

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The present study was mainly designed to explore Taiwanese EFL students' performance in the English reading comprehension tests in the BCT after the instruction of the reading skills and strategies in class. In this section, the researcher described first the characteristics of the participants in this study. Secondly, the instruments adopted in the study and the teaching plan to implement the research was introduced. The procedures then displayed the process of the present study. Last, the researcher also explained the statistical methods employed for analyzing the data collected.



Participants

A total of 73 students in a junior high school in Taipei were invited to take part in this research. This school is similar to most of other junior high schools in Taiwan in many aspects. First, English teaching and learning is greatly emphasized at the school. Second, English is a required course and two monthly exams are administered every semester. Third, the Basic Competence Test for entering senior high school also exercises an impact on English curriculum and instruction, and the major goal of the school policy is to help students enter their ideal senior high school.

The participants included 73 ninth graders from two different classes. There are 37 students in one class and 36 in the other. In general, there are about 36 students in a class. Male and female students are randomly assigned to each class, and students of different English proficiency are also randomly assigned in different classes. All the students in the two classes took the reading pretest held in February, 2006. The participants were also in the researcher's classes. When they were taking the pretest,

the researcher was responsible for supervising the whole process of the pretest. Among these students, there were 13 students who failed to complete the reading pretest, 7 in the first class and 6 in the other. After the interview with these students, most of them reported that they could not read the passages or the questions and they just made blind guesses or even quit their test. According to Clarke (1979), who first proposed the threshold theory, students whose background knowledge or reading skills in L1 are unable to compensate for a lack of linguistic proficiency in L2 are not literate in English. Therefore, their performances in either the reading pretest or the BCT in 2006 were not analyzed to avoid some unpredictable errors presented in the statistic data.

After the reading pretest, statistic treatments were taken to decide whether there was any significant difference between the two classes. The first class was the control group, which received the content-based instruction on vocabulary, grammar, structures and meanings of the reading passages. On the contrary, the experimental group received the instruction of the reading skills and strategies with the same reading passages. All of the participants took both of the BCT held in May and July of 2006.

Instruments

The reading pretest was used to collect information on the participants' reading comprehension performances. After the pretest, the formal reading instruction was implemented. At last, both of the BCT held in May and July of 2006 may demonstrate the effectiveness of the formal reading instruction for the participants.

The Reading Pretest

The reading pretest included the English reading comprehension tests in the BCT

from 2002 to 2004 (Appendix A). The passages from the reading comprehension tests were gathered and the items were edited. There were totally 21 passages and 55 items in the reading pretest, and the testing time lasted for two class periods, 90 minutes. There are six different question types, each of which also represents different reading skills, identifying the main idea (MI), finding the detailed information (DI), determining the meaning out of the context (MC), finding the targets of the reference (TR), drawing implications and inferences (II), and drawing correct conclusions (CC). The researcher also invited another English teacher to check whether the classification of the reading question types and reading skills is acceptable and available for her to conduct a similar research with her own students.

The participants were asked to follow the instruction of the pretest and take the test seriously as if it were the BCT. The researcher, who is also the participants' English teacher, was responsible for supervising the whole testing process. According to the literature review of the reading skills and strategies, the reading comprehension questions in the pretest were categorized to display six different question types and their frequency distribution. Besides, the participants' performances from both the control and the experimental groups were gathered and analyzed after the reading pretest to examine if there was any significant difference before the formal reading instruction.

The Formal Reading Instruction

The formal reading instruction consisted of the teaching plans for the control and experimental group and the instruction lasted for fourteen weeks, two class periods a week. The formal reading instruction was implemented from February to May in 2006. The instruction of the reading skills and strategies in the experimental group included three major phases, while at the same time, for the control group, the researcher

adopted the same reading passages and focused on the instruction of the vocabulary, grammar, structures and meanings. Besides, both groups were also assigned the same homework after class. Following is the phases of the reading instruction for the experimental group:

Phase one: Warm up and Introduction (Week 1)

Phase Two: The Instruction of the Reading Skills and Strategies (Week 2 to 13)

Phase three: Review and the Q&A Time (Week 14)

During the second phase, six different reading question types were introduced and each of them may include their own reading item forms, related reading skills and strategies, examples from the BCT and assignments for the participants to practice after class. After the formal reading instruction, the participants in both groups took both of the BCT held in May and July of 2006.

