READING FOR UNDERGRADUATES EFL STUDENTS

Reny R. Nadeak.

ABSTRACT

Students acknowledge in a way, that they don.t understand the reading text due to lack of vocabularies. But on the otherhand teachers of reading take it for granted that the students have sufficient knowledge of vocabularies and sentence structures. In the end teaching reading turn out to discuss difficult or unfamiliar words and sentence structures. Helping undergraduates understanding a text is the purpose of this article. Teachers are to make plans in advance that cover guiding students to recognize words and sentence structures –learning about the importance of context and using context clues to find meaning. This context in sentences or paragraphs, the students will encounter in their reading texts. These practices of knowing words and sentence structures are expected to develop their interest and readiness in reading.Teachers play important roles and students have to participate actively to make the practices work. The skills of recognizing words and sentence structures in English are meant to be the students background og knowledge to be able to understand reading assignments. Some practices are recommended before the students are ready to read the texts.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people ;the reader and the writer" (Keith Lenz, Ph.D,).

All too often students fail to understand the ideas in the reading texts. Some complain about unfamiliar words. They know nothing about science, pshychology or other various kind of texts they encounter in a text selection . Some students know the words - they are familiar with them but they are not able to get the message or ideas implied in the texts. Moreover ,They do not have any previous knowledge of the ideas and language used in the reading material. Most students have difficulties answering questions .They get frustrated to get meaning from long and difficult sentences eventhough the words seem to be familiar. They can not draw correct conclusion from the texts.

On the other hand , students read because they "must read the text. It is part of the "contract" they agreed upon.. For many students, reading is a constraint in a form of assignments they are 'forced' to do ? They have no choices but read the material the teachers tell them to read .Very often , when reading, these students suffer from a lack of confidence in their reading skills.. They become slow readers who keep checking their dictionary every time they encounter unfamiliar or new words. These students are unable to recognize the words and meaning.They become frustrated when they don,t understand what they are looking for. This causes a problem.

The writer believes that through practices the students can learn to read or to read more effectively. They need patience, guidances and motivation. Since they have to use the authentic text prepared by the institution the students should work harder to understand reading better. They have to be active readers. They need a creative teacher

to push them harder to find their conscious effort to do their best to go further in their reading assignments.

To be better readers , these students need their teachers to facilitate ways to make them understand reading better, to easily answer the comprehension questions their teachers or the texts offer. They need their teachers involvements helping them to overcome their problems. They need their teachers help them to develop their reading skills through extensive and continual practices. Active participation of the students during the process of reading avoid students frustration.

Reading For Undergraduates EFL students deals with some practices to recognize some elements of reading. Creative teachers are expected to be able to guide the students with some practices facilitated before they are ready to do reading comprehension-constructing meaning from texts. The teachers along with the students will solve the reading problems faced by the students in understanding the reading text. Stating objectives of reading and designing instructional activities will improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Some practices are based on the categories of cognitive process dimension .The categories of the cognitive dimension are adopted to guide the students and test their comprehension of a given material used. "Skills in the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy revolve around : Knowledge, Comprehension,and critical thinking of a particular topic. As a whole, there are six categories or levels in the taxonomy moving through the lowest order processes to the highest."

(Beth Lewis, About.com Guide)

The categories of cognitive dimensions and their corresponding verbs are as follows:

1. To Remember (Knowledge) :
2. To Understand (Comprehension) :
3. To Apply :

"Bloom Taxonomy Categories of the cognitive process dimension are intended to provide a comprehensive set of classifications for these student cognitive processes that are included in objectives" (Lorin W.Anderson and David R.Kratwol , 2001:30) This article among others deals and starts with simple ways of how to unlock meaning through context. Understanding through context is the best way to comprehend information in the text Doing this activities during class time must be very beneficial .Hints or clues they encounter in reading process help the students to comprehend the reading assignments.

Concentration on hints and clues could be done within a minimum expenditure of class time.

The Students who follow the instructions or practices are expected to make substantial progress in improving their reading competences. The students should follow some activities developed before they actually begin reading . They are exposed to some activities that lead them to be competent readers These activities might be time consuming but they are worth trying. Some practices are presented in the following categories and sub headings :

I. REMEMBER : RECOGNIZING RECOGNIZING MEANING USING SENTENCE –CLUES

Students always encounter new words in reading texts. The students could use some hints in a sentence that translate or define words meaning like punctuation, helping words, synonym , opposite, definitions and examples. Words meanings are found around sentences. " They learn to recoqnize hints or clues. This will help them to understand new

vocabulary items and motivate them to guess the meaning from context." (Dubin, et all : 1986 : 34).

