

A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR TEACHING EXPOSITORY TEXT COMPREHENSION FOR EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Reading course in university level is supposedly designed to promote EFL students' reading comprehension skills and strategies, in order to assist them in comprehending information as delivered by reading text. However, it is considered that EFL students often face have difficulties in comprehending English text, specifically English expository text. Therefore, appropriate model for teaching expository text comprehension for the students who experience difficulties in comprehending expository text is highly needed. Appropriate comprehension instructions, such as questioning and analyzing text structure, should become the focus of teaching reading to students to achieve this main goal of reading course objective. If these instructions are combined with video, under the framework of experiential learning theory, students will have rich experiences in promoting their reading comprehension skills and strategies. This article discusses the possibility of integrating video in reading course and proposes the possible activities of integrating video with reading comprehension activities.

Keywords: *video, expository text, reading comprehension, analyzing text structure, questioning*

Reading is fundamental in the learning process, since the ability to understand reading text highly influences the readers' success in education in furthermore in their life. Current EFL and ESL reading programs generally focus on developing the students' reading skills such as recognizing main ideas, supporting information, and organizational patterns in order to understand the meaning of a written text. To enable the students to develop those skills in comprehending the text, reading activity should become an interactive process between the teacher and the students, between the students, and between the students and the texts. However, since reading is a skill, it is not automatically possessed and mastered by the reader. As a result, reading activity can be very challenging for readers, especially for EFL students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories and models of L2 reading comprehension have emphasized that the comprehension process of reading is an interactive process of bottom-up (from text to reader) and top-down (from reader to text) processing (Hudson, 2011; Grabe; 2009; Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Kintsch & van Dick, 1978), rather than merely bottom-up or top-down. Interactive model of comprehension

processing focuses on how readers interact with the information in the text, by building meanings from recognizing letters, words, phrases, clauses and sentences to reconstruct the original idea (bottom-up processing) and by applying their prior knowledge to understand and to create meaning that is personally and contextually sensible (top-down processing). This process of interaction during reading make possible for the reader to comprehend a sentence through identifying the key words provided, as well as identifying the words first and combining the meaning of words together in order to understand the meaning of a whole sentence (Grabe, 2009; Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Interactive model of comprehension processing is consistent with the goal of using instruction in learning as viewed by constructivists (Jarvis, 2006; Jarvis et al, 2004), to promote the students' behavior during reading in order to lead them to become active students. This condition will be achieved once the students engage in an appropriate cognitive behavior such as processing new information, mentally organizing it, and mentally relating it with students' relevant prior knowledge.

The information processing during reading is processed in three memory stores; sensory memory, working memory, and long-term memory. This information processed enters our cognitive system and is temporarily held in a sensory memory. However, some of the information can fade easily when we do not pay much attention to it, while some of it can be transferred to working memory to be further processed. Furthermore, the cognitive process in the brain involves accessing and activating our prior knowledge, which is already stored in our long-term memory, to be transferred also to our working memory (Grabe, 2009). The integration of new information transferred from sensory memory and prior knowledge from long-term memory, or schema (Hudson, 2011; Grabe, 2009; Alderson, 2000), will make us possible to understand the meaning of the text being read.

Alderson (2000) and Hudson (2011) state that schema consists of content knowledge and formal knowledge. Content knowledge is divided into background knowledge and subject-matter knowledge, while formal knowledge is divided into linguistic knowledge and text structural knowledge. Background knowledge may or may not be relevant to the content of a particular text and hence should be revised during reading, while subject-matter knowledge is directly relevant to the content and topic of the text being read (Alderson, 2000). Linguistic knowledge deals with the readers' ability to read the language of the text, and text structural knowledge deals with the readers' ability to understand the way the information is organized in the text (Hudson, 2011). Grabe (2009) then broadens the definition by adding that background knowledge consists of general knowledge of the world, cultural knowledge, topical knowledge and specialist expertise knowledge.