The BCT in May and July of 2006

The English reading comprehension tests of the BCT held in May and July of 2006 included 13 reading passages and 33 reading questions. The first in May consisted of 6 passages, 16 questions and the other in July included 7 passages, and 17 questions. There were five reading question types: identifying the main idea (MI), finding the detailed information (DI), determining the meaning out of the context (MC), finding the targets of the reference (TR), and drawing implications and inferences (II). But the question type drawing correct conclusions (CC) was not found in either of the BCT in 2006. The reading question types in the BCT of 2006 were discussed and the resulted of the participants' performances in these question types were analyzed to display the effectiveness of the formal reading instruction.

Moreover, You (2004) proposed that a large and standardized exam like the BCT is of high validity, reliability, and discrimination. The test results should be consistent with one another, and it would not be necessary to analyze both of the tests. However, the researchers planned to take both of the tests because of the emphasis on adopting more reading comprehension questions for each question type to enhance the sample number. On the other hand, the second BCT was held about one and a half months after the first one, and the participants graduated from their school in June. After their graduation, the researcher could not have the participants practice the reading skills and strategies in class, and the effectiveness of the formal reading instruction may reduce.

Procedures

There were four steps to carry out the experiment in the present research. The first step was to gather the reading comprehension passages and questions in the reading comprehension tests from 2002 to 2004, and categorized these questions into six different question types, each of which represents different reading skills, identifying the main idea (MI), finding the detailed information (DI), determining the meaning out of the context (MC), finding the targets of the reference (TR), drawing implications and inferences (II), and drawing correct conclusions (CC).

The next step was to conduct the pretest for the participants from the control and the experimental groups. The participants were given two class periods to finish the reading comprehension questions in the pretest. Then, their performances in the pretest were analyzed to figure out the overall tendency and their problems in a reading comprehension test.

After the researcher analyzed the students' performances, a teaching plan with reading skills and strategies was proposed for classroom instruction. Both groups

were given the same periods of class time, materials and assignments. The procedures to conduct the formal reading instruction are presented below. For the last step, after the formal reading instruction, the researcher compared the results between these two groups from both of the BCT in May and July of 2006.

The Procedures of the Formal Reading Instruction

The formal reading instruction included the teaching plans for the control and experimental group and the instruction time lasted for fourteen weeks, two class periods a week. The teaching plan for the experimental group was mainly about the instruction of the reading skills and strategies, and three major phases were presented. At the same time, for the control group, the researcher adopted the same reading passages and focused on the content-based instruction of vocabulary, grammar, structures and meanings. Besides, both groups were assigned the same homework after class.

Phase One: Warm up and Introduction. (Week 1)

For the warm-up activities, the participants were divided into five small groups, and two reading passage with seven questions were given to them (Appendix B), and they had to find out the answers with their partners in ten minutes. The group which used the least time and got the most correct answers was the winner. Then, the participants were invited to talk about how they figured out the answers and what were the difficulties they encountered.

For the next class, the researcher introduced the participants the importance and the categorization of the reading skills and strategies. The reading passages presented in the pretest were given back to them. They joined their small group again and discussed all the questions or items from the reading passages. They were asked to

find out what these questions were about and searched for some similar questions. Each group had to write down the question types they came up with and presented them to the rest of the class. After their presentation, the researcher concluded with six major question types. The researcher also gave a brief introduction of the six reading skills that may go with these question types-including identifying the main idea, finding the detailed information, determining the meaning out of the context, finding the targets of the reference, drawing implications, inferences and drawing correct conclusions.

