



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

THE EFFECTS OF USING CONTEXTUAL CLUES STRATEGY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY

AMARJIT KAUR A/P KARTAR SINGH



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION
(TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)
(MASTER BY MIXED MODE)

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi



ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study aimed to investigate the effects of using contextual clues strategy to understand the meaning of words while reading a text among Form 1 students. The samples of this study, consisting of 70 students, were divided equally into a control ($n=35$) and a treatment group ($n=35$). Data were collected through a pre and a post test and analyzed using the t-test. The findings showed that there was a significant difference in the mean score of pre-test and post-test at p value. The value of t for each group was .584 and -18.602 at a level of $p<0.05$. This indicates that students in the experimental group performed significantly better than the ones in the control group during the post-test. In addition, questionnaires were distributed in order to determine students' views on strategies employed to understand meaning of words in a text. The findings from the questionnaires revealed that students viewed contextual clues strategy positively in helping them to understand meaning of words. In conclusion, the overall findings of this study suggest that contextual clue is an effective strategy to improve students' vocabulary. Therefore, it could be implemented in English language reading classrooms to help learners perform better.





KESAN PENGGUNAAN STRATEGI PETUNJUK KONTEKSTUAL UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KOSA KATA PELAJAR

ABSTRAK

Kajian eksperimen kuasi ini bertujuan mengenalpasti kesan penggunaan strategi petunjuk kontekstual dalam memahami makna perkataan ketika membaca teks di kalangan pelajar Tingkatan 1. Sampel kajian seramai 70 orang telah dibahagikan secara samarata kepada satu kumpulan kawalan ($n=35$) dan satu kumpulan eksperimental ($n=35$). Data dipungut menerusi ujian pra-kajian dan pasca-kajian dan dianalisa menggunakan ujian- t . Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan di dalam min skor antara ujian pra-kajian dan pasca kajian di nilai p . Nilai t bagi setiap kumpulan ialah .584 dan -18.602 bagi $p<0.05$. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar dalam kumpulan eksperimen mencatat perbezaan prestasi yang signifikan sewaktu ujian pasca berbanding dengan pelajar di dalam kumpulan kawalan. Sebagai tambahan, borang kaji soal-selidik telah diedarkan bagi menentukan pandangan pelajar mengenai strategi yang digunakan untuk memahami makna perkataan ketika membaca teks. Dapatan dari soal-selidik mendedahkan bahawa pelajar menyifatkan strategi petunjuk kontekstual sebagai suatu yang positif dalam membantu mereka memahami makna perkataan dengan lebih baik. Ini menggambarkan bahawa strategi petunjuk kontekstual berkesan dalam meningkatkan kosa kata pelajar. Ia boleh dilaksanakan dalam bilik darjah pembacaan Bahasa Inggeris bagi merangsang prestasi pelajar.



CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF THESIS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
CONTENT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
LIST OF APPENDICES	xi

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background of the Study	1
1.3	Statement of the Problem	3
1.4	Research Objectives	6
1.5	Research Questions	6
1.6	Hypothesis	7
1.7	Significance of the Research	7

1.8	Limitations of the Research	8
1.9	Definition of Terms	9
1.10	Summary	10

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	Theoretical Framework	13
2.3	Reading Comprehension	18
2.4	Strategies in Language Learning	18
2.5	Strategies in Reading	21
2.6	Vocabulary Knowledge	21
2.7	The Importance of Teaching Vocabulary Strategies	22
2.8	The Contextual Clues Strategy	23
2.9	Procedures for Guessing Meaning from Context	24
2.10	The Types of Contextual Clues	25
2.11	Review of Previous and Recent Research on Using Contextual Clues Strategy in Understanding Words in Reading a Text	27
2.12	Summary	34

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	36
3.2	Research Design	37
3.2.1	Quasi-Experimental Design	38
3.3	Sampling	42
3.4	Samples	42
3.5	Variable	43

