

HIGH 5 STRATEGIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHING STRATEGY IN EFL CLASSROOM

Desi Surayatika
University of Indo Global Mandiri

Abstract

This study describes the use of High 5 Strategies in English Foreign Language classroom. As one of teaching strategies, High 5 strategies can help the students to tackle their reading. High 5 strategies consists of activating background knowledge, questioning, analyzing text structure, creating mental images, and summarizing. First, activating background knowledge is the important concept of reading that can help the students to connect what they already learned or knew before so that it allows the students to get a better understanding of what it is about. Second, question is also the important way for students to form questions that help them understand what to look for as they read. Then, the students need to understand the structure of the text that help them easier comprehend each part of paragraph in the text by analyzing the text structure. Next, creating mental image or visualizing is used to imagine the structure of the text that the students have known before, so as they read, they should also imagine how the structure is. Finally, the students summarize all important information that they already got using the previous strategies. High 5 strategies provide an opportunity for all the EFL students to activate their background knowledge and form question in their mind, analyze, visualize and summarize the reading. In short, High 5 strategies can be used to help the students to learn better especially in improving their reading skill.

Key words: *High 5, strategy, teaching, EFL, classroom*

INTRODUCTION

English is known as one of the most important means for acquiring knowledge and information. Mastering English is one way to reach out the world because English is an international language which is used as a means of communication among nations. In Indonesia, English is as foreign language. Based on the *PISA 2009* database, Indonesian students' score was below the OECD average and on the 57th of 65 countries (OECD, PISA 2009). It was noticed that the condition in the process of teaching and learning English must be improved by using an appropriate method. Therefore, the teachers should apply good techniques to make students realize the pleasure of English. Nowadays, people, particularly the students should master English because as an international language it helps them in seeking some information.

Reading is the essential foundation of seeking information and knowledge. Learning to read is an important educational goal. For both children and adults, the ability to read opens up new

worlds and opportunities. It enables them to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature, and do every day things that are part of modern life, such as, reading the newspaper, magazine, short story, novel, job listing, map and etc. Most people learn to read in their native language without difficulty. Many, but not all, learn to read as children. Some children and adults need additional help. Moreover, reading is one of the important English skills because by reading people can understand the information sent or read from the printed pages. Reading offers a productive approach to improve vocabulary and word power. It is observed that children and teenagers who love reading have comparative higher IQs. Reading helps in mental development and it is an activity that involves greater levels of concentration and adds to the conversational skill of the readers.

According to Galda and Beach (2001) assert that texts can be difficult or easy depending on factors inherent in the text, on the relationship between the text and the knowledge and abilities of the reader, and on the activities in which the reader is

engaged. For example, the content presented in the text has a critical bearing on reading comprehension. A reader's domain knowledge interacts with the content of the text in comprehension. In addition to content, the vocabulary load of the text and its linguistic structure, discourse style, and genre also interact with the reader's knowledge. When too many of these factors are not matched to a reader's knowledge and experience, the text may be too difficult for optimal comprehension to occur. Further, various activities are better suited to some texts than to others.

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive ability requiring the capacity to integrate text information with the knowledge of the listener or reader and resulting in the elaboration of a mental representation (Meneghetti, Carretti, & Beni, 2006). In addition, according to Rudell (2005), the most common academic goal of reading is reading comprehension (p. 88). Comprehension is a construction process because it involves all of the elements of the reading process, working together. In order that comprehension can occur, words must be decoded and associated with their meanings in a reader's memory. Phrases and sentences must be processed fluently so that the meanings derived from one word, phrase or sentence are not lost before the next one is processed. The reader must construct a writer's message without the benefit of live conversation, relying only what is derived from the text and the reader's own prior knowledge or past experiences. The reader must monitor this construction process, solving problems and making repairs as needed. This involves the conscious use of comprehension strategies.

