

HINTS OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

Oleh:

Fitriadi Lubis

Dosen FTIK UIN SYAHADA Padangsidempuan

Email: fitriadilubis@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

Salah satu keberhasilan pembelajaran ketrampilan berbahasa Inggris, termasuk ketrampilan membaca atau reading comprehension adalah teknik pembelajaran yang digunakan guru. Setiap guru mempunyai teknik pembelajaran tersendiri yang membedakan guru yang satu dengan guru yang lain. Dalam proses belajar mengajar ada beberapa hal yang tidak boleh terlewatkan yaitu teknik penyajian materi, teknik penugasan dan teknik evaluasi. Artikel ini membahas petunjuk-petunjuk terkait teknik memperkenalkan dan menyampaikan materi, petunjuk mengelola tugas-tugas rumah, mengoreksi tugas rumah, dan teknik menilai penguasaan siswa tentang reading comprehension yang lebih bermakna.

Keyword: *Hints, Teaching Reading*

I. Introduction

Nowadays English is one of the foreign languages which are studied in our schools in Indonesia. This language is studied from junior high school up to and including the college level.

The teaching of this language is concentrated on the four skills, namely; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills can be divided into two categories, namely; receptive skills (listening and reading), and productive skills (speaking and writing). Krontyik (1969) says "listening and reading are alternatives for the reception of messages, while speaking and writing are respectively associated means for its transmissions"

The success of teaching depends on various factors such as; the seriousness of the students in learning English, the facilities, the strategy used in presenting the materials to the students, the teachers' and the teacher's ability and methodology.

Among these things, method is considered to have a great influence on the result of the teaching. It might be one of the most important things that must be considered. In this case Mulyanto Sumardi (1987) says "The success of the language teaching program is always estimated through the method used".

There are many methods which can be applied in language teaching. The choice of method is influenced by the particular objectives in learning the language, for instance the direct method may be used for teaching listening, dramatization may be used for teaching speaking, reading method may be used for teaching writing.

In addition to the method, syllabus and contents of the curriculum are also very important because the materials presented in the teaching process is already planned in the syllabus.

If we scrutinize the contents of the English curriculum of SMA. It can be found that among the four skills, the reading skill is given more time than the other skills.

For six years study: three year at junior high school and three years at senior high school a great deal of reading material was given to the students as planned in the curriculum, but the facts indicate that many senior high school students are still very poor in English. We still find most of the students do not have the required ability in reading comprehension. Most of them still have many difficulties in reading, understanding and translating the text books which written in English.

Senior high school graduation, especially, who want to continue their study to university needs skills in reading comprehension, because nowadays a lot of scientific books in university libraries are written in English. So, in teaching reading comprehension process, the teachers should use various techniques in order the materials that are presented by the teachers are easy to understand by the students. If the students know the techniques of searching idea, or information from the reading texts, of course it can help them to complete their assignments which instructed by their lectures later.

Based on the explanation above, through this article the writer tries to propose hints for teaching reading comprehension.

II. Discussion

2.1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension can be defined as the ability to construct meaning from a given written text (Lems, at all : 2010). Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language, (Tankerslay : 2005). From the the two definitions, it can be concluded that reading comprehensioan is the process of extracting the meaning from the text.

Reading comprehension is an important language skill. By having a good skill in reading comprehension, the students will be easy to get information from many sources, such as books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, handbooks, repots a.t.c. If the students have a good ability in reading comprehension they will be successful in their studies in the future. Of course, the students who have good reading skills will more easily find ideas in the text, because they know the techniques of reading comprehension, types and purpose of reading texts, and also the process of reading comprehension activities itself.

2.2. Hits of Teaching Reading

Technique can be defined as method, way or system. According to Hornby, technique is method of doing something expertly. Teaching according to Djayadisastra (1982) is all the initiatives that are carried out by the teacher to hand the material to the students. Wile reading comprehension according to Grellet (1986) “is understanding a written text by means of extracting the required, information from it as efficiently as possible”

Based on the definition above, the meaning of the technique of teaching reading comprehension is the method or way used by the teachers in carrying out the text by means of extracting the required information from reading texts.