When the readers make meaning from information that is actually expressed in the text, they are engaged in text model comprehension. This comprehension model is enabled by lower-level processing such as recognizing words, syntactically parsing the sentence, and semantically encoding the meaning of the sentence (Grabe, 2009; Kintsch, 1978).

Higher-level processing covers the formation of text-model and situation-model. Text-model comprehension is enabled by the contribution of linguistic level and semantic analysis processing. Linguistic level happens when the reader recognizes the words because of an interaction between orthographic and phonological units altogether. Once the words are recognized, the semantic analysis processing is needed to understand the meaning of a sentence as represented. These sentences-meaning units, or microstructures, will be organized into higher-order units. Higher-order units will form a structure of a text or macrostructure, which its formation involves the recognition of global topics of the text and their interrelationships according to the text rhetorical pattern and structure (Grabe; 2009).

However, the students are required not only to make meaning in a text-level comprehension, but also in a deeper understanding level. To achieve deeper understanding of the text, the text content must then be used to construct a next model, a situation model, as a mental model of the situation described by the text. This situation model requires the integration of both information in the text and relevant prior knowledge already possessed by the reader.

The integration of new information and prior knowledge to make meaning in reading, as viewed by experiential learning theory, is happened and enabled during experiences in learning (Kolb, 1984). Jarvis (2006) categorizes experience in learning into six; primary, secondary, actual, recalled, real and artificial. Primary experience occurs when the students experience social context through their real senses within the context of the occurring experience, while secondary experience occurs when facilitated by video presentation, theoretical discussion, or reading experience that has little or nothing to do with the social context within which the experience occurs.

Actual experience is an experience that occurs at the present time, and recalled experience happens when the students recall memories of their previous actual experiences. Next category, a real experience, is related to actual experience when the students experience the actual context. Artificial experience, the last category, occurs when the students create form of experience and highlight some aspects of other real or actual experiences. Every experience is in some sense 'real', even though it may be indirect or mediated, so these terms are by no means mutually exclusive (Jarvis et al: 2004).

The proposed theoretical framework for Reading course for EFL university students is illustrated in Figure 1.