Moreover, reading comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text. Connected text is any written material involving multiple words that forms

coherent thoughts. Phrases, sentences, paragraphs and so on are examples of connected text that can be read with comprehension. Reading difficulties become most apparent when the reader is unable to grasp the meaning from a text passage.

So, in general, reading comprehension as the complex process of understanding the meaning one word or series of words presented in oral or printed form and also the process of readers' interaction with the printed material. In addition, there are three levels of reading comprehension. These three different levels of comprehension can be called the literal level, the interpretive level and the applied level (Schieffer, Marchand-Martella, Martella, Simonsen, & Waldron-Soler, 2002).

The first level of comprehension can be called the literal level for the sake of wording because it is the simplest, most direct from comprehension. According to Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui (1997), literal of comprehension involves literal questions or statements directly expressed in passages. At this level, students will not have to understand the true meaning of paragraph; however, they can memorize the information. The teacher may ask students to read a chapter dealing with dates or specific facts. However, even though they have memorized these facts, this does not mean that they necessarily understand their full meaning or see the implication of these dates and facts applied to other situation. At the literal level, the students are looking at what was written by an author at fact value, little interpretation is needed.

The second level is called the interpretative level. Interpretive level of comprehension, the reader is expected to read between the lines. According to Herber (1978), at this level, readers are able to perceive the relationships of the information in the content material and

conceptualize those relationships (p. 45). In other words, students are capitalizing on their interpretation skills of using content information in the text and activating their critical and analytical skills to construct meaning in reader-text transaction. It is presumed that students have already memorized certain facts at the literal level and now they are attempting to see the implications of the author's words. At the interpretive level, the students are attempting to read between the lines, as they say. At this level, students are attempting to understand that which you memorized at the literal level of comprehension. Knowing the how's and why's behind this level of understanding is obviously a much deeper or profound level of thinking. Interestingly, it is this level of comprehension that the teachers will most likely expect students to get to in their courses. Of course they want students to memorize dates, facts, details, but they also want their students to be able to understand how that information relates to and is connected to the "bigger picture" of what they are studying.

The last level is called the applied level. Reading at the applied level is undoubtedly akin to discovery (Herber, 1978, p. 47). At this level, students are able to synthesize information in the content material to construct additional input in reader-text transaction. The exploitation of thinking skills such as synthesis and evaluation is necessary at this level of questioning. Students are attempting to elevate or rise their thinking one more "notch" or level to a more critical, analyzing level. This presumes that students have already reached the previous two levels. At this level, they are reading between the lines and then examining the message from the author and attempting to apply that message to other settings.

However, success of learning is determined by the exact use of learning strategies. According to Ueta (2005),

reading involves very complex processes and varies depending on purpose (p. 5). Therefore, applying appropriate technique is needed in order to increase students' English skill. A high 5 strategy is one of the ways to improve students' English skill especially reading. According to Dymock and Nicholason (2010) in their research stated that High 5 strategies help students tackle expository text with success. The explicit and systematic teaching of five comprehension strategies is so helpful in reading. High 5 strategies consist of (1) activating background knowledge (2) questioning, (3) analyzing text structure, (4) creating mental images, and (5) summarizing. These strategies are effective in enhancing students' comprehension of text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading as one of Important Skills for Foreign Language Success

Generally, reading is considered as one of the important skills for foreign language success in educational contexts. Reading is an attempt to understand the message that is either explicitly or implicitly stated in the text. In other word, reading is for meaning. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading is a complex and dynamic process that involves a set of activities such as remembering,comprehending, interpreting differentiating, comparing, finding out, analyzing, organizing and applying message sent through written language in order to understand its content (p. 9). To do this, the reader brings his or her prior knowledge or experience to the text. The clues in the text trigger the reader's experience relative to the topic. He or she uses clues from the text in combination with prior knowledge to form meaning; the use of these two elements together is the interaction between the reader and the text. In order to perform this process,

students must be taught to recognize words quickly and use the process needed to construct their meanings by using information from the text and relating it to their prior experiences.

