ENGLISH TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN APPLYING GENRE KNOWLEDGE IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION: AN ANALYSIS ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Berlin Sibarani
English Department of Faculty of Language and Arts (FBS)
The State University of Medan, North Sumatera Indonesia
Email: pr4_unimed@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

Knowledge of text structure and how to apply it are regarded to be of great help for the students to enhance their comprehension of written texts. Fostering the knowledge and how to use the knowledge becomes necessary to be attempted. English teachers of senior high schools have known the importance of this knowledge and have taught the knowledge to senior high school students. Empirical evidences of how competent they are in applying the knowledge in teaching reading comprehension are important for further improvement of teaching reading comprehension. The results of the data analysis showed that the classroom practice for fostering the knowledge of text structure is misleading. The teachers are not competent enough to teach the students the way how to apply the text structure knowledge to enhance the students' reading comprehension. The underlying reasons for such incompetence may be due to (1) misconception of the nature of reading comprehension, (2) misperception of the purpose of teaching reading comprehension, and (3) lack knowledge of the relationship between text structure (genre) and reading comprehension process. These empirical evidences prove that the teacher is the key determining factor in classroom practices including for fostering the text structure knowledge and ways of applying the knowledge to develop the students into independent readers or becoming good at reading comprehension. Therefore, it is suggested that the improvement of classroom practice for fostering and applying of the text structure knowledge to enhance reading comprehension should be begun from training the teachers to master the nature of reading comprehension and text structure, the purpose of teaching reading comprehension and the relationship between text structure knowledge and reading comprehension process.

Keywords: Genre, Teacher's competence, Reading Comprehension, Classroom Practices

Introduction

The purpose of teaching English as a foreign language is to enhance the development of science and technology and consequently poverty can be alleviated. . Sayer (2012) said that in unstraightforward ways, English education can alleviate poverty because English, as an international language, is the linguistic engine of globalization which enables more people to participate in global marketplace and to have better quality of processing written English texts including those containing science and technology. The quality improvement of teaching Reading Comprehension to students at all levels is one way of achieving this goal.

Teaching reading comprehension, like teaching other subjects, involves four main variables, they are (1) presage category, (2) context category, (3) process category and (4) products and process category is broken down into three categories, namely (a) teacher thought process in planning, and deciding, (b) teacher thought process and the content of teaching, and (c) teacher thought process and students' thought process. The presage category refers to the teacher's knowledge, belief, experience, and education. The teachers' thought process which is extensively involved in the process category and highly correlated with the students' achievement is significantly dependent on the presage variable (Gage, 2009: 51-56). This implicitly conveys that the teacher is the key determinant factor of students' achievement.

Reading Comprehension as a construct, and the components of the construct, like the nature of reading comprehension, the structure of texts (genre), reading comprehension skills, etc, as well as pedagogical aspects of reading comprehension are some components which comprise the presage category which in turn determine the teachers' success in developing the students to be good at reading comprehension and to be independent readers. Text structure in teaching reading comprehension has to be manipulated till the students realize that each text has different structure and until they are able to use the knowledge to trigger their expectation while reading a text (Oakhill, 2015).

What goes on in the classroom is the heart of teaching and it is the consequence of the presage category reflected in the process category (Gage, 2009:57). The OECD (2009: 99) reported that among the OECD counties, the teaching practices are different from country to country and different from subject to subject as well as different from teacher to teacher. The differences are due to different belief, knowledge and attitude to the nature of teaching method, and the nature of subject matter.

In referring to the theory as proposed by (Gage, 2009) and the finding of the OECD (2009), in the teaching of reading comprehension of texts with different genre or text structure, teachers may perform different classroom practices which may due to the teachers' different levels of text genre knowledge, teaching method of applying the knowledge, belief of the aim of manipulating the knowledge, and belief of the aim of teaching reading comprehension itself. To confirm this prediction, the teachers' competence in applying their knowledge of genre to enhance the students' reading comprehension is researched.