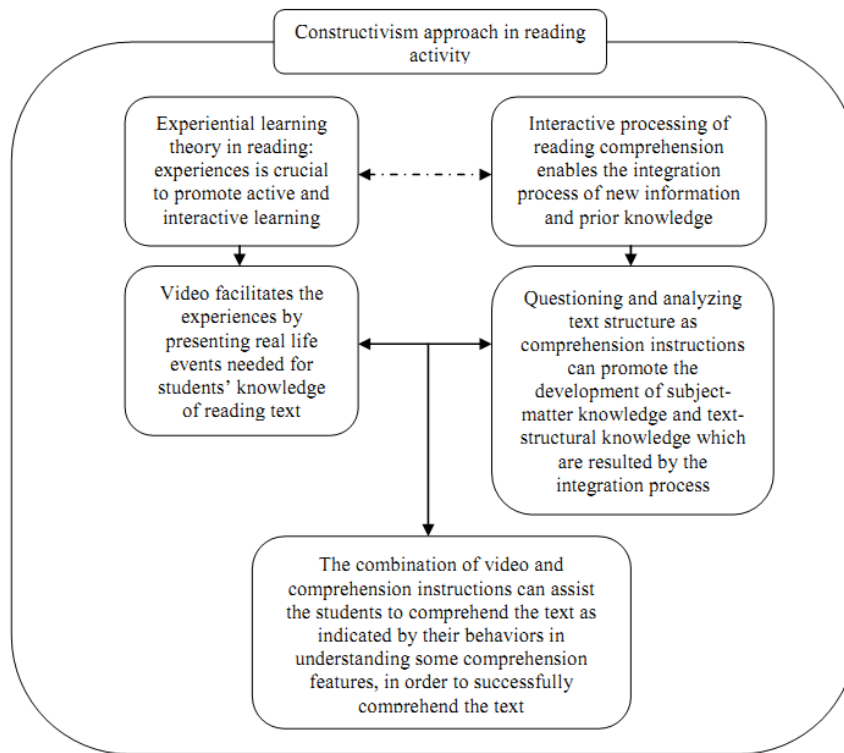


Figure 1. Proposed Theoretical Framework for Reading Course

READING EXPOSITORY TEXT

In academic field, expository text is a genre that is mostly encountered by the students than narrative text. Broadly defined, expository text aims to present factual information. Expository texts can be found in textbooks, biographies and autobiographies, newspapers, diaries, journals, magazines, brochures, and catalogues. Therefore, to read expository texts successfully, students need to understand how the organization is presented and should have sufficient knowledge to help them comprehending the text.

Reading and comprehending expository text can be more difficult than narrative text since it has many challenging topics and text structures (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Hall, 2007; Duke, 2002). The lack of knowledge and difficulties to understand expository text features may lead the readers into trouble with taking information from the text and gaining meaning. These difficulties in comprehending may result poor reading behaviors, such as tend to ignore the meaning-making requirements from reading the words, ignore to set explicit goals for reading, ignore to note the text structure, and ignore to identify main ideas and supporting details in solving the comprehension breakdown (Hall, 2007).

The nature of expository text as presenting information by focusing on its features (lexical, grammatical, discourse structures, charts, and graphs) to make meaning from the text, requires the students to interact with the texts during reading activity actively. Hence, the use of video as part of comprehension

instruction may contribute to the students' cognitive processes during reading and assist them to construct the organization of information in the expository text being comprehended (Andreasen, 2009), in order to assist the students engaging themselves in an active and interactive learning process during reading.

COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTIONS FOR READING ACTIVITIES

The use of comprehension instruction in reading comprehension activity has been proven effective to assist the readers in reading expository texts (Taboada & Guthrie, 2006; Guthrie et al, 2004). Two instructions that are commonly used to access and activate the students' subject-matter knowledge and text-structural knowledge in reading are questioning and analyzing text structure. These comprehension instructions can promote interactive activity for the students (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Kendeu & van den Broek, 2007; Taboada & Guthrie, 2006).

Subject-matter knowledge, as one of the predictors of reading comprehension, needs to be activated in order to recognize the meaning of the words in a text-model processing. Later, in the macrostructure level, the reader should access and activate her or his text-structural knowledge to make meaning of the text base by understanding the information structured in the text (Hudson; 2011; Kendeu & van den Broek, 2007).

Questioning is one comprehension instruction that can be used to guide the students become interactive in reading activity, as shown by their behaviors in reading (Grabe, 2009). Taboada and Guthrie (2006) state that one of the behaviors of an interactive reader is able to compose and answer her or his own questions during reading. Question as comprehension instruction is consistent with strategies of reading, which are skimming for main idea, scanning for details, guessing word meaning from context, making inference, using discourse markers, and using grammatical features. When asking questions, the students are deeply interacting with the information presented by making inference, focusing on details and main ideas, and anticipating conclusions. At the same time, during asking questions related to the topic, the students intentionally direct their attention to the text sections to look for the answers. Questions are organized into hierarchy of information, simple description, complex explanation, and pattern of relationships (Taboada & Guthrie, 2006).

Analyzing text structure is needed to process the information structured in the text. A reader should be carefully looking at the inside-text features (cue or signal words, keywords, phrases, or figures) and the outside-text features (table of contents, indexes, or glossaries) to reveal the structure of the text being read (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Kendeu & van den Broek, 2007). Students need to be taught to exploit these text features, and to use these features to support their comprehension. One of the behaviors of exploiting text features is to draw a pattern of information from connecting table of contents, subheadings, and figures in the text altogether (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Grabe, 2009).