In addition, According to Krashen (1989), reading is comprehensible input. The reader is keeping something in his or her mind from the reading process. He or she must understand what is being read. It combines the knowledge of the world (p. 19). In addition, according to Galda and Beach (2001), prior to reading; a reader has a purpose, which can be either externally imposed or internally generated. The purpose is influenced by a cluster of motivational variables, including interest and prior knowledge. The initial purposes can change as the reader reads. That is, a reader might encounter information that raises new questions that make the original purpose either incomplete or irrelevant. When the purpose is externally mandated, as in instruction, the reader might accept the purpose and complete the activity; for example, if the assignment is read a paragraph in order to write a summary, the compliant student will accept that purpose and engage in reading operations, internally generated purposes may conflict with the externally mandated purpose. Such conflicts may lead to incomplete comprehension. For example, if students fail to see the relevance of assignment, they may not read purposively, thus compromising their comprehension of the text.

High 5 Strategies

High 5 strategies are the key five comprehension strategies; they are (1) activating background knowledge (2) questioning, (3) analyzing text structure, (4) creating mental images, and summarizing (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010).

1) Activating Background Knowledge

Activating one's prior or knowledge of a topic before reading provides a mental hook linking knowledge the reader already possesses with ideas in the text (Neufeld, 2005). Activating background knowledge has strong facilitative effects on learning. In reading, the letters are identified by letter-by-letter decoding, which is generally supposed to be mechanical and autonomous, but the number of letters received, how long it is allowed to run, is sensitive to how much the observer already knows about the word (Rosenblatt, 2006). This reveals the marvelous flexibility of the word identification process that identifies only as many letters as are needed to identify each word. A good reader usually uses prior knowledge to make sense of new information; asks question about the text before, during, and after reading; draws inferences from text; monitors comprehension; uses fix up strategies when meaning breaks down; determines what is important; and synthesizes information to create sensory image. Reading slow is as the number of possible words increases. In addition, an accurate, successful word-decoding upgrades readers to the stage of connecting information with prior knowledge, so as to reach textual meanings/comprehension eventually (Bamford & Day, 2004). Therefore, students' prior knowledge is needed in reading that help readers make connections between what they know and what they are reading.

2) Questioning

Questions help the students focus on the most important parts of text, and they help readers find the key information (Zwiers, 2004, p. 97). In addition, helping students develop the ability to ask and answer questions of themselves and the text before, during, and after reading is an important part of the process of becoming

a strategic reader (Neufeld, 2005). According to Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2012), questioning is an effective way to check for understanding and to provide students with more opportunities to apply their conceptual understanding. It is helpful for identifying relevant assignments that reinforce the purposes for learning. Plan for questions that require students to apply, analyze, and evaluate to strengthen purposes for learning and build background knowledge is important.

According to Dymock, and Nicholson (2010), stated that in high 5 strategies, there are three types of the questions the students can ask: right there, think and search, and beyond the text which help students clarify and deepen understanding of the text they are reading. A right there question about the text is factual, such as, What are the facts here? An example of think and search question is What does the writer want me to figure out based on the fact? A sample beyond the text question is, What is not being said here that I should check by doing some background research? Prior to reading, good readers also ask themselves questions that active background knowledge.

Good readers ask questions and consider the text structure as they read (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). If the text has a sequential structure, readers should be encouraged as they read to ask themselves what will happen next. If the text is exposition and focused on one topic, readers should ask themselves as they read what the subtopics are. In this study, the students continually should ask and answer questions as they read.

3) *Analyzing Text Structure*

Making the structure of the text more salient improves comprehension and learning (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000, p. 316). Text structure awareness, or the ability to analyze text in terms of its

structure, is a mental awareness of how writers organize information. It involves the reader looking mentally for the structure, looking at keywords, subheadings, and other text features that can reveal the structure the writer is using. According to Meyer and Ray (2011), Readers who use text structure can mentally examine how ideas in text are interrelated. It means that analyzing structure also help the reader in comprehending the text.