Teaching Reading Comprehension And Text Structure

The theory presented in this section highlights the interrelatedness among the nature of reading comprehension including genre (text structure), classroom practices of teaching reading comprehension which comprises teacher thought process for content of reading comprehension, planning the teaching of reading comprehension, teaching methods, and for student thought process of developing the reading comprehension of a text.

Reading comprehension is the product of the iterative and dynamic processes that operate during reading to construct mental representation of the situation described by the texts. The construction of the model is enabled by iterative and dynamic interaction between the readers' and text's characteristics. The readers' characteristics include their capacity of working memory, word knowledge, background knowledge or knowledge of the world, and the readers' purpose of reading, while the characteristics of texts consist of text cohesiveness of texts within a genre, and between text genres, such as the presence of words and phrases signaling important relations, like causal and temporal relations (Barness, 2015)

Genre are communicative events which communicate a set of communicative purposes that are recognizable, identifiable and mutually understood by members of professional community, such as academic community. The communicative events are realized with conventional or rhetoric structure and with certain lexicogrammars to achieve socially recognized communicative purposes. The rhetoric structure is static, while the lexicogrammar is dynamic (Bhatia, 2014).

Bruce (2008) claims that genre is divided into *social* and *cognitive* genre. Social genre may include texts such as personal letters, novels, academic genre, economic texts, newspaper, history texts, etc. Each of the has static text structure and serves to achieve socially recognized communicative purposes. Definition of genre as elaborated by Bhatia (2014) belongs to social genre. But cognitive genre is defined as the overall cognitive orientation of a piece of writing. This type of genre is divided into four main types, they are   *narration, description, argumentation, exposition, discussion etc.,* belong to cognitive genre. Each of these types has different text structure and lexicogrammars.

Narrative text formally sequences people/characters in series of events in time and place. The sequencing of the events, is sometimes not for the sake of sequencing itself, but to set up one or more complexities or problems. Therefore, the Narrative text can be structured with orientation, sequence of events and resolution or with orientation, problem (complication), solution, and resolution. To sequence people or characters and events in time and space, narrative texts typically use action verb, temporal connectives and sentences of past tense, unless quoting direct speech (Kanpp, 2005: 221-226).

Descriptive text is structured with naming the thing to describe, classification, parts, appearance, functions, behaviors, habitat, etc. In describing a thing, simple present is predominantly used, relational verbs are used when classifying and describing appearance and function. Action verbs are used when describing behaviors. Mental verbs are used when describing feeling. Adjectives are used to add extra information to nouns, and adverbs are used to add extra information to verbs to provide more detailed descriptions (Knapp, 2005).

Argumentative text can be divided into two, namely exposition and discussion. Exposition is structured with thesis, argument and conclusion. The argument consists of point and conclusion. An exposition may have more than one argument and therefore an exposition may have more than one point and elaboration. Discussion is structured with issue, argument against, argument for, and recommendation. Both of the arguments may have more than one point and elaboration. The purpose of argumentative texts is to interpret the world and persuade the audience or readers of the validity of his interpretation. To achieve the purpose, the development of logical and coherent texts as well as the writer's and the reader's position must be conducted. The grammatical features used for this development are mental verbs, modality and connectives (Kanpp, 2005: 191-196).

Knowledge of different genre or text structure as described in the previous part is helpful for guiding comprehension. The knowledge of text structure and how to use it during reading can support constructive processing of situation model of the texts being read. Readers who are familiar with particular text structure know what to expect from different part of the texts, where to search for particular types of information and how the different parts of the text are linked together. Readers with poor reading comprehension appear to lack both knowledge of genre and how to apply the knowledge (Oakhill, 2015). In line with this claim, Evans (2013) said that the knowledge of text structure enables the reader to expect where certain information appears in the text and to construct the meaning of the text. Klinger (2007) also agree that knowledge of text structure can help the readers to better comprehend a text because with the knowledge, the readers are able to form expectation, organize incoming information, and judge the relative importance of what they read.