Phase Two: The Instruction of the Reading Skills and Strategies (Weeks 2 to 13)

As presented in phase one, there are six reading skills, each of which includes a brief introduction, the question forms, related reading strategies, examples from the BCT reading passages, and exercises for the after-class assignments (Appendix C). The instruction of the reading skills is described as followed:

Identifying the Main Idea (Weeks 2 to 3)

Brief introduction

Among the question types of the reading comprehension tests in the BCT, this type of questions is designed to ask the reader to identify the main idea of the reading passages and decide on the topic or the title. Therefore, the concept of ‘topic sentence’ was introduced to the participants, and the researcher also taught them how to identify the topic sentence which may help them figure out not only the main idea but also the best title of the passage.

Question forms

Before the instruction of the related strategies, the participants had to be

acquainted with the question forms. Following are some of the item forms which are related to the reading skill of identifying the main idea:

- (1). What is **the main idea** of this passage/ article?
- (2). What is the passage/ article **mainly about**?
- (3). What is **the best title** for this passage/ article?

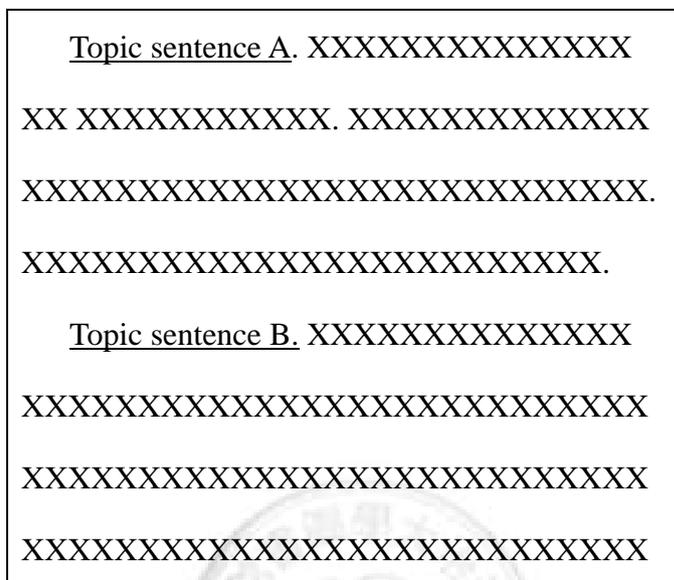
Related strategies

According to Sarig (1987), the technical aid strategies are skimming, scanning, and skipping. The strategies of skimming and skipping can be adopted to identify the main idea and the title of the reading passage. Brown (1994) mentioned that “skimming consists of quickly running one’s eyes across a whole text to get the gist” (p. 293). Skimming gives readers the advantages of being able to predict the purpose of the passage and the main topic. The participants had to skim for the topic sentence and skip the supporting details. Johnson (2004) also suggested similar ways to recognize the main idea.

Moreover, the researcher introduced different ways to identify the topic sentence. It is the sentence in the passage that best expresses the main idea that the entire passage is about. The topic sentence is most likely the first sentence of each paragraph. But if it can not be identified at the beginning of the paragraph, the participants may skip all the supporting details until the topic sentence is identified. In this case, the writer may arrange the topic sentence within or at the end of the reading passage to build up and enhance the main idea. The participants were advised to underline the topic sentence and identify the main idea and the best title. Besides, a passage often contains more than one paragraph, and there may be more than one topic sentence. When more than one topic sentence is identified, the participants have to decide and understand the possible ways to identify the main idea. The following figures may

present two possible solutions for the participants.

Figure 1. Combination of the Topic Sentences to Form the Main Idea



Main idea => Topic sentence A + Topic sentence B

In figure 1, these two topic sentences may present equal significance to the content, and according to Johnson (2004), if the passages have two or more seemingly equal general points, the relation between them includes the main idea. In Appendix C, there are two paragraphs in example 2, and the participants had to identify the topic sentences ‘John Keats is one of the greatest English poets’ for the first paragraph and ‘Keats spent the last three years of his life writing a lot of beautiful poems’ for the other. The two topic sentences are about two important aspects to introduce the poet, Keats; both are essential for the reader to get acquainted with this poet and his poems. Therefore, the participants had to combine the topic sentences to get the main idea and recognize the best title of the passage. The first one is about Keats’ life and the other is about his poems. Therefore, the participants can identify the best title as ‘Keats’ life and his poems’.

