Students' Perception On The Use Of Inferring And Predicting Chart For Learning Interpretive Reading

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Abstract: Interpretive Reading course is designed to enable the students to apply effective reading strategy. The inferring and predicting chart is one of the strategies that aim to train the predicting and inferring strategy by creating picture or mental image for the readers. The students' perceptions about the chart's can give some data on the merit and drawbacks chart application for learning reading. This descriptive qualitative study used case study method. It used interview as the instrument of data collection and Miles and Huberman model for data analysis. The study showed most of the students gave positive perceptions on the strategy application. The merits of using the chart were; it is quite challenging, different from traditional lecturing method, and make them learn reading systematically. The drawbacks of using the chart were the puzzlement on making use the explicit and implicit information from the text to guess the author's meaning/intention. There should be further and more massive data collection to support and follow-up the result of the study. Further investigations about the reasons behind the students' negative perception for the chart is also needed to reveal the actual reasons for the answers and find the best solutions.

Keywords : students' perception, inferring and predicting chart, learning, interpretive reading

Learning reading for L2 learners especially EFL university students needs to be done with carefully chosen strategy. According to Burns, Roe, and Ross (1996:6), lecturers can motivate their students by emphasizing the joyfulness of reading, its usefulness in daily live, and the vast information it contains. Choosing fun and effective strategy is tricky, but worth to try. The teaching of reading for the EFL university students should be linked to particular education objectives.

Interpretive reading is an English-language-skill course designed to enable the students to apply effective reading strategy to understand the both explicit and implicit

information from fiction/non-fiction text on pre-advance level. According to Song (1998:41), one of the effective way to improve students' reading is by training them to use appropriate reading strategy. By training them the appropriate reading strategy, the students will gain confidence and able to decide which strategy suits their needs in reading.

The inferring and predicting chart is one of the strategy that aims to train the predicting and inferring strategy by creating picture or mental image for the readers. The use of this chart can only be effective when the students get more benefit from its use. To study the benefits that the students feel from the use of the chart, we have to study their perception on the strategy. By studying the students' perceptions we can find out the chart's merit and drawbacks and use it to perfect the chart application for learning reading.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following paragraphs provides theoretical basis for the use of inferring and predicting chart to teach interpretive reading particularly for non-traditional students.

Teaching Reading for University Students

Students in higher education level needs to equip themselves with sufficient reading skills to support their study. The ability to comprehend any reading materials is valid steps to gain the success in higher education as most of the materials in higher level education are written in English as stated by Sulistyo (2010:2). For EFL university students as well as the lecturer, this phenomenon causes other problems from students' anxiety to various choices of teaching strategies and media application. Students who have lower anxiety in learning EFL tend to gain more prospective improvement in reading skills. Thus, it is the main job for the lecturers to choose the suitable teaching strategies and media to lower the students' anxiety in learning EFL and boost their reading skills.

Teaching and improving students' reading ability in Indonesia is a big fat homework as most of Indonesian students have rather low interest in reading. The low interest of reading in Bahasa also affects their interest in reading materials in English. It is similar to Meng's statement (2009) that EFL students tend to struggle more, read slower, and be lacking of confidence in reading English texts despite the number of time and practice they have spent. This reality in EFL classroom setting should be turned down for the sake of the

students themselves.

There are three models of reading process: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive model. The readers (students) can use the model to activate their background knowledge as well as their language competence. The first model deals mainly with the letters, phonemes, and words to understand the readings. Boothe, Walter, and Stringer (1999). According to Stanovich as quoted by O'Malley and Pierce (1996), the second models starts with the reader's hypotheses and predictions about the text and his or her attempts to confirm them by working down to the smallest units of the printed page. Cox (1999: 270) stated that the third model uses the first and second model interchangeably to understand the text. The third model is usually used by skilled readers and considered as the most promising approaches for reading.

There are three levels of reading comprehension i.e. literal, inferential or interpretive, and applied comprehension (Berry, 2005). When the readers understand straightforward meaning of the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times, and locations presented by the text writers through the explicit facts, details, and relationships between ideas (such as comparison, contrast, sequence of events, or cause and effect), it means that they are already in the first comprehension level. Based on Pearson and Nicholson (in Musta'in, 2004), the readers are in the second comprehension level when they are required to draw inferences in order to understand information that is indirectly stated, induced, or require other information. The last level happens when readers are analyzing or synthesizing information and applying it to other information.