In teaching English, include in teaching reading comprehension, there are many techniques that can be used by the teacher. The most important thing for the teachers are to

select the most suitable techniques for the subjects and develop appropriate technique for that. Every teacher may have his own technique in teaching reading comprehension. This is very important for the teachers because teachers are trained in using a variety of methods and techniques to achieve the highest degree of student learning.

According to Wren and martin (1984) there are four steps in presentation of reading comprehension, namely;

- a. Read the passage fairly quickly to get the general idea.
- b. Read again a little slowly, so as to know the details
- c. Study the questions thoroughly
- d. Asking the meaning of any words or phrases.

Amy L. Sonka (1979) in her article *Reading Has to be Taught Too*, limited the presentation of reading into three steps;

- a. Asking the students to number the paragraphs.
- b. Students are asked to underline the topic sentence.
- c. The students are given a list of facts they have to match to the general topic without referring to the original.

Furthermore, Sally (1981) says that there are five steps of the reading comprehension presentation, namely;

- a. Explanation of the text
- b. Word study
- c. Oral comprehension
- d. Reading aloud
- e. Written work.

Based on the above ideas, it can be concluded that there are many steps that can be used in reading comprehension presentation, namely;

1. Introduction or explain of text.

Here the teachers introduce the text to the class and then explain it shortly to raise the students' interest in the lesson being discussed. Sally (1981) says "After a short introduction (such as Today we are going to read about Marcopolo. The famous traveler, and so on)" the teachers read the passage to the class, while the students are asked to listen to the teachers

2. Word study.

This step include asking the meaning of words, phrases, and idiom; The teachers ask the students to study the words, phrases, and idiom which occur in the text. If any words are not understood by the students or unfamiliar with them they may ask their teachers and "the teachers have to explain their meaning because some of the words will be new to the class while others will be familiar words in new ways

3. Asking the students to number the paragraphs of the passage.

This is very important because through this activity the students will find certain words, phrases, and idiom, which are being explained or discussed by the teachers, for instant the teachers tell the students to find the words similar in the second paragraph, or look at the word simulate in the third paragraph and so on.

4. Read the passage fairly quickly to get the general idea.
The teachers request the students to read the passage quickly. The students do not look for any specific information, but to get a good general overall understanding of the passage, such as; how many people there are in the passage, what is the relationship among the paragraph, etcetera.
5. Read again a little slowly so as to know the details.
After the students read the passage quickly, the students are asked to read again to know the detail of the passage. In this case, Harmer (1983) says “Very often the students have read the passage for the first time, they then return to it to perform more detailed comprehension which focus on detail of the text” the students should be able to grasp information from paragraph by paragraph.
6. Underlining the topic sentence.
The students are asked to underline the topic sentence of every paragraphs. This is very important in the activity of reading comprehension because the topic sentence usually states the main idea of the paragraph.
7. Oral comprehension.
Here, the teachers test the students’ understanding of the passage by asking oral comprehension question. Hill and Dobby (1983) says “Asking oral comprehension to be answered orally by individual pupil or by all students” This is an important part of reading comprehension class to know whether the students understand the passage or not.
8. Reading aloud.
Reading aloud is essential during the reading activity, related to this Sally (1981) says “A reader who has not pronounced the word could for example will be struggling to read it, while a students who has read it aloud several times will read it at glance”
9. Study questions thoroughly. The teachers ask the students to study the questions at the end of the passage. If any of the students do not understand the questions, the teachers have to explain and make the questions clear to the students.
10. Written work. This written work can be answering the comprehension questions of the passage, taking some points or ideas from the passage, translating the passage into Indonesian and summarizing the passage. This work should be written in their exercise books.

2.3. Hits of Organizing Reading Homework

Homework is an important part in teaching and learning process. Homework can consolidate the work, increase ability, and develop independent study, and desirable work habit.

In organizing a piece a piece of homework, firstly, we have to plan it, so that the students will be interested in it. Howard (1986) says “Carefully planned and effectively used, the students assignment can develop strong students’ interest, participation, and understanding, and multiply the value of the teacher’s lesson” Meanwhile the home works must be carefully planned. We have to state our aim, and consider how much they are, what kind of home works

they are, how they should be done and when they are to begin. Make the home works clear to all students, explain exactly what is to be done and when they are due.

The homework should include a variety of activities and things to do, so that the students do not become bored. The home works may be of almost infinitive variety. They may be difficult or relatively easy and long or short.