VIDEO-INTEGRATED READING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES AS SUGGESTED MODEL FOR READING COURSE

The model for integrating video as reading instruction in reading course for EFL university students suggested in this article is a combination between text and video as the media of expository information, and the instructions used in implementing this model are questioning and analyzing text structure. This model is suggested to be implemented in teaching reading comprehension activities for EFL university students at beginner to intermediate level. It consists of three-step activities: before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities.

Step 1: Before-reading activities

Combining video with comprehension instructions in this activity is specifically intended to bring in real life events related to the topic discussed in the text to the classroom, as for the input for the participants' general knowledge. The purposes of using video-combined questioning as instruction are to introduce and arouse the participants' interest in the topic, to build and activate their subject-matter knowledge, and to provide audiovisual images needed for the next reading activity. The activity of making connections to the text will be reinforced by playing the video documents that contain similar information with the text. To make it clear, the instructions in this step are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Comprehension instruction in before-reading activity

Topic example: The Snowy Owl (topic is taken from Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies Level 7, published in 2002 by Saddleback Educational Publishing at Canada, USA)		
Examples of comprehension instructions	Behavior	Function
I want you to take a look at the title and the subheadings.	Write down the title and the subheadings	To introduce the topic
Can you guess the key terms that will be discussed in the topic?	Underline the terms, circle the terms	To build the subject-matter knowledge
Have you ever seen a snowy owl?	Mention or write down the place and the time of seeing a snowy owl. e.g.: on TV, on documentary program	To arouse the participants' interest
When and where did you see it?	about birds, in a magazine, in a zoo, etc.	To make text-to-self connection
Can you describe it?		
I will play a video of the snowy owl. Can you identify it?	Play the video, describe the snowy owl, draw a sketch of it, write down words that describe the snowy owl	To make text-to-world connection as facilitated by video To provide audiovisual images needed for the next reading activity
Do you know why snowy owl is	Write down 'why	To provide reason for

important?	important?', refer to the video to highlight the importance of snowy owls.	reading
Topic example: The Snowy Owl (topic is taken from Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies Level 7, published in 2002 by Saddleback Educational Publishing at Canada, USA)		
Examples of comprehension instructions	Behavior	Function
I will write down the important words that you have to understand during reading.	Write down words on the whiteboard, underline the words	To provide important key words and phrases needed for comprehending the text
Do you know the meaning of each word?	Point to the glossary provided, link the words to the title and the sketch of the snowy owl	To make text-to-text connection
Now watch the video again, and can you identify the important words to the video?	Link the words to the habits of snowy owl or characteristics of snowy owl as seen in the video	To make text-to-world connection as facilitated by video

Step 2: During-reading activity

In this activity, video is combined with questioning and analyzing text structure instructions, specifically to assist the participants to visualize how the text is structured, as well as to strengthen the concept introduced in the text. The purposes of video-combined questioning and analyzing text structure instructions are to help the readers organize the information in the text being read, to record the detailed information and main ideas, to clarify the information by locating the answers and looking for concrete examples in the text, and to deepen understanding of the text they are reading. The information of implementing video-based comprehension instructions is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Comprehension instructions in during-reading activity

Topic example: The Snowy Owl (topic is taken from Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies Level 7, published in 2002 by Saddleback Educational Publishing at Canada, USA)		
Examples of comprehension instructions	Behavior	Function
What is the main idea of the text?	Underline the statement of main idea, mention the main idea by referring to the title and the subheadings	To infer the main idea which is not explicitly stated in the text
What is this text about?		
Pay attention to the video that discusses the characteristics of snowy owls compared to other	Locate the example of snowy owl and other owls as discussed in the text,	To strengthen the concept already introduced in the text