RECOGNIZING SOUNDS (DIAGRAPHS) TO EXPAND VOCABULARIES.

There are 44 sounds in English and

Table 1- List of sentence –clues

No	Hints	Examples	Explanation
1	Punctuation (-) or (,) used to define a word.	-Linguists- People who study language -……. -Lingusits, People who study language….	(-) dash or (,) comma is □eparate by the definition of the word preceded.
2	Defenition	The heat of *magma,* a mass of liquid rock within the body of the earth, may be sufficient…	A mass of liquid rock within the body of the earth, is a definition of *magma*
3	Helping words	Linguists believe that our ability for a language is innate. *In other words*, humans are born with…..	Heping words *In other words* along with punctuation a comma (,) provide additional or important clues.
4.	Opposite	A good supervisor knows which is an *adept* worker from the *unskilled* ones.	Adept means *expert* which is the opposite unskilled.
5	Synonym	A periodical or a magazine I like is Tempo	*Or* tells that a periodical is a synonym of a magazine.
6	Examples	From among Time, Fortune, Tempo and Cosmopolitan , Tempo is my favorite periodical	Periodical means magazine such as : Time,Fortune, Tempo and Cosmopilitan.
7	To be	English Rose is a name given to Lady Di by Elthon Jhon	'is' explain / inform about the subject (English Rose)

These are some important prefixes and suffixes with their meaning.

Table 2 – List of Prefixes

1).Prefixes mean 'no' or 'not'

No	Prefixes	Meaning	Examples
1.	a	Not, without	asymetrical
2.	in	not	inability
3.	im	not	immoral
4.	non	not	nonstop
5.	mis	wrongly	misbehave
6.	mal	badly	maltreat
7.	anti	agaist	antichristian
8.	ir	not	irresponsible
9.	un	not	unpredictable
10.	il	not	illegal
11	Dis	not	Disadvantage

2). Prefixes deal with numbers

No	Prefixes	Meaning	Examples
1.	Mono	One	Monotone
2.	Auto	Self	Autobiography
3.	Bi	Two	Bifocal
4.	Tri	Three	Triangle
5.	Poly	Many	Polygamy
6.	Multi	Many	Multipurpose

3). Prefixes deal with time

No	Prefixes	Meaning	Examples
1.	Pre	Before	Preface
2.	Post	After	Post Graduate
3.	Ante	Before	Antedate

2.Suffixes :

Table 3 – List of Suffixes

N0	Suffixes	Meaning	Examples
1	1.able 2.ible	Able to be	1.Manageable 2.Defensible
2	1.ance 2.ence 3.ic	Relating to	1.resistance 2.independence 3.artistic
3.	1.ion 2.ism 3.hood 4.ity 5.ment	State of / quality of	1.companion 2.feminism 3.childhood 4.equality 5.entertainment
4.	1.er 2.or.	One who	1.reader 2.conselor
5	1.y 2.ful	Full of	1.curly,hairy 2.regretful, respectful

only 26 letters. This means that some sounds have to be represented by two letters put together e.g. ee (see), oa (soap), ou (out), er (letter), ng (ring), sh (wish) etc. These letter sounds are known as *digraphs.- two letters that represent a single sound. Learning the sounds using a synthetic phonics method help to improve vocabularies.*

A teacher of reading can use this method to teach students vocabularies . This skill can be acquired in 'Reading aloud activities' . The students who have a good visual memory and a natural ability to hear the sounds in words are able to teach themselves the code. They can use their knowledge of the digraphs to expand their vocabularies.

This method of teaching vocabularies is best used while doing reading aloud activities, A teacher can start with the simplest steps by telling students to pay attention to two vowels that reperesent one sound. Then

gradually , the teacher can introduce words with more complicated aspects. The teacher helps them until the students can understand the principles of synthetic phonics . The teacher can start by assigning the students to find words contain two vowels that they think having similar sounds .The students can find out what sounds those two alphabet vowels make in a dictionary. They have to make notes and practice using them in communicating with their friends.