Achieving the knowledge and the ways how to use the knowledge can be facilitated in the teaching of reading comprehension by training the students to apply graphic organizer to visualize the structure of the text (Oakhill, 2015). Story map and story recipe are suggested to visualize the text structure of narration (Klinger, 2007). This training may foster the knowledge of text structure in the students' mind. To enable them to use the knowledge to build better comprehension of a text, they are asked to answer teacher's probing questions that are made based on the parts of the text structure. All such questions are initially dominated by the teachers and gradually lead them to raise questions that are made based on the structure of the texts and answer the questions they raise by themselves until they are able know what to expect from different part of the texts, where to search for particular types of information and how the different parts of the text are linked together.

Based on the conception of teaching proposed by Gage (2009), teaching reading comprehension also consists of four main variables, they are (1) presage category, (2) context category, (3) process category and (4) products. The process category in the teaching of reading comprehension can also be broken down into three categories, namely (a) teacher thought process in

planning, and deciding, (b) teacher thought process and the content of teaching, and (c) teacher thought process and students' thought process.

The presage category in the teaching of reading comprehension comprises all the Reading Comprehension teacher's knowledge about all aspects of reading comprehension such as the nature of reading comprehension, genres of texts and their lexicogrammars, etc., knowledge of teaching methods, knowledge of students thought process. The presage category also deals with the reading comprehension teacher's belief of those knowledge. Based on the theory proposed by Gage (2009), the teacher of reading comprehension can be considered as the key determinant factor of the students' success in building better comprehension of a text. This consideration is due to the theoretical claim that the teachers' thought process which is extensively involved in the process category and highly correlated with the students' achievement is significantly dependent on the presage variable (Gage, 2009: 51-56). So the success of the students to achieve the knowledge of text structures (genres) and to apply the knowledge to enhance their reading comprehension depends on what the teacher practices in the classroom, while the practice is dependent on the teacher presage.

Research Design
This article is based on a qualitative research design of non-participant observation. Transcription of tape-recorded observations of classroom teaching process of three senior high school English teachers in their application of genre (text structure) knowledge to enhance reading comprehension were taken as the data. Twenty eight observations were conducted to the teachers – two of the teachers were observed 9 times each and one is 10 times.

Classroom Practices

Based on the data analysis it was found out that the teachers have not been quite competent in applying their knowledge of genre to develop the students into independent readers. This is indicated by the what they did with the knowledge in the teaching of reading comprehension.
1. In the application of their knowledge of narrative texts to enhance reading comprehension, the teachers just raise the questions dealing with the components of the narrative text structure as seen in excerpt 1. In all of the scripts, T stand for teacher, S stands for individual student, and SS stand for more than one students.

    Excerpt 1
    T : Okay, have you ever heard a story?
    SS: Yes, Mam
    T : Have you ever heard Malinkundang? Legenda Danau Toba?
    SS: Yes, Mam
    T : [provide a narrative text entitled with *The Legend of Telaga Pasir*, then the T asked the SS to read the text, and wrote down 9 questions about the text dealing with the time, the place, the characters, the problem, the resolution and moral lesson]
       : Have you finished reading?
    SS : Yes, Mam
    T : Lets discuss. Number one, when did the story happen?
    SS: One day
    T : In which paragraph did you find the answer?
    SS: Paragraph one.
    T : Okay, right. Where did the story happen?
    S : In West Java

    <center>(I/Obs1/p.1, L3, L11-30, p.2, L1-3)</center>

    In script 1, the teacher raised 8 questions and here are the questions:
    (1). When did the story happen?
    (2). Where did the story happen?
    (3). Who involved in the story?
    (4). What was the first problem?
    (5). What was the first resolution?
    (6). What was the second problem?
    (7). What was the second resolution?
    (8). Why did Nyai Pasir change into Daragon?
    (9). What we can learn from the story?