Figure 2. Preference of One Topic Sentence as the Main Idea

Topic sentence A. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XX XXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Topic sentence B. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Main idea => Topic sentence B

Figure 2 presents another common way to identify the main idea. In the example passage, the first paragraph is obviously shorter and the second paragraph may contain more important information, key concepts and significant statements for the whole passage. Therefore, topic sentence B may be adopted to identify the main idea or the best title. Assignment 8 from Appendix C is a good example. The topic sentence for the first paragraph is ‘There are culture differences between Chinese and Americans’ and that for the second paragraph is ‘Food plays an important part on Chinese holidays (festivals). In this passage, topic sentence A may serve as the introduction to bring out the important points afterwards. It just describes the situation that Chinese usually celebrate holidays with food, but Americans love to celebrate with funny activities. Then the focus is on topic sentence B that is about the importance of food on Chinese holidays. The whole paragraph is about the relationship between food and Chinese holidays and therefore, topic sentence B may

best represent the main idea of the passage instead of topic sentence A. Then, the best title for this passage would be 'Food and Chinese Festivals'.

Examples from the BCT

Four examples (Examples 1 to 4) from the BCT reading passages in the pretest were discussed in class and the researcher would lead the participants through all these passages to practice the reading skill and related strategies they can apply when identifying the main idea, and the best title.

Assignments

After practicing the examples from the BCT, the researcher chose eight more reading passages from other materials as the assignments (Assignments 1 to 8) and the participants had to underline the topic sentence and find out the correct answer to the reading questions about identifying the main idea or the best title. The researcher would explain the answers and the passages the next class.

Finding the Detailed Information **(Weeks 4 to 5)**

Brief introduction

In addition to the topic sentence, there are still a lot of supporting details in a paragraph. After identifying the main idea, the participants also had to find the supporting ideas which may consist of various detailed information. The information is either to supplement or to limit the development of the main idea. The question type finding the detailed information appears a lot in the reading comprehension tests. Understanding the skill of finding the detailed information and related reading strategies may help the participants to answers the reading comprehension questions faster and more correctly.

Question forms

When dealing with the question type finding the detailed information, the participants have to make sure what the questions are about and decide what the possible answers are. Following are four common question forms for the question type of finding the detailed information:

- (1) **How many** people are there...? (Number)
- (2) **What/When/Where/Who/Why/How** ...? (Asking information)
- (3) Which is **true/correct/NOT correct** about...? (True or False)
- (4) **What happened** to ...? (Consequence)

Related strategies

The reading skill of finding the detailed information is related to the scanning strategies proposed by Sarig (1987). Brown (1994) also described this strategy as quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The participants have to identify the question forms first, and then scan the lines of the passage quickly for the possible answers. If there are more than one possible answers, they have to judge the most suitable one. For example, there is a reading passage about ordering pizza and a reading question “How much did John have to pay?” is presented. The participants have to identify that the question is about asking the number and they have to scan the whole text for the number of money. After circling all the possible numbers, they have to check what John has ordered and do some simple mathematical jobs. The reading strategy of scanning is one of the technical aids, which may require the participants to practice the connection between the questions and the information scanned. Therefore, the researcher asked the participants to circle the information they

scanned and connect it to the answer they chose with a line.

Examples from the BCT

There are five reading passages adopted from the BCT reading comprehension tests in the reading pretest (examples 5 to 9). All these examples include the reading question type of finding the detailed information and the researcher would guide the participants to practice the skill of finding the detailed information with the scanning strategy throughout these examples. In example 9, there is a reading question 'Where does Bill live?', and the participants had to scan quickly all the possible places in the passage, Taipei, Europe, Kaohsiung and Spain. Because Bill is the one who received the letter, the participants had to identify in the sentence 'Are you O.K. down there', 'you' refers to Bill and 'there' refers to Kaohsiung. To get this answer, the participants would also learn the skill of finding the targets of the reference, which is introduced later in the reading instruction.