3.5.1	Independent variable	44
3.5.2	Dependent variable	44
3.5.3	Control variable	44
3.6	Instrumentation	45
3.6.1	Survey	45
3.6.1.1.	Preparation	46
3.6.1.2.	Questionnaire A	48
3.6.1.3.	Questionnaire B	49
3.6.1.4.	Administration of the Questionnaires	50
3.6.2	Pretest – Posttest	51
3.6.3	Validity	53
3.6.3.1	Content validity	54
3.6.4	Pilot Study	54
3.6.5	Reliability	55
3.7	Research Procedure	57
3.8	Data Analysis Procedure	62
3.8.1	Questionnaire	62
3.8.2	Pre-test and Post-test	63
3.9	Summary	65

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1	Introduction	66
4.2	Analysis of Data	67
4.3	Results of the Study	67

4.3.1	Research Question One	67
4.3.2	Research Question Two	75
4.3.2.1	Pre-Test Results	77
4.3.2.2	Post-Test Results	81
4.3.3	Research Question Three	86
4.3.3.1	Analysis of the Questionnaire	87
4.4	Summary	94

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	96
5.2	Findings and Discussion	97
5.3	Conclusion	106
5.3.1	Effectiveness of Contextual Clues Strategy	106
5.3.2	Learners' View of Using Contextual Clues Strategy	107
5.4	Implications of the Research	108
5.5	Recommendations	110
5.5.1	Recommendations for Teachers and Students	110
5.5.2	Recommendations for Future Researchers	111
5.6	Summary	111

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table No.		Page
3.1	Distribution of Samples	43
3.2	Reliability Statistics	56
3.3	Description of Activities for Experimental Group	60
3.4	Description of Activities for Control Group	61
4.1	Phases of Analysis	67
4.2	Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Determination	68
4.3	Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Social Strategies (Discovery)	70
4.4	Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Memory	71
4.5	Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Cognitive	72
4.6	Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Metacognitive	73
4.7	Percentage of Overall Strategy Use	74
4.8	Pretest Results for the Experimental and Control Groups	77
4.9	The Differences in Means and Standard Deviations of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre-test	78
4.10	The Independent Sample Test for the Differences in Means between the Pre-test for the Control and the Experimental Group	79
4.11	The Results of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test	81



4.12	The Differences in Means and Standard Deviations of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test.	82
4.13	The Independent Sample T-test for the Differences in Means between the Post-test for the Control and the Experimental Group	83
4.14	T-test Analysis of Achievement in Test Scores	85
4.15	Comparisons of the Affective Component of the Samples' Attitudes	88
4.16	Comparisons of the Behavioral Component of the Samples' Attitudes	90
4.17	Comparisons of the Cognitive Component of the learners' Attitudes	91
4.18	Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire	93



LIST OF FIGURES

No. Figures	Page
2.1 The Conceptual Framework	13
2.2 Inductive Procedure of Guessing From Context	24
3.1 Comparison Group Pre-test/Post-test Design	39
3.2 Levels in Conducting Lesson	58
3.3 Summary of Research Procedure and Data Collection	64
4.1 Phases in Obtaining Results of Pre and Post-test	76
4.2 The Results of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test	84



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMTB	Attitude Motivation Test Battery
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
GoM	Government of Malaysia
L1	First language
SBELC	The Standard Based English Language Curriculum
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language learning
SPSS	Statistical Packages for the Social Science

LIST OF APPENDICES

- A Questionnaire A
- B Word Detective – The Ugly Duckling
- C Questions
- D Answers
- E Questionnaire B
- F Lesson Plan Week 1 – Experimental Group
- G Lesson Plan Week 1 – Control Group
- H Lesson Plan Week 2 – Experimental Group
- I Lesson Plan Week 2 – Control Group
- J Lesson Plan Week 3 – Experimental Group
- K Lesson Plan Week 3 – Control Group
- L Lesson Plan Week 4 – Experimental Group
- M Lesson Plan Week 4 – Control Group
- N Lesson Plan Week 5 – Experimental Group
- O Lesson Plan Week 5 – Control Group
- P Lesson Plan Week 6 – Experimental Group
- Q Lesson Plan Week 6 – Control Group
- R Approval Letters from Authorities



CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will first briefly state the background study done for this research. It will be followed by the statement of problem. Then there will be a focus on the research objectives, research questions and hypothesis that are to be dealt with. Subsequently the significance of the study and its limitation will be stated, followed lastly with the definition of terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

English being the second language in Malaysia is a compulsory subject in school.

