neglect to treat text as something is more effective in promoting learning since reading without comprehension is not reading (Nuttal, C. 1987:30). This leads to students failing in their effort to negotiate meaning and they would be unable to comprehend text read and answer questions pertaining to a text. Teachers should help students to comprehend what they read and this can only be done by employing the right strategies during the reading lesson.

There is a major need in conducting this study in order to overcome student's weaknesses in being unable to comprehend comprehension passage read due to which the students are unable to answer questions correctly.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The main problem of this study is that students are not able to comprehend what they read, due to which they fail to answer comprehension questions correctly. Due to which it is important to find out which is a more effective way to enhance reading and understand comprehension passage among secondary school students. One way is through utilizing the retelling strategy. Students, who are unable to understand a text, will be unable to decode what they are reading. Hence, this study investigates the effectiveness of using retelling strategy to improve comprehension of a text in a Form 3 classroom to find out whether teaching reading comprehension using retelling will bring about significant improvement to enable students to answer comprehension questions effectively.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study is undertaken to investigate the effectiveness of using retelling strategy in enhancing comprehension of text among Form 3 school students.

Other than that, the study would help to confirm if retelling strategy improves students understanding of text read, which contributes to their ability in answering comprehension questions correctly.

This study is also undertaken to determine the perception among the students towards the use of retelling strategy in the reading classroom.

1.4 Objectives of Study

This research intends to meet the following objectives:

a) To establish the effectiveness of retelling strategy in reading comprehension.

b) To determine if retelling helps to improve student's understanding of text read.

c) To determine if retelling helps to contribute to student's ability in answering

comprehension questions correctly.

d) To determine student's perception towards the use of retelling strategy.

1.5 Research Questions

In the pursuance of this study, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

(a) Is retelling strategy effective in reading comprehension?

(b) Does retelling strategy help students to better comprehend what they read?

(c) Does retelling strategy help the students to answer comprehension questions accurately?

(d) Do students have positive perception that retelling strategy helps them in answering comprehension questions?

(e) Is there a significant difference between the performances of students who received the retelling strategy compared to those who received the traditional strategy in answering reading comprehensions?

1.6 Hypotheses

The following are the research hypotheses constructed to answer the research questions.

Research Hypotheses 1

The use of retelling strategy is effective in reading comprehension.

Research Hypotheses 2

The use of retelling strategy is able to help students to better comprehend what they read.

Research Hypotheses 3

Students who use retelling strategy are able to answer comprehension questions accurately.

Research Hypotheses 4

Students have more positive perception toward the use of retelling strategy in the reading classroom.

Research Hypotheses 5

There is a statistically significant difference in the students' reading comprehension post-test scores after being exposed to the retelling strategy as compared to their pre-test scores before the treatment.

1.7 Limitations

This study used the Retelling strategy to teach reading comprehension lessons in a secondary ESL classroom. The findings of this study are representative only of students who are similar to the students in a secondary school in Batu Gajah, Perak. The samples of this study are also restricted to students in a rural area. The time allocated for the treatments in this study was also limited due to constraints faced by the researcher. However, even a small study like this may indicate if there is potential in the approach under study and it is hoped that this study will stimulate further research into applying the principles of learning in the language classroom.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Retelling   *"Retelling as being synonymous of free recall of text"* Gambrell & Koskinen (1991:360). It is a task based activity that calls for the readers' personal reconstruction of text or all the important ideas form the text. *"It is the instructional use of individual own and students work to maximizine their own learning" (Johnson and Johnson,* 1994:285).

Schemata   According to Anderson & Pearson (1988:39), *it is "an active organization of past experience"*, which is referred to as the background knowledge that a reader uses to comprehend text.

Comprehension   Brown, H., & Cambourne, B. (1987) define comprehension as "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader". It is a process of meaning-making and understanding information when reading a text. It also involves the ability to relate the reading to one's prior knowledge and experiences. A comprehension involves understanding factual and surface meaning of text as well as the implications, which involves making inferences and being sensitive to emotional tones and relationship of ideas.