Assignments

After the examples from the BCT, the participants were given seven more reading passages (Assignments 9 to 15) as the take-home assignments. The participants had to apply the scanning strategy they learn in class in order to connect the information they scanned with the answer they chose. The researcher also explained the answers and the meanings of these passages the next class to enhance this reading skill of finding the detailed information.

Determining the Meaning out of the Context **(Weeks 6 to 7)**

Brief introduction

For junior high school students, words or phrases that they never learn are

always “a big headache” to them and they often make blind guesses. The words or phrases may be underlined, in bolds or in italics and the participants are asked to choose the answer which indicates the same meaning. In order to get the correct answer, the participants have to watch out for some key words and clues in the context that are important to help figure out the meaning of these words and phrases.

Question forms

The items that are referred to as the question type determining the meaning out of the context are usually identified as followed:

- (1). What does the word “_____” **mean**?
- (2). What does the man **mean** by saying “_____”?
- (3). What is “_____”?

Related strategies

Many researchers have proposed strategies to determine the meaning of the words or phrases. For example, Olshavsky (1977) suggested the word related strategies include the use of context to define a word, and synonym substitution. Sarig (1987) mentioned using synonyms and circumlocutions as the clarification and simplification monitoring strategies. Brown (1994) also proposed the strategies of guessing and vocabulary analysis to help determine the meanings of the words in the context. Johnson (2004) provided strategies for contextual clues to define new words, such as synonyms, restatement, antonyms, definition, explanation, examples, and mood or tone. The participants were asked to figure out the clues or key words in the context that help define the new words or phrases. They also had to identify the relations between the clues and the new words. Besides, if the words or phrases underlined are words known to everyone, they have to be careful because there may

be a different meaning in this context.

Examples from the BCT

Four examples adopted from the BCT reading passages in the pretest were presented in class (examples 10 to 13). All the examples include the reading question type determining the meaning out of the context. The researcher asked the participants to circle the key words first in the passages and then decide the relations between the new words or phrases and the clues. In example 10, there is a question about the meaning of the word ‘skinny’, the participants have to find the clues ‘NOT heavy at all’ and because of the word ‘NOT’, the key words and the new word are antonyms to each other.

Assignments

Ten more passages (Assignments 16 to 25) with examples which may display other contextual relations were adopted as the after-class assignments. The participants had to practice the skill of determining the meaning out of the context with related strategies to identify the relations.

Finding the Targets of the Reference **(Weeks 8 to 9)**

Brief introduction

The use of referents is common in English and in many other languages, especially the pronouns. A pronoun is often used when the writer wants to avoid repeating the same word or phrase in the passage. Therefore, this reading skill of finding the targets of the reference is to identify the ‘referents’ which were replaced. If the participants can understand the directions and the categorization of reference, they may find out the targets of the reference more easily.

Question forms

For the reading questions that belong to the type of finding the targets of the reference, pronouns, auxiliaries and the adverb ‘then’ and ‘there’ are often observed.

Following are some of the possible question forms:

- (1). What does “**this**” mean in the first paragraph?
- (2). What does “**she**” refer to in the second line...?
- (3). What does “**one**” refer to...?
- (4). What does “**there**” refer to in this dialogue?
- (5). The man said “**I don’t think so**”. What did he mean?