The home works must be developed from the material already studied, even though the home works are taken from various sources, such as; magazines, newspapers and other books. It must relate to the class work. Howard (1986) says “The homework should arise naturally from classwork its relationship to class work needs to be carefully delinated with sufficient time given for its completion” The length of time may allow four or five nights. Otherwise we should always collect the homework, and make same assessments about the students’ ability, study skills and efforts.

The home works for reading comprehension can be completed by the students individual work and in group work. Harmer (1983) says “Reading work can be focused for individual study and in group”. Individual work is a very good activity because the students can work on their own home works freely without putting pressure on their friends. Beside that, the students may complete the home works in group work. The group work should consists of one leader and four members, and at lest one member of the group is good student.

2.4. Hits of Correcting Reading Homework

Correcting home works can be done by two techniques namely; by both the students and the teacher. In students correct-student technique, the teachers ask the students to correct their friends’ homework. Another way to correct the homework is by asking to read his homework to the class loudly, or write his own homework on the blackboard. While the other students are asked to make a note of mistakes then give the correct response, ideally written work can form the basis for the students correction, students exchanging their works. They then look for mistakes in each other’s writing and attempt to correction. Next, teacher corrects students.

In teacher-correct-students technique the teachers must be able to show the students the mistakes which has been made, and tell them the reasons why they are mistakes and help the students to realize what has gone wrong and put it right. The teacher should underline the mistakes, and put the mark in the margin to show what kinds of mistakes they are. In this case the teacher will need symbols for correcting the mistakes, such as the symbols for spelling of the words, wrong place, punctuation etcetera. The following example shows how the teachers can indicate that a student has made mistake in word order.

For example :

(WO) I like very much banana. (WO = word order) It means that there is a mistake in word order. The correct one is I like a banana very much.

The students should understand clearly what they mean, since the teachers should ask the students to stick these key symbols on their exercise books.

2.5. Hits of Reading Evaluation

Evaluation is very important because by evaluation we will get the information about the result of the teachers' efforts in teaching and learning process.

Generally, a discussion of teaching starts with planning and ends with evaluation. Therefore in appraising students' work we will talk about evaluation. Purwanto (1986) says "Evaluation is the estimation of the growth and progress of pupils toward objectives or values in the curriculum" While the aim of evaluation is to reach the information about the yield of teaching, aptitude, interest, and other personality aspects of the students.

One way to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding, skills and competence is through test. The test is as a tool of measuring all the significant features of what taught. The test itself must be valid, efficient and reliable. According to Nord (1962)

Validity means simply that the procedure measures what we want to measure and not other things. Reliability means that the procedure yield consistent result, not measuring high one time and low another or bring any wise capricious in its finding. Efficiency means of course that neither time nor effort is wasted.

In addition, clarity and discrimination are also very important. The test should be constructed as clearly as possible because the vague construction of test will give an opportunity or opening for guessing the answer. Discrimination means the test can discriminate the students who have learnt the material being tested, or the students who have not learnt it, can answer the test, it means the test is bad because it can not discriminate the students' ability.

Therefore, test construction requires careful planning in keeping with the previously determined objective of the lesson. The teachers should determine the length of the test, the time allowed, when the test held, and what kind of test items to use, and the materials that will be tested.

The materials of the test must be based on the text book and the lessons that have been taught. Presumably a test will show what was taught and what was learnt. Beside that, it is recommended that the test is written with different form. The questions should be separated into several groups in order to avoid confusion among the students. The test should be written in certain logical order for example; from easy to difficult questions. When the test is finished, the teachers should collect the test to be corrected promptly and return it to the students. Every correct answer should be given the same credit. The teachers should not give credit to answer unrelated to question because it is not the answer we want even though the answer is factually correct.

According to Dobson (1980) there are two types of tests which can be used in teaching reading comprehension, namely; multiple choice, and cloze tests. Relation to it Heaton (1983) says "the test which can be used in testing reading comprehension are matching test, true-false, multiple choice, completion, and cloze test"

Based on the ideas, the test that can be used in testing reading comprehension are as follows;

1. Matching test. Matching test is a test where the students are required to match the statements or questions or pictures with certain words or sentences which have been prepared. It consists of the answers. The number of answer is more than the questions. Matching test is very good when used for specific information such as causes and effect,

terms, dates, places, definition and pictures. It can use to test words and sentences too. For example;

Tom is not going to your school

- A. Tom is not going to your pool
- B. Tom is going to your school
- C. Tom is not coming to your school
- D. Tom I not going to your school

2. True–False. A true-false test is a test where the students are required to have only one answer between the two possible responses. There are no alternatives except true-false (T-F). The most common words which are used in this test are true-false. But sometimes we can use yes-no, right-wrong, agree-disagree. True-false test is very good when used for recalling factual knowledge and recognition. For example;

Put a circle round the letter T if the statement is true; if it is false put a circle round letter F.