Inferring and Predicting in Interpretive Reading

Interpretive Reading is a course for English Education Department which to enable the students to apply effective reading strategy to understand the both explicit and implicit information from fiction/non-fiction text on pre-advance level. This course is in line with Roe, Stoodt, & Burns. (1995:100) statements that interpretative reading is concerned with deeper meanings and readers must relate facts, generalizations, definitions, ideas, cause-effect relationships that are not directly stated. To reach the course objective, the students must have the skills to infer supporting details, main ideas, sequence, comparisons, cause and effect, character traits, predict outcomes, and interpret figurative language (Barret 1968 in Finch (2009:3). When dealing with the text students are supposed to be able to answer

open-ended and/or thought-provoking questions like why, what if, and how subjectively.

To help the students read more quickly and effectively, Tyner and Green (2005, 8-9) mention some effective comprehension strategies to help students comprehend reading texts which include generating, evaluating text structure, activating background knowledge or scheme, making predictions, visualizing, summarizing and inferencing. Among those strategies, predicting and inferencing are most likely used interchangeably, since predicting also involves inferring. Both processes are involving guessing, using schema and prior knowledge to be crosschecked with clues and evidence from the text (Jones, online). The main difference between both is that predicting is guessing what will happen in the future (thinking a head), but inferring is guessing the author's means (looking back and reflecting).

Inferring and Predicting Chart for Enhancing Reading

Inferring and Predicting Chart is a visual chart that helps students to train the predicting and inferring strategy for improving their reading comprehension. Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not (Pressley, 1977). Behne (2010) stated that visualize in reading refers to the production of picture or mental images that they can use to recall details in the text and relate it to their prior knowledge. Other advantages of visualizing the picture or mental images during reading are (Jones, online):

• bring personal prior knowledge to the forefront

•

check their mental images against text for discrepancies and detail to gain a more complete understanding

•

match language to the images and therefore improve their processing of ideas

• connect in meaningful ways to what is read

• assist students with little reading experience to improve their mental images making.

Therefore, the Inferring and Predicting Chart was designed to train the students to the effective reading strategy by improving their picture or mental images. There are six columns on the chart, i.e. students' name, title of the text, prediction, inferences, evidences, interpretive conclusion. On the prediction column, the students wrote down their

prediction on what would the text about based on the title of the text only. The inference column and evidences column were closely related as they both provide support or contradiction for the early predictions. The students wrote part of the text that support of deny the early prediction on the evidences columns. On the other hand, they wrote down the new inferences about the text after reading it. The interpretive conclusion column dealt with the students' conclusion on the reasons of the text writing and how the author did present the information within the text. It also included whether their prediction was in line with their inference, to show their own level of reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This descriptive qualitative study used case study method. This case study was generated during Interpretive Reading course. The course was only attended by five students who became the sources of data for this study. It used interview as the instrument of data collection. There were four open-ended questions in the interview. It asked about the students' general perception about the chart, the merits, and drawbacks of using the chart compared to the traditional lecturing method, the suggestions for the chart's application improvement. The data were then analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model (2014: 16), i.e. data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verifying.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of the Interview

The study used interview to gain data about the students' perception toward the use of inferring and predicting chart for learning interpretive reading. The interview was done in the third meetings (October 15th, 2019) in respect to the fact that the students had been familiar to the use of inferring and predicting chart for learning reading. There were five open ended questions that the students had to answer. The results of the interview were elaborated in the following paragraphs.

The first question was on students' general perception about the chart. The students gave rather similar answer for this question. There more than 60% students who gave positive perceptions for the use of the chart. They used the word "good" and "easy" to

describe the use of the chart for learning reading. The rest of the students (two) gave neutral perception like so so, and I don't know as the answer of the first question. It means that the use of the chart was considered positive by most of the students.

The second question was on the merits of using the chart compared to the traditional lecturing method. The students gave various answers for this question. Their answers were; it is quite challenging, different from traditional lecturing method, and make them learn reading systematically. But there was a student that considered the use of the chart had no significant impacts for his reading comprehension improvement. He felt that the chart was only the printed form of spoken lecturing method.