The way how the teacher proceeded question one to question nine was the same as illustrated in script 1. The same way was also performed by the second teacher.
2. In the application of their knowledge of the text structure of exposition, the teachers also raise questions, but the questions do not represent all components of the exposition text structure. Even sometimes the teachers are confused with the questions narrative text structure. These findings are reflected in excerpt 2 and 3. In the classroom practice, the teacher could start the application of exposition structure knowledge by providing an exposition text, asking the students to read the text and assigning them to answer questions that are raised based on the text structure as seen in excerpt 2.

    Excerpt 2
    T : Today, we want to continue discussion about hortatory exposition. What is this? What is this? [the teacher show a mobile phone to the students]

SS: Haandphone, Mam

T : What is the function? Can you tell me? What is the function?

SS: to call Mam, for sms (*texting*) Mam, for camera Mam.

T : Ok, many functions, right? Open your LKS [*workbook*] page 44. Look at the text *Mobile Phone Should be Banned in School* Listen carefully, I'll read the text [read the text]

SS: [Listening to the teacher reading the text]

T : [after reading the text], What is the text about?

SS: That's about mobile phone, Dilarang bawa HP ke sekolah [*mobile phone is banned in School*].

T : Yah good. Right. Let's see your comprehension about the text. Look at the questions under the text. Answer the questions.

SS: [they were busy answering the questions]

T : [15 minutes after assigning the students to answer the questions] Have you finished?

SS: [silent, no response]

T : [5 minutes later], Let's discuss. Who can answer question number one?

S : [raise his hand]

T : Ya, what is the issue?

S : Mobile phone should be banned in school.

T : Good. Mobile phone should be banned in school. Next, number two. How does the writer view mobile phone recently?

SS: Recently, most people own mobile phone

T : Right, in which paragraph did you find the answer?

S : One mam. Right

T : After reading the text, what should be done by the readers?

SS: Mobile phone should be banned.

T : Right do you agree? Do you agree that mobile phone should be banned or forbidden in school?

SS: No, Mam.

<div align="center">(I/Obs 12/p.1, L3-40; p2. L.1 – 5)</div>

In excerpt 2, the application of exposition structure is limited to raising question of the issue in the text. Other components of the text structure are not applied.

In applying the knowledge of text structure of exposition, the teacher may confuse it with the text structure of narration, as seen in excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3.

T : Today, we want to study about hortatory exposition. Do you know hortatory exposition?

SS: no, no Mam

T : No? Okay. So listen carefully. Hortatory exposition is a kind of text to persuade the reader should or should not do the case or the issue, jenis text yang mengajak pembaca atau pendengar untuk melakukan ide penulis, pendapat penulis [*it is a text which persuade the readers or listeners to do the writer's idea*]. Mengajak atau membujuk pembaca untuk melakukan sesuatu.[*to ask or to persuade the readers to do something*]. Look at the example of the text in our textbook on page 199. Baca sebentar [*read it for a few minutes*] Setuju nggak, kalau iklan dilarang di TV [*do you agree or not if the advertisement is banned on TV*]

SS : Yes, Mam.

T : Why? Kenapa, kenapa setuju [*why do you agree?*]

S : Karena kita lagi enak-enak nonton rupanya sudah iklan, jadi benci awak [*because the TV advertisement frequently disturb us when we were absorbed in watching a TV program*]

T : Okay, so it means that you agree that the advertisement should be stopped in TV programs.

S : Yes Mam

T : Okay, look at the text in your book on page 199. Kita baca dulu. I read first and then you listen.

SS: [They are listening to the teacher carefully]

T : [having finished reading the text] I think you can understand. I will give you some questions for you to answer. First, what is the issue in the text?

SS: Advertisement should be banned from the TV program, Mam.

T : Okay, number 2, Where and when does the story happen?

SS: One day on TV program

T : Good. Number three. What is the first argument?