The main aim of teaching and learning English is to enable students to use English in everyday life and for knowledge acquisition besides for future workplace needs.





Every week, five periods, each comprising of 35 minutes is allocated to teach English in secondary schools. From the five periods provisioned, one period lesson is made compulsory for literature and the rest four periods are to be divided equally to teach the other skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar.

For Form One (age 13) learners, The Standard Based English Language Curriculum (SBELC) specifies that for reading skills, learners should be able to acquire vocabulary skills by using a dictionary or contextual clues to find meaning of unfamiliar words. Learners should demonstrate understanding of various types of text read to obtain information.



Thus, based on The Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools (SBELC) in Malaysia (2016) teachers need to make students read from selected authentic materials such as articles from newspaper, magazines, signs, notices, labels, warnings, instructions, advertisements, directions, messages, simple passages, annotated series of pictures and information in tables. Here learners are made to read aloud to observe correct pronunciation, intonation pattern, pauses and fluency. They are also made to read silently to comprehend text on their own. There are a few ways to test a comprehension of a text read. For example by answering comprehension questions where by learners may be asked to answer multiple choice questions, completing a text, putting information in graphic form, sequencing, labeling or checking True/False statements.





The learners are then to be graded within the band that describes the learner's language ability on a six-point scale where A1 is for beginners and it goes up to C2 for those who have mastered the language. In this way, it is easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing especially teachers or learners to identify the level of different qualifications. It could also assist employers and educational institutions to easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In reading classes, the emphasis is equally on knowing the meaning of words read. The ability to recognize the meaning of a word in context is after all what reading is all about.

In alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), The Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools (SBELC) by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia (2016, pp. 31-33), states that Form One students aged 13 or 14 should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts using a range of strategies to construct meaning.
2. Understand meanings of words from print media by using
 - a) dictionary.
3. Apply a range of strategies to comprehend texts related to everyday living.
4. Demonstrate understanding by
 - a) identifying main ideas in given texts.





5. Analyse and infer information by:
 - a) using textual clues to predict outcomes or conclusions
 - b) finding meaning of unfamiliar words.
6. Analyse and evaluate various texts.
7. Read various texts and select information for specific purposes.
8. Read independently and extensively to explore and expand ideas for personal development.

However, Naginder (2013) states that one of the many difficulties encountered by English language learners at all levels is deficiency of lexical competence. There are a lot of unknown words yet to be discovered by learners. Similarly, Ahmed (2013) states that problems in reading arise when there are many difficult words to learn and learners find it difficult to recall them after a period of time.

Awwad Osman (2013) too indicates that one of the main problem confronting advanced learners is that when learners are often loaded with difficult words and expressions, they do not retain them even after they have read them and checked their meanings in dictionaries several times as there has been no specific method for remembering new words. Thus, the learners at the tertiary level still lag in the competence of the language due to vocabulary impairment.

Phantharakphong and Pothitha (2014) state that Malaysian learners, in general have been unable to reach a reasonable level of English language proficiency. He relates





it to the lexical competence of the learners whereby the learners have a hard time to understand written text as they still have difficulties in their reading comprehension.

Lindika Rahamawati Malik (2016), [u1]too states that in reading the key component of knowing words has never been an easy task in learning a language, especially in learning a second/foreign language, because it has complicated components to be mastered such as meaning, form, and the use of the word itself.

Due to the circumstances as mentioned above, learners need to be equipped with strategic and systematic set of vocabulary strategies that they can apply in learning new words. Therefore, in the local context of this study, the researcher intends to investigate, the strategies learners currently use to understand words in reading a text, the effectiveness of using contextual clues strategies to improve the ability to understand words in reading a text, and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of the contextual clues strategies to understand words in reading a text.