The following table shows examples of letter sounds or digraphs . Once letter sounds are encountered in the reading text the teacher can tell the students to search for other words that belong to the same groups of sounds. The words could be two or more syllable words that belong to more complicated aspects

Table 4- Alternative digraphs and the vowel spellings :

No	Sounds	Alternatives Vowel Spellings			Words Examples
1	ei	ai	ay	a-e	Rain, play, made
2	i :	ee	ea	e-e	Deep, meat, these
3	ai	ie	igh	i-e	Tie, night, my, line
4	ou	oa	ow	o-e	Goat, snow, hope
5	ju	ue	ew	u-e	Due , few, tube
6		er	ir	ur	Sister , girl , burn
7		Or	au	aw,al	Torn, August, saw, talk
8		oi	oy	-	Boil , toy
9	au	ou	ow	-	Loud , cow

RECOGNIZING PARTS OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH

We can categorize English words into 8 basic types or classes. These classes are called "parts of speech". Each part of speech in English has its own function in sentences or in the system of English Grammar. A word may have more than one function or 'job' and different meaning in sentences regarding what parts of speech each of them belong to. Take the word 'study' in the following sentences ; 1.The students *study* how to use a dictionary.

2.The *study* will help them to search for words easily.

A Summary of the 8 Parts of Speech

II. COMPREHENSION : RECOGNIZING SENTENCES

1. CLASSIFYING TYPES OF SENTENCES:

The students sometimes can not tell which is the subject or a verb in sentences. This problems arise from the difficulties when they encounter compound–complex sentences. They may be unable to state the noun topics and the topic sentences and the

important ideas.

The students need to do exercises helping them to overcome this problems .

They learn to identify the simple sentences, the compound sentences or the compound-complex sentences in the text . They may underline the sentences based on the kinds of sentences intended.

The students would be happy to do this activity because they find it easy. They are more willing to respond to the challenge . They find the exercises are easy and the task as well. The are also encouraged to work together in groups. They could discuss things and finally make a decision which is the best answer.

There are three types of sentences in English : Simple sentences, Compound sentences and Compound - Complex sentences.

2. RECOGNIZING SIMPLE SENTENCES.

A simple sentence has one Subject and one verb.

The subject tells who or what does something A simple sentence may also have a complement. A complement completes the meaning of the verb or add more information to the sentence. A complement has many types.

A complement may be ; a noun, a pronoun, an adjective or an adverb (place, time or manner) (Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue : 1997 :15)

Table 5 :Parts of Speech in English grammar System

No	Part of Speech	Function or 'Job'	Example words	Example sentences
1	Verb	Action or State	to) be, have, do, like, work, sing, can, must	EnglishClub.com is a web site. I like EnglishClub.com.
2	Noun	Things or Persons	pen, dog, work, music, town, London, teacher, John	This is my dog. He lives in my house. We live in London.
3	Adjectiv e	Describe a noun	a/an, the, 69, some, good, big, red, well, interesting	My dog is big. I like big dogs.
4	Adverb	Describe a verb, adjective or adverb	quickly, silently, well, badly, very, really	My dog eats quickly. When he is very hungry, he eats really quickly.
5	Pronoun	Replaces a noun	I, you, he, she, some	Tara is Indian. She is beautiful.
6	Prepositi on	Links a noun to another word	to, at, after, on, but	We went to school on Monday.
7	Conjucti on	Join clauses or sentences or words	and, but, when	I like dogs and I like cats. I like cats and dogs. I like dogs but I don't like cats.
8	Interject ion	short exclamation, sometimes inserted into a sentence	oh!, ouch!, hi!, well	Ouch! That hurts! Hi! How are you? Well, I don't know.

3. RECOGNIZING COMPOUND SENTENCES

When A Simple sentence contains only one subject and one verb, A compound sentence is composed of two simple sentences joined together by commas (') and coordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions in English are : *and, but, so, or, for,nor* and *yet*. (Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue :1997:59)

After reading the text discussed the

teachers could tell the students to classify sentences they find in the text based on their kinds. Simple sentences and Compound sentences. The students could do the assignments in group too so they can share the sentences they discover. They may have discussion about the sentences and explain why they belong to certain kind of sentences. While the students do this project the teachers could make a round monitoring and give encouraging suggeston when they need one.