Related strategies

According to McCarthy (2001), there are three directions of reference—
anaphoric, cataphoric, and exophoric. Anaphoric reference means that referents can be confirmed by looking back in the text, but if the referents are identified afterwards, this is called cataphoric reference. However, if the author expects us to share a world with him independent of the text, and the reference shared worlds outside of the text is exophoric reference. The reading questions of reference are mostly in the anaphoric direction and the participants were suggested to look for their targets or referents back in the passages first. But if this does not work, they may also go in the opposite direction. On the other hand, McCarthy (2001) also mentioned that reference items in English include pronouns (he, she, it, him, they, one, ones, etc), demonstratives (this, that, these, those) and adverbs (there, then). Besides, the items used for substitution in English may have the same anaphoric manner as reference. For example, auxiliaries (do, does, did, will, can, etc) can be referred back to the verb phrases and the adverbs ‘so’ and ‘not’ can even be referred back to the clausal structures. To enhance the participants’ skill of finding the targets of the reference, grammatical cohesion

strategies are introduced to identify the direction of the reference and match the targets with the reference items in gender, number, animation, time, place, tense, affirmative or negative.

Examples from the BCT

There are five examples adopted from the BCT reading passages (examples 14 to 18). The reading passages were discussed in class and the researcher led the participants through all these passages to practice the reading skill and related strategies they can apply. In example 16, the reading question is ‘What does them mean in the letter?’ and the participants first had to decide that the referent is in plural form and it is also identified as human in the context. Then, they may look back in the passage and search for most suitable candidate.

Assignments

After the examples discussed in class, the research selected nine more reading passages (Assignments 26 to 34) for the participants as their assignments. When doing their assignments, they were suggested to circle the most possible referents, connect them with the reference items and draw the line between to show the direction of reference. After they made their choices, the researcher also asked them to check the grammatical cohesion by moving their answers to the position of the reference items.

Drawing Implications and Inferences (Weeks 10-11)

Brief introduction

For readers, it is easier to determine the author’s literal meanings, but not all the meanings are clearly stated. The author may expect readers to draw implications and inferences in the passage to get a clearer understanding of their meanings. The author

sometimes plans to hide his or her intentions and the readers have to notice the ‘hints’, the words that may imply the messages the author arranged. Therefore, if the participants can use the information collected in the passage to come to a conclusion about additional facts and information that are not specifically stated, they are drawing logical implications and inferences.

Question forms

The question type drawing implications and inferences may contain the item forms as:

- (1). What can you infer from ...?
- (2). What is most likely...?
- (3). According to the reading, what might/could “_____” be?
- (4). What does “_____” imply in this passage?
- (5). Which of the following does the author imply/infer?

Related strategies

Olshavsky (1977) mentioned inferences in the clause related strategies. Brown (1994) also focused on the strategy to distinguish between literal and implied meanings. Johnson (2004) suggested skillful readers develop the ability to read between the lines. He also stated that writers usually could not include all the information that might be relevant to their purposes. Thus, they must rely on the reader’s ability to infer. Writers sometimes leave out information because including it would divert the reader’s attention from the essential point being made or from the train of thought. To enhance the participants’ skill of drawing implications and inferences, they have to understand both the literal and the implied meanings. Sometimes, the writer may use puns to deliver the intended meaning. For example,

there is about President Bush. He once bumped his head and went to the doctor. After examining carefully, the doctor said to him, “In your right brain, there is nothing **left**. And in your left brain, there is nothing **right**.” Should Bush be happy or angry? If the reader can not get the underlying meanings of these two words, they may not realize that the doctor made a joke on Bush. Therefore, the participants were trained to read not only the lines but also between the lines to get the meaning implied and draw logical inferences.

Examples from the BCT

There are five examples adopted from the BCT reading passages (examples 19 to 23). The research led the participants through all these passages and asked them to underline the words that may imply the answers to the reading questions. For instance, in example 20, the question is ‘What is most likely the writer’s job’ and the participants had to notice the hints such as ‘Some people leave their garbage after they eat and drink in my car. Some people are “back-seat drivers.” They never stop telling me “Turn right!” “Turn left!” “Stop!” “Drive faster!” Sometimes more than four people want to get into my car at a time, but it is illegal!’ The hints underlined are quite enough to tell the writer’s job as a taxi driver. In the reading comprehension tests of the BCT, the hints are often easy to identify.