Capturing the structures helps hugely in terms of comprehension (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). Capturing the design of the text in the mind as soon as possible is part of text structure awareness. A diagram will be used to help the students to analyze the structures easily.

4) *Creating Mental Images*

Dymock and Nicholson (2010) stated that when learning about structures, it is helpful for students to image the structure, that is, to visualize it while reading so that they can make the structure concrete. Visualizing is the mental organizing that helps the images and the information stick in our brain (Zwiers, 2004, p. 56). Good readers are like architects when reading text. The structure is the key to comprehension to comprehend a passage is to create a mental structure. Therefore, readers, as they process the text, should be able to get a visual image of its ribs and bones, its structure. When learning about text structures, strategies 3 and 4 reinforce each other, it is helpful for students to image the structure, that is, to visualize while reading so that they can later make a diagram of it. Diagrams help students make the structure concrete. Therefore, the students will make the structure of the text in diagram that can help them comprehend the text. Students should be encouraged to form visual images in their head as they read the text, which will help in better comprehension.

Summarizing

In the English reading field, summarizing technique is useful for students in terms of reading comprehension, recalling, and organization (Khoshsima & Tiyyar, 2014). Generally, a vast majority of reasons may be the source of students' difficulties in reading comprehension. Factors such as lack of appropriate reading strategies, lack of background knowledge related to the topic of the passage or lack of attitudes toward reading are examples of the sources of those difficulties. Moreover, there are few teachers who are familiar with the recent strategies to provide some effective opportunities for their students. On the basis of what actually occurs in most EFL classrooms, the strategy which is frequently applied by most EFL teachers and students is the summarizing strategy. After creating mental images, summarizing is the last step that can give positive impact in reading comprehension. According to Karbalaei and Rajyashree (2010), summarizing allows readers to differentiate key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas and to construct logical connections between them. Research shows that the ability to summarize a text can enhance comprehension. In addition, Palmer (2003) stated that summarizing is based on a learning process, and the perfect comprehension of a text will be a necessary step in order to teach students to condense information in a new piece of discourse. A summary reduces information from a piece of text to get at the crucial details. Good summary are able to strip away the extra verbiage and go straight to the heart of the matter. Summarizing is the last component of High 5 which can help students easily comprehend their reading. Knowing how to summarize the main ideas has a positive impact on comprehension. A

summary is concise and gives only the main points, which is as the ability to delete irrelevant details, combine similar ideas, condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that capture the purpose of a reading for the reader.

According to Dymock and Nicholson (2010), students can easily produce a summary if they use Strategy 3. First, read the text. Second, identify the text structure the writer has used. Third, make a diagram of the structure. Fourth, discard redundant information so that only the key ideas remain. Fifth, circle only the critical ideas that is needed for the summary. Therefore, in this study the writer will use diagram that can help students summarize the text.

High 5 Strategies in EFL Classroom

Using High 5 strategies is one of the efforts to improve the reading comprehension of EFL students, especially the Indonesian students. According to Dymock and Nicholuson (2010), High 5 strategies help students tackle expository text with success. The explicit and systematic teaching of five comprehension strategies is so helpful in reading. A major emphasis of the whole language approach is to learn reading naturally with a focus on real communication and reading for pleasure. High 5 strategies consist of (1) activating background knowledge (2) questioning, (3) analyzing text structure, (4) creating mental images, and (5) summarizing. These strategies are effective in enhancing students' comprehension of text.

Comprehension can be defined broadly as the process of constructing a supportable understanding of a text. Without comprehension, there would be no reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading. It

means that comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from connected text. Reading involves word knowledge (vocabulary) as well as thinking and reasoning. Students who have good comprehension will be successful to get the author's idea (Neufeld, 2005). It is the final product of reading, and therefore should require attention and emphasis during literary instructional time. As students begin the upper elementary grade levels, almost all of their reading experiences include informational text, such as textbooks. Through instructing students how to read the text for meaning, the teacher better equips the students to read actively and with purpose. By understanding the importance of reading comprehension and strategies that can increase reader knowledge, teachers and students will have a greater appreciation for the significance of comprehension skills and place a higher emphasis on texts in the classroom.