1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To determine the kinds of strategies learners use to understand the meaning of words in reading a text.
- b. To determine the effectiveness of using contextual clues strategy to improve the ability to understand the meaning of words in reading a text.
- c. To investigate learners' view on the use of contextual clues strategies to understand the meaning of words in reading a text.



- a. What kind of strategies learners use to understand the meaning of words in reading a text?
- b. Is there a significant difference between the performances of learners' who used the contextual clues strategies compared to those who used the conventional strategies to understand the meaning of words in reading a text?
- c. How do learners view the effectiveness of using contextual clues strategies to understand the meaning of words in reading a text?





1.6 Hypothesis

The following is the research hypothesis constructed to answer the research question two.

Research Hypothesis Two

H_1 : There is a significant difference in the mean score between the experimental group and control group.

H_0 : There is no statistically [u2]significant difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and control group.



1.7 Significance of the Research

The research is significant to the following people below:

(a) Teachers

The findings of the research may provide the teachers with unconventional ideas in improving learners' vocabulary in reading. In addition to asking learners to refer to a dictionary or translate the meaning of the words into learners' native language, the teachers may teach them to use the contextual clues strategies to decipher meaning of unknown words.





(b) Learners

The learners would be made aware of strategies they could apply in order to improve their vocabulary in reading. [u3]

1.8 Limitations of the Research

It is important to view that the contextual clues strategy may not be a wholesale replacement of traditional whole-class instruction. Some learners may not have the subject matter and pedagogical knowledge needed to provide effective advance organization and structuring of content, systematic development of key concepts, or the sophisticated instructions given to them. Thus, the contextual clues strategy may be more feasible and valuable in certain classes than in others.

Besides that, it is not yet clear what the effects would be if contextual clues strategy is used in most courses year after year. It should be noted that learners who are confident and those who are eager to learn would probably respond very positively, while others may not.





Thus, although the post-test results may be positive, the limitations found in this study have to be addressed. More variables have to be added. Future studies should be conducted with learners from rural areas which should include learners that would have completed their primary school education either in aborigines' schools or from Malay, Chinese and Tamil medium schools. The study could also include family background, reading habits of the learners and using it with a younger age group which perhaps could include learners in Year 5 and 6. The studies that would include these variables would produce more reliable results.

1.9 Definition of Terms



The key terms used in this study are defined as follow:

(a) Contextual Clues

Contextual Clues refers to clues or hints that appear in a sentence or a text that can help learners find the meanings of unknown words by relating them to their contexts; the contexts can be before or after the word itself (Hartman & Blass, 2007). There are a few types of context clues which include the use of synonyms, antonyms, examples, rewording, using logic and affixes.





(b) Vocabulary Achievement

Vocabulary achievement is the increasing score that indicates the progress made by the learners on the achievement test (Hughes, 1941). In this study, the vocabulary achievement refers to the score obtained by the learners on the vocabulary achievement test given by the teacher.

(c) Contextual Clues Strategy

Contextual clues strategy refers to a strategy that uses contextual clues to find the meanings of new or unknown words in sentences or passages by relating them to their contexts. (Nation, 2001). This strategy would provide the learners with explicit steps to use as they try to determine meanings of unknown words. As the learners become more skillful in using context clues in the text, they will progressively develop a more extensive and powerful way of determining the meaning of vocabulary read.

1.10 Summary

A lot of emphasis has been given on learning English in Malaysian schools as it is the second language of the nation. The main purpose to teach learners English is to enable them to use it in everyday life, knowledge acquisition and for future workplace needs. However, researchers have indicated learners at the tertiary level still lag in the





competence of the language due to vocabulary impairment. Due to the circumstances as mentioned, learners need to be equipped with a systematic set of vocabulary strategies that they can apply in learning new words. Therefore, the use of contextual clues strategy is being implied in this study.

