

## THE TEACHING OF READING IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mohammad Sofyan Adi Pranata**  
**Universitas Nurul Jadid**  
[sofy4ninho17@gmail.com](mailto:sofy4ninho17@gmail.com)

Reading English is an important skill that students need to learn. The teaching of reading in secondary school will help student to get a purpose for reading, focus on what they are learning, think actively as they read, monitor their comprehension, and review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know. In order to apply the strategies effectively in new instructional settings, teachers must have a clear understanding of the reading comprehension process and the natural reading strategies that commonly applied by our students. By knowing this, they can select and demonstrate appropriate reading strategies that their students need in reading the text.

**Key words:** *Teaching reading, Senior Secondary School*

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching of reading in old curriculum led the students to practice the language components that they had already met through the teaching of vocabulary and structure. Reading was regarded as the medium for representation and practicing these language components. In this practice, comprehending and sharing information and messages contained in the text is neglected.

In this era teaching of reading depends on the teacher. Teachers are always to be the sources of ideas for developing reading strategies. To do this, teachers should prepare students to reach a higher level of understanding in the reading process. They should help students read and understand the texts easily. Then, the teacher can contribute to the strategy training of their students in the three stages of reading instruction in classes. This includes: pre-reading, while reading and post reading.

In the 1994 English curriculum and the coming Competency-Based Curriculum of English for secondary school, the teaching of reading is treated in a proper way. It is oriented towards providing real life reading skills, such as identifying particular information containing in a text. In this orientation, reading is not separated from the other skills. When we read a text, for example, we sometimes share what we have read with other people by discussing or summarizing the content of the reading. This practice leads to the possibility of integrating reading to speaking or writing. In this context, it is very beneficial for us to develop learning and teaching strategies that help our students possess and develop their strategic reading as well as develop integration among language skills. In this paper, we would address this issue.

1. The teaching of reading as communication
  - 1.1 A model of reading

The National Education Ministry, in their guidance book for the School Based Curriculum, state that senior high school students are expected to be able to comprehend written texts either in short functional or simple essay form in the genre of recount, narrative, procedural, descriptive, news item, spoof, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, explanation, discussion, and review in a daily activity context and to be able to access knowledge (Depdiknas, 2006 A, 2006 B and 2006 C).

Reading is the process of getting information from the written text; from the writer to the reader. The goal of all reading is the comprehension of meaning that is conveyed in the written text. According to Dean (2013), reading is more than seeing words clearly, more than pronouncing printed words correctly and more than recognizing the meaning of isolated words. Reading requires you to think and feel. Reading is not just looking and pronouncing words in the text but comprehending all the components of a text. Thus, reading is the best ways to understand all the components of a text.

Richard & Schmidt (2002: 443) defines reading in two ways; first, reading is perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension. Second, reading is saying a written text aloud (oral reading). This can be done with or without understanding of the contents.

In the act of reading, for example, readers sample and infer the four significant cues: graphophonic (the relationship between letters and sounds), syntactic (word order), semantic (word and sentence meanings),

schematic (knowledge of the world); and they predict what they believe subsequent graphophonic, syntactic, semantic structure are going to be (May, 1990; Goodman, 1994). The use of these cues will be influenced by proficiency level of readers. Less proficient readers, for instance, tend to use the four cues, moving from one cue to another one which result in slow inefficient reading process.

In line with strategies employed by learners or readers, that tendency is known as bottom-up strategy. Whereas, when they use their background knowledge (schema), their expectation, and experience in reading a text, then they identify the cues (when they are needed), they tend to employ top-down strategy. This is commonly used by proficient readers.

As inferences and predictions are made in the process of reading, for example, readers test these hypotheses against their linguistic and conceptual knowledge to see if they are meaningful. This testing leads to confirmation or disconfirmation of the semantic and of the syntax through which meaning is being constructed.