The sun rises in the west	T	F
Fish can't fly, but bird can	T	F
Lagos s as large as London	T	F

3. Multiple choice. A multiple choice item is made up a question or statement called the stem, and four or more possible responses, one or more of which is correct and the reminder called destructors. In this test the students select the right or the best answer by writing the number of the correct responses in the spaces or circling, underlining or crossing the number of it. The multiple choice items permit problem solving, application of learning and exercise in making judgment. The following example is multiple choice item. For example;

John is not as tall as Miss Green, but he's a little taller than Bill.

- A. Miss Green is taller than John and Bill.
- B. John is not as tall as Bill.
- C. Miss Green is taller than John but not as tall as Bill
- D. Bill is taller than John and Miss Green

4. Completion. A test which consist of a number question based on passage is completion item. The question is written as incomplete statement to be complete by the students. For example;

I had to look after my small brother until my mother returned home.

I could not leave home because I had to wait for to return.

5. Cloze test. A cloze test usually consists of one or more paragraphs where some words left out from every sentences. The first two or three sentences usually written completely. The interval at which word are deleted is usually between every fifth. Cloze test is very good when used for measuring the students' ability to decode interrupted or

mutilated messages by making the most acceptable substitutions from all the contextual clues available. For example;

Fill in the blanks with suitable words.

One upon a time a farmer had three sons. The farmer was rich and had many fields, but his sons were lazy. When the farmer was dying. He called his sons to him. "I have left you Which will make you He told them. But must dig in all Fields to find the where the treasure is

III. Conclusion

Technique cannot be separated from teaching and leaning process, include in teaching reading comprehension. The technique is a way of doing something. So the technique of teaching reading comprehension is the way of delivering reading comprehension materials to the students. To be effective the teaching reading comprehension, the teachers should use certain suitable techniques either in presenting materials, organizing homework, correcting homework, or in evaluation of reading comprehension. Good learning techniques will produce meaningful learning.

Bibliography

Djayadisastra, Yusuf, 1982, *Metode-Metode Mengajar*, Jakarta, Aksara.

Dobson, Julia, 1980, *A TEFL nthology, Selected Articles from nglish Forum*, Washington. International Agency.

Grellet, Francoice, 1986, *Developing Reading Skill*, London, Cambridge University Press.

Heaton, J.B, 1983, *Writing English Language Test*, Singapore, Longman.

Hill, L. A. and Dobbyn, M. 1983. *A Teacher Training Course*, London, Cassel.

Howard, Alvin W. 1986. *Teaching in The Middle School*, Scrznton, International Text Book Company.

Inhoof, Marrie and Herman hudson, 1979, *From Paragraph to Essay*, Hongkong, Longman.

Lems, Kristin at all, 2010, *Teaching English to English Learners, Insights from Linguistics*, New York: The Guilford Press

Nord, haville, 1962, *Secondary School Teaching*, New York, Macmillan

Purwanto, Ngalim, 1986, *Prinsip-Prinsip dan Teknik Evaluasi pengajaran*, Bandung, remaja Karya.

Sally,Ovaiza, 1981. *A TEFL Anthology, Selected Articles from English Forum*, Washington. International Agency.

Sonka, Amy L, 1979. *Forum*, Volume XII, January 1,

Sumardi, Mulyanto, 1987, *Pengajaran Bahasa Asing, sebuah Tinjauan dari Segi Metodology*, Jakarta, Bulan Bintang

Sukarna ,1977, *Dasar-dasar Pendidikan Science*, Jakarta Bhrata

Tankerslay, Karen, 2005, *Literacy Strategy*, Virginia : ASCD.

Wren, P.C, and Martin, 1984, *High School Grammar and Composition*, New Delhi, S. Chand Company.