owls. Can you find out the differences? Can you give the differences that can be found in the text?	mention specific line(s) that discusses about the examples, link the examples in the text with the examples in the video	To clarify the information of supporting details about the topic by locating the answers and concrete examples in both text and video
What line discusses about differences between snowy owls and other owls? How is sentence 4 related to sentence 5?	Mention the specific details asked, locate the answers, from the inside-text and outside-text features and in the video	To assist the participants record detailed information and main ideas
Can you guess pattern of the text? Pay attention to the subheadings and Table of contents before guessing the pattern	Mention or write down the pattern of the text, draw the graphic pattern based on the text features, look at the cue words in the text that signal the text pattern (e.g. therefore, as a result, reasons, etc)	To identify the text pattern from the title, subheadings, illustration or the concrete examples provided To build the text-structural knowledge of the text
Can you find out supporting details in each paragraph and put it into the graphic pattern? Can you find out supporting details in the video linked to	Draw the pattern, underline the supporting details in the pattern, mention the pattern and the supporting details based	To organize the information from the text To visualize how the text is structured
Topic example: The Snowy Owl (topic is taken from Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies Level 7, published in 2002 by Saddleback Educational Publishing at Canada, USA)		
Examples of comprehension instructions	Behavior	Function
the information in the text? How are snowy owls and other owls different? How are other owls related to snowy owls? Can you find out the examples to support your answers from the video?	on the text features and the video Locate the answer in the text, give concrete examples as provided in the text, mention specific line(s) that discusses about the examples	To highlight the information and examples needed for identifying text structure To deepen understanding of the text they are reading To give vivid description about the information in the text

How does the diurnal characteristic of snowy owls help them to survive in the north?	Predict the answers by referring to key words (such as antonyms and synonyms) and features of the text,	To infer the cause-effect relationship which is not explicitly stated in the text
Can you find out the examples to support your answers from the video?	Watch the video to find out the supported details for the answer	To assist the participants in making inference
Is there any information in the text about how do the snowy owls survive from the danger?	Look for the details in the text	To exclude unstated details
Are there any other differences discussed in the video which are not discussed in the text?	Make list of which details are discussed in the text, which details are presented in the video, and which details are discussed in both text and video	To differentiate information discussed in the text and presented in the video

Step 3: After-reading activity

The use of video as combined with questioning and analyzing text structure in this after-reading activity is basically to recall and strengthen the knowledge about the text which is already gained in the before and during-reading activities. The purposes of video-combined questioning and analyzing text structure are to guide the participants to connect all the information from the reading process, as illustrated in the Table 3.

Table 3. Comprehension instructions in after-reading activity

Topic example: The Snowy Owl (topic is taken from Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies Level 7, published in 2002 by Saddleback Educational Publishing at Canada, USA)		
Examples of comprehension instructions	Possible behavior	Function
Can you state the main idea of the text?	Mention the main idea and the supporting details, write down the topic discussed in the text	To monitor their reading comprehension process
What are the details that support your identified main idea?	and the supporting details of the topic, mention the examples of the topic as stated in the text	To strengthen their knowledge of reading
Can you give me examples of the topic?		To check the understanding of critical words and phrases
Do you remember the snowy owls' characteristics?	State or write down the details asked	To check the ability to recall all gained information

Based on your note, how is the information about whale presented in the text?	Describe the organization of the information, draw the lines to connect all subheadings in the text to support the answer,	To check the information already written
Can you draw the lines that connect all subheadings in the text to show the organization of the information?		To check the understanding of text structure
Now re-watch the video, and after that can you explain about whales based on what you have read and viewed?	Describe about snowy owls, talk about whales based on the note and the information presented in the video	To summarize the information

CONCLUSION

Video can be both illustrational and instructional tool for teaching reading comprehension activities. Since video is rich with audiovisual experiences, it can be exploited to become a powerful tool for empowering EFL university students in comprehending expository texts if combined with powerful reading comprehension strategies such as questioning and analyzing text structure. It is expected that this model is applied, improved and developed furthermore in order to assist EFL university students to comprehend expository text.

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