<div align="center">**(R/Obs13/p.1, L3-35)**</div>

The three excerpts are some of the examples of how the teachers apply their knowledge of text structure in teaching reading comprehension. The number of the excerpts and the text structure applied in the teaching of reading comprehension is small and this is due to the limitation of the space. However, they are quite representative to the whole classroom practices found in the transcripts of the 28 tape recorded observation.

In the classroom practices of teaching reading comprehension, the application of text structure knowledge is simply limited to the raising of the questions that are made based on the text structure of the text being taught. This is clearly seen in excerpt 1. Almost all of the components of narrative texts are questioned. All the components of narrative structures taught in this practice are theoretically correct (Kanpp, 2005) This indicated that the teachers have mastered the knowledge of narrative text structure well.

The application of the text structure of exposition in teaching reading comprehension as seen in excerpt 2 and 3, showed that the teachers do not apply all the components of the exposition. The components applied is *the issue* and *the aargument*. The two components, *the issue* and *the argument* , based on Knapp (2005), do not belong to the structure text of *exposition*, but to the text structure of *discussion.* Both *discussion* and *exposition* belong to the argumentative text structure. The text structures of *discussion* are *statement of issues, argument for and against,* and recommendation (Knapp, 2005:194). The text structures of *exposition* are *thesis, argument* and *conclusion*. The *argument* in an exposition may be more than one and each of the arguments should consist of *point* and *elaboration* (Knapp, 2005: 192). In comparison to this theory, what have been done the classroom process is misleading and the number of the components of the text structure of the exposition is much fewer than it should be. This indicated that the teachers do not have good knowledge of the structure of expository text.

There are some ways of fostering the components of text structure in the teaching of reading comprehension. A good way of fostering the knowledge is to assign the students to visualize the text structure. Graphic organizer and story map are two recommended ways of fostering the knowledge of text structure (Klinger, 2007). Simply asking the students to answer questions that were made based on the components of text structure is not able to foster the components in the students mind, because the activities does not emphasize the importance of knowing all the components of text structure. The activities might be considered as exercises for vocabulary learning. The feedback given by the teachers to every correct response may strengthen the idea that the activities is to mean for vocabulary enrichment.

The teachers' success in training the students to master the knowledge of text structure is not an end, but it is a means to an end. Mastering the knowledge of text structure is not enough. The ultimate goal of the activities is to enable the students to apply the knowledge to enhance their reading comprehension. Knowledge of text structure should enable the students to know what to expect from different part of the texts and know where to search for particular types of information and know how the different parts of the text are linked together (Oakhill, 2015). Therefore, the students should be able to make their own questions based on the components of the text structure and be able to find the answer to their own questions from the text. So the teachers' activity should be directed to the achievement of such goal. In other words, the application of the text structure knowledge in teaching reading comprehension should enable the students to be independent reader.

With reference to the conception of teaching that is put forwarded by Gage (2009), the failure of the teachers to apply the knowledge of genre to develop the students into independent readers or good at reading comprehension, is due to the teachers' lack of competence in manipulating the knowledge during the classroom process of teaching reading comprehension or during the process variable in Gage's (2009) terminology. Such incompetence, may also due to the teachers' lack knowledge of the nature of reading comprehension, and lack knowledge of relationship between text structure (genre) and reading comprehension process as well as due to misperception of the objective of teaching reading comprehension.

Conclusion

Based on the results of classroom practices analysis, it is concluded that the teachers are not competent enough to manipulate their knowledge of text structure to develop the students into independent readers or to become good at reading comprehension. The underlying reasons for such incompetence may be due to (1) misconception of the nature of reading comprehension, (2) misperception of the purpose of teaching reading comprehension, and (3) lack knowledge of the relationship between text structure (genre) and reading comprehension process. These suggest that the teachers' competence in applying their knowledge of text structure in teaching reading comprehension should be improved. Such improvement may be started from providing them with deeper insight of the nature of reading comprehension, purpose of teaching reading comprehension, and the relationship between knowledge of text structure and reading comprehension process.

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