Assignments

After the examples to practice the reading skill of drawing implications and inferences, the researcher also prepared seven more passages (Assignments 35 to 41) with the same type of reading questions. The participants were asked to choose the correct answers by underlining the words, phrases or sentences that have implied meanings.

Drawing Correct Conclusions (Weeks 12-13)

Brief introduction

Before the participants finish a passage, there is often a reading question type to ask about what they have learned or what conclusion they can get from the passage. The conclusion is often related to the author's purpose to write this article. Johnson (2004) mentioned possible purposes for writing are to inform, to describe some ideas or things, to tell a story, to convince, to state a problem, to analyze, to classify, to offer a solution and to suggest an alternative, etc. Understanding the purposes of the author is not an easy job for the participants in junior high school, but after the training of identifying the purposes, they may draw correct conclusions more easily. Besides, the conclusion is always consistent with the main idea presented in the passage.

Question forms

The question forms related to the question type drawing correct conclusions can be displayed as followed:

- (1). What can we **conclude** from the reading?
- (2). What can we **learn** from the passage?
- (3). What **lesson** does the story give us?

Related strategies

Brown (1994) suggested the strategy of identifying the purpose in the passage. Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something and understanding the purpose may enable the reader to spot the conclusion that the author comes to more easily. Johnson (2004) also mentioned that the strategy of recognizing the purpose is closely related to that of identifying the main idea. Therefore, the strategy that the participants have to be familiar with is to recognize the purpose of the

passage and to relate the purpose and the main idea to draw the conclusion. Moreover, unlike the topic sentence, the conclusion or lesson, if any, may be organized near the bottom of the passage, so the participants are suggested to start with the last parts of the passage to find the conclusion.

Examples from the BCT

For the reading skill of drawing correct conclusions, there are four examples which are adopted from the BCT reading passages in the pretest (examples 24 to 27). The researcher guided the participants to recognize the purpose, identify the main idea and draw correct conclusions. In example 25, the passage about Keats again, judging from the last sentence of the passage ‘Keats died at the young age of twenty-five, but both the poet and his poems will always be remembered’, the participants can decide on the possible conclusion from the answers ‘life could be short but art is long’. Moreover, the main idea is about Keats’ life and his poems. The purpose of this passage is to tell a story about Keats’ life and his poems. Therefore, the researcher asked the participants to refer this conclusion back to the main idea and the purpose of the passage and check if they are consistent with each other.

Assignments

After the examples from the BCT reading passages in class, there are seven reading passages (Assignments 42 to 48) adopted from other materials and these are the after-class assignments. The participants had to underline the sentence which may contain the conclusion from the bottom of the passages. Furthermore, they had to identify the main idea first, and then recognize the purpose to draw correct conclusions.

Phase Three: Review and Q & A (Week 14)

For the last week of the reading instruction, the researcher focused firstly on reviewing the reading skills and strategies the participants had learned in class. Then, they were encouraged to find their own reading passages and bring them to the reading class. The researcher invited them to demonstrate the reading skills and strategies through their own examples. Therefore, the effectiveness of the reading instruction would be reinforced by the participants themselves.

Moreover, before the end of the formal reading instruction, the researcher arranged some time for the Q & A, and the participants were invited to share their ideas and feelings toward the reading skills and strategies.

Data Analysis

Both inferential and descriptive statistics with the SPSS statistic package for Windows 8.0, were adopted for the research questions of the present research. First of all, the reading passages and reading comprehension questions in the pretest and in the BCT of 2006 were collected and descriptive statistics was adopted to discuss various question types and their frequency distribution. Secondly, the results of the pretest were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical treatments such as means, standard deviations, t-test and ANOVA to reveal the participants' performances on different question types, and to make sure if the control and the experimental groups presented any significant difference before the reading instruction. Last, for the participants' performances in both of the BCT reading tests of 2006, the results were analyzed again with statistical treatments to display if there were any significant differences between the control and the experimental groups after the formal reading instruction