4. RECOGNIZING COMPOUND SENTENCES

Complex sentences are sentences with adverb clauses or conjunctions –A dependent clausecan not stand alone. It must be connected to an independent clause to make a complex sentence meaningful.

Due to the length and their different ways of using them in sentences, complex sentences are always invited problems to the students. . To understand, the students need to recoqnize these sentences with adverbial clauses.The students must acquire some knowledge when and how to familiarize themselves with the adverbial clauses to understand the ideas. They need to practice and to study all the signal words they find in the sentences and how they work to convey meanings. It is compulsory, since the Indonesian structure with adverbilal clauses, is different from the English structure.

Finding complex sentences from the text could be done in groups. This activities help the students to work together to recognize the kinds of sentences found in the text.

III. TO APPLY : DETERMINING, STATING AND WRITING

1. DITERMINING THE SUBJECT OR THE TOPIC NOUN OF THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The teacher reminds the students to first use or practice their knowledge in recoqnizing kinds of sentences..This involvement makes them able to determine the main clause.

The main clause is a sentence contains one subject and one verb and gives a sense of completeness to the thought. A complete sentence has a subject that tells who or what did something and a verb that tells the action. Both are very important words in a sentence because they convey essential meaning.

To be able to determine the main clause helps to detect a noun topic. The subject of the main clause is the topic noun. Like a subject in a sentence, a topic noun tells who or what did something

The following sentences are complete sentences because each of them has a topic noun or a subject and a verb

1. *Josef* plays hockey in the fall
2. *It* tells what the sentence is about
3. *The girl in blue skirt* smiled beautifully

The paragraph discusses only one subject which is called a topic noun. The topic noun is the subject of a topic sentence that the writer develops in the paragraph. To determine the topic noun in sentences the teacher could tell the students to search for the nouns or noun phrares in each sentence of the text. Then they should point out which nouns or noun phrases function as the subject or the topic nouns. They share among them their finding and exchange notes as well as opinions. They could compare what they find with other students.

This activities may take some time of the teaching allocated for reading course . To avoid spending too much time to play 'finding' the topic nouns in the classroom, this could be assigned as a pre-reading assignment. The assignment the students do

at home is to highlight or underline the nouns or noun phrases they believe are topic nouns or the subject of the sentences of the paragraph.

2. STATING THE TOPIC SENTENCE IN A PARAGRAPH

The topic sentence in a paragraph serves the same purpose as the subject does in a sentence. When the subject in a sentence tells what the sentence is about, the topic sentence tells what the paragraph is about. Where as the subject comes in the beginning of a sentence the topic sentence most of the time comes at the beginning or at the end of a paragraph. However, some topic sentences come in the middle of a paragraph or outside of the paragraph.

A paragraph discusses only one topic sentence and one topic noun The topic noun is the subject of the topic sentence. It is repeated again and again in almost all sentences which are also called developmental or supporting sentences in a paragraph. Each developmental sentence tells something about the topic noun in the form of synonym, a pronoun or a group of words or noun phrases.

Check the following paragraph whose topic sentence is in the beginning of the paragraph.

3. WRITING THE SUMMARY OF A PARAGRAPH

Table 6- Examples of Simple Sentences

SIMPLE SEMTENCES			
NO	SUBJECT	VERBS	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1	The students	Are listening	A simple sentence with a' subject' and a' verb'
2	Mary and Rose	Study	A simple sentence with two subjects
3	Mary and Rose	Study and work	A simple sentence with two subjects and two verbs
4.	My brother	Owns	A plantation (a noun)
5	My sister	Is	Beautiful (adjective)
6.	Mr Jones	Congratulated	My sister (noun phrase)
7	My husband	has	His own office (noun phrase)
8	A friend of	wants	To get married in January (verb phrase)
9	mine	read	In the library (Prepositional phrase)
10	The students	arrived	At 6 o'clock (Adverbial / time phrase)
11	She	sang	Beautifully (Adverbial Phrase)
	The singer		

Reading is an active process of deriving meaning. It needs active involvement of the students to comprehend a reading text. The students need to process other elements of the text. They required to know grammar and the structure of a sentence. The ability to classify The Types of Sentences help to reveal meaning. They need to go through some activities before they get involve in examining thoroughly the paragraphs in the text into reading comprehension.