The third question was on the drawbacks of using the chart compared to the traditional lecturing method. The students answered that the drawbacks of the chart were they still confused on how to make inferences from the text. Their difficulties were rooted from their puzzlement on making use the explicit and implicit information from the text to guess the author's meaning/intention. Doing the chart independently made them put more effort in the comprehending the text.

The fourth question was on the suggestions for the chart's application improvement. The students suggested adding vocabularies and phrasal understanding sessions before they started to do the chart. Their suggestions were based on the facts that sometimes the words or phrases within the text has different meaning to those on the dictionary, so they thought that it will be useful to have the same idea on the meaning of particular word and phrase in the text. Another suggestion was related to the interpretive conclusion. Making interpretive conclusion from the text was hard for them. They wanted the lecturer to guide them in conclusion drawing process.

Student's Perception on the Use of Inferring and Predicting Chart for Learning Interpretive Reading

Based on the result of the interview the students tend to have more positive perceptions on the use of the chart during the Interpretive Reading Course. Their answers can be interpreted that they like and eager to use new strategy to improve their reading comprehension. It also meant that the lecturer can use this strategy as additional strategy to teach interpretive reading. The students who gave neutral impression may possibly not

really enthusiast with the use of the chart, or any other reasons that need to be further examined. The positive impression for the chart supported the study that claimed for the students' needs to have various type of strategy to learn and increase their reading comprehension.

The students' answers for the second question showed that more students were ready to do different strategy to help develop their own reading comprehension. Their answers also implied the use of the chart helped them to make their own picture or mental image that was important for idea processing stage of reading. The student that considered the use of the chart had no significant impacts for his reading comprehension improvement and felt that the chart was only the printed form of spoken lecturing method should be noted down for further investigations. The investigation should be able to reveal the actual reasons for the answers; i.e. whether it is derived from the chart, the application of the chart, the student him/herself, or the combination of it.   .

Changing always brings uncomfortable feeling. The similar feelings also happened when students were exposed to new learning strategy who demanded for more independent and hard work. Their puzzlement on how to make inferences from the text was natural reaction to the shift of teacher-centered-strategy to learner-centered-strategy. Practicing, discipline, and time management can be the answer of their problem when doing the chart.

Most of EFL students had to deal the text mechanic before they were able to deal with meaning. Since most of the students were on medium level of English vocabulary, it was normal to ask for more time and guidance to help them with the text's mechanic. But lecturers must carefully decide the time allocation and types of guidance given to the students, so that they would have sufficient experience to train their reading strategy. Making interpretive conclusion of a selected text for students with medium level of English can also be done with the help of lecturer. In addition, the students' willingness and motivation to independently train them with the strategy will boost their comprehension faster and thoroughly.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This micro case study on the use of inferring and predicting chart for learning interpretive reading showed that most of the students gave positive perceptions on the strategy application. There were some minor negative perceptions too. The positive perceptions were the use of the word "good" and "easy" to describe the use of the chart for learning reading. These positive perceptions showed the students' fondness and eagerness to use new strategy to improve their reading comprehension especially in Interpretive Reading course.

According to the students, the merits of using the chart compared to the traditional lecturing method were; it is quite challenging, different from traditional lecturing method, and make them learn reading systematically. The students' answers for the second question implied the use of the chart helped them to make their own picture or mental image that was important for idea processing stage of reading. The drawbacks of using the chart compared to the traditional lecturing method, according to the students, were the puzzlement on making use the explicit and implicit information from the text to guess the author's meaning/intention. Their puzzlement on how to make inferences from the text was natural reaction to the shift of teacher-centered-strategy to learner-centered-strategy. The suggestions given for the chart's application improvement were adding vocabularies and phrasal understanding sessions before they started to do the chart and asking the lecturer to guide them in conclusion drawing process. The students' positive perceptions toward the use of inferring and predicting chart for learning interpretive reading should became the foundation for further and better development of the strategy.

Suggestions

Since the study was done to a small number of the students, there should be further and more massive data collection to support and follow-up the result of the study. Further investigations about the reasons behind the students' negative perception for the chart is also needed to reveal the actual reasons for the answers and find the best solutions. The lecturer can use this strategy to improve the students' interpretive comprehension.

Additionally, the students should foster their willingness and motivation to independently train themselves with any strategy that will boost their comprehension.

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