First, activating background knowledge refers to discuss some useful facts related to the topic to make connections between what the students already knew and what they were going to read. Prior knowledge is one of the vital necessary components of learning (Yuksel, 2012). It can help the reader to understand entirely and to draw the framework of the topic. When reading the passage given by the teacher, questioning is the second strategy that should be used to find the key information of the text. It refers to use three types questions, they are right there, think and search, and beyond the text. Then, analyzing text structure helped them to differ what kind of text it is. The hortatory exposition text was used during the reading class. So they analyzed the three generic structures of the text, they were thesis, argumentation, and recommendation. While analyzing the text, they should also visualize the text structure itself that can help them to make

the diagram of the structure. The students made the diagram in order to help them to make the structure that they already read become concrete. Finally, the last strategy, summarizing refers to the ability to delete irrelevant details, combine similar ideas, condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that help students comprehend their reading. In addition, summarizing strategy could influence students' reading comprehension ability sufficiently and made statistically significant improvement in the students' reading ability (Khoshsima & Tiyyar, 2014). For years, and more recently, summarizing strategy is regarded as an important tool in reading comprehension but as revealed in the present study, it is still worth to put emphasize on it. By using the last four strategies, they can conclude the main points of the text easily.

DISCUSSION

A high 5 strategy provides an opportunity for all the students to activate their background knowledge and form question in their mind. This technique can be used for a wide variety of daily classroom activities. High 5 strategies help students for better reading comprehension and help them learn better.

High 5 strategies consist of activating background knowledge, questioning, analyzing text structure, creating mental image, and summarizing for reading to tackle the text. The "Activating background knowledge" is the important concept of reading that can help the students to connect what they already learned or knew before so that it allowed the students to get a better understanding of what it is about. In short, activating one's prior or knowledge of a topic before reading provides a mental hook linking knowledge the reader already posses with

ideas in the text (Neufeld, 2005). Next, questions that help them understand what to look for as they read. Questions give students a purpose for reading and help them stay focused on the reading assignment. Questions help the students focus on the most important parts of text, and they help readers find the key information (Zwiers, 2004, p. 97). Analyzing text structure is also the important way for the students in reading. Students need to understand the structure of the text that helped them easier comprehend each part of paragraph in the text. In addition, making the structure of the text more salient improves comprehension and learning (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000, p. 316). Creating mental image or visualizing is used to imagine the structure of the text that the students had known before, so as they read, they should also imagine how the structure is. They also can write the structure before in form of diagram, they can classify which one the thesis, arguments and recommendation of the hortatory exposition text. Visualizing is the mental organizing that helps the images and the information stick in our brain (Zwiers, 2004, p. 56). The last important way is "Summarizing". In this way, the students summarize all important information that they already got using the previous strategies. They can get the topic of the text easily because summarizing allows them to differentiate key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas and to construct logical connections between them (Karbalaie & Rajyashree, 2010).

It can be concluded that when students are exposed to apply High 5 strategies, they will become aware of the processes that can make better understanding the reading passages and they can view the passage as a whole unit in which knowledge of the parts can be reach through regarding the preceding and following sections of the passage. High 5

strategies encourage content reading intending to make students ready for autonomous reading and understanding. The successful of reading comprehension would not take place unless some appropriate activities and strategies are implemented systematically.

CONCLUSION

An appropriate approach can encourage the students to read more and help them to understand the text easily. By applying High 5 Strategies in EFL classroom, it can help students to tackle the English especially reading. High 5 strategies consist of activating background knowledge, questioning, analyzing text structure, creating mental image, and summarizing. This strategy is good to enhance students' English skill. Having achieved an awareness of the strategy, the students can have a better command of a variety of practices they can use for successful reading of the passages. In short, High 5 strategies can be considered as an alternative method for teaching and learning of reading skill.

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