The developmental sentences or supporting ideas found in a paragraph serve the similar purpose as the predicate does in a sentence. They tells something about the topic sentence in a paragraph. They tell the writer's opinion , feeling and ideas found or implied in the general statement of the paragraph. These developmental sentences or the supporting ideas are the ideas the students need to discover.

When the students are ready to discover or search fot meaning of the reading text they could make use of their prior knowledge to understand their reading assignments. They can go back to their knowledge of interpreting words using hints or clues or practicing to analyze the structure of sentences they encounter in a paragraph.

4. WRITING THE SUMMARY

A. Reading Activity :

The teachers have important role in helping the students to get into meaning important information in a text. The creative teachers would prepare questions. Supplying background informations for the text lead the students into comprehending the text. This activity is done after the teacher and the students have gone through learning processes implementing the categories of cognitive dimension and their elements .

Take the paragraph below as a model and prepare some questions that lead them to be able to understand what is the reading text about :

The teacher gives a few minutes for the students to read the text. When the students are busy with the text the teacher prepares the questions to refresh their memory of the text.. The teacher reads or writes the questions on the board, give the students some time to read and write the answers on their paper then discuss it among them. To warm the discussion the teacher could divide the students in groups and tell them to write the answers on a piece of paper .

B. Reading Analysis

1. What is the subject or the topic noun ?
2. What does the subject do ?
3. What is the best tittle to give to the paragraph ?
4. What is the topic sentence of the paragraph?
5. Why do you think it is the topic sentence?
6. How many developmental sentences are there ?
7. What do you think of the subject ?
8. Do you know anyone as active as Josef ?

C. Making notes to write the summary

1. Josef is the topic noun
2. He plays many sports
3. Josef
4. Josef is a busy boy
5. 'Josef' is repeated over and over in the whole paragraph.
6. There are 7 developmental sentences
7. Josef is an active and busy boy
8. Various answer is possible

CONCLUSION :

Some practices offered in this article are meant to help undergraduates of EFL students to easily understand their reading assignments. They are arranged in such a way that the students can build confidence in working on their reading assignments. These activities could be done in groups. Breaking down complex processes of learning by starting from the simplest to more complex help the students to attain the goal of the activities.

Bloom's Taxonomy Categories of cognitive dimension are used to design the instructional activities. They are used to help the students start from the simplest ways to comprehend the text.

The first and second cognitive

categories are focused on recognizing and recalling the the vocabularies and types of sentences. They both are the important elements in comprehending the reading passages .

The students can also utilize the text they use in the class room and adapt themselves to fit to certain needs. The students can focus on one element at a time then move to the next.

Creative students will do activities that help them to build more confidence in doing their individual reading . They can accomplish their reading capacity by practicing at home. They can do it by sorting out passages in the text that they like. They don't have to wait for the teacher to tell them to do the reading. Having realized that the result of their effort to understand reading better, develop their confidence to move on. Eventually, Students will never find reading assignment an oppression anymore but a contentment that take them to be better reader.

Teachers need to motivate their students to read materials or passages other than the text used in the classroom. They can tell the students to find different topics they like and analyze them or present before their classmate. The teachers urge them to apply the same practices suggested in this article and tell them that the activities are related to their effort to develop their reading competences. They have to keep offering the students support to tackle complex elements.

Table 7 – Simple sentences and Compound sentences

NO	SIMPLE SENTENCES	COMPOUND SENTENCES
1	*1.It was raining hard* *2.There was a strong wind*	It was raining hard ***and*** there was a strong wind
2.	*1.He didn't do the assignment.* *2.He got good mark.*	He didn,t do the assignment ***but*** he got good mark.
3.	*1.You can leave* *2.You can stay to finish your job.*	You can leave ***or*** you can stay to finish your job
4	*1.She looked so tired* *2.She went to bed early.*	She looked so tired, so she went to bed early
5	*1.I was so angry.* *2.It was late already.*	I was so angry , *for* It was late already
6	*1.I was so angry.* *2.I felt sorry for her.*	I was so angry, yet I felt sorry for her.
7	*1.They didn,'t say a word* *2.They didn't leave*	They didn't say a word *nor* did they leave

NOTE :

- .Use comma (') before the coordinating conjuction in compound sentences only
- Coordinating conjunctions used in Compound Sentences are : *and, but, so, or, for, nor* and *yet.*

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