In trying to infer or predict the information or message contained in the text, readers will also employ the two strategies known as scanning and skimming. Scanning is especially used when readers want to locate required information without reading the whole text. Skimming, on the other hand, is employed by reader when they want to get the main idea from the text. When a reader is asked about the topic of the passage, he/she will probably scan key words and other relevant cues like picture to respond to the question raised by the teacher.

In the act of reading, readers will ask questions the test their predictions, such as, "Does this sound like language?". "Does this make sense to me?". Here, they probably employ scanning and skimming strategies to find required information in testing the predictions. If the answers to these questions is "yes" and if the material is worthwhile, reading continues. If the answer is "no". the following strategies might be used by readers (Goodman, 1994).

The first, reread and pick up additional cues until the text makes sense. The second, Stop, consider and rethink why what is being read doesn't seem make sense. The third, continue reading in order to build additional context; in so doing, generate enough understanding to decide why things don't make sense. The fourth, Stop reading because the material is too difficult or not relevant.

We probably experience this model of reading when we read a text in our language. However, this natural process of reading exists in our sub-conscious level of thought. Since, we never realize that we as language teacher, do not consider applying the model as the basis of learning and teaching strategies. And the strategies must be developed by teacher with reference to the objectives of teaching reading covered in the curriculum.

#### **Objectives of The Teaching of Reading in Senior Secondary School (SMA)**

Reading English is an important skill that students need to learn. In reality, students reading a text at school often have difficulties to understand and comprehend its meaning. So, teachers of reading must have good techniques to teach reading to students to help them get good results. Teaching reading is not easy because the teachers not only have to get the students to read the text but also, they have to think how the students can comprehend all the aspects of English in it. According to Chaudron (2004) studying English is not easy for Indonesian students because the English language and the Indonesian language are very different in terms of spelling, sounds, pronunciation, vocabulary and culture.

The objective of teaching reading in high school is to develop the students' reading skills in order to read texts effectively and efficiently. Ariwiyati (1997) asserts that the specific objectives of reading are:

- a) to enable the students to develop basic comprehension skills so that they can read and understand texts of a general nature.
- b) to use reading to increase their general knowledge.
- c) to decide about reading purpose.
- d) to adapt their strategies of reading.
- e) to develop their ability to read critically.

Based on these, a teacher must have a good technique to build the motivation of students to learn and memorize vocabulary.

When we investigate the objectives of the teaching of reading in the 1994 English Curriculum and the coming Competence-Based Curriculum of English for SMA, we could say that the primary purposes of reading are reading for information or intensive reading. This can be seen in the following objectives for reading as stated in the curriculum.

Students are able to read texts in the forms of narration, description, dialog, and other genres like time tables, brochure, menu, diary, form, letter to:

- Get a particular information;
- Get a general information about the text;
- Identify the main idea explicitly;
- Identify the main idea implicitly;
- Get the details of information about the text;
- Identify word, phrase, and sentence meanings based on the contexts

In order to achieve the objective, the following learning activities are suggested:

- Guess the content of the text based on the given picture;
- Guess the meaning of derivative contained in the text based on the related word;
- Complete the given tables based on the information contained in the text;
- Make flow chart based on the information contained in the text;
- Follow a set of instructions given in the text;
- Summarize the main points of the text;
- Some students generate questions about the text and others answer the questions;
- Identify words, phrases or clauses through the given references;
- Identify synonym and antonym;
- Identify a particular information contained in a text quickly;
- Identify key words to infer main ideas of the given text;
- Identify main idea of a text or a paragraph and supporting details;
- Describe the difference between main idea and supporting details;
- Identify paragraph structure, e.g., whether it is organized from general to specific or vice versa;
- Determine the functions of the given text (invitation, notice, instruction, informing, etc.);
- Complete the text with the given word; etc.

Based on the explanation above, the teaching of reading in secondary school will help students to get a purpose for reading, focus on what they are learning, think actively as they read, monitor their comprehension, and review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know.

### **Realizing objectives into the teaching of reading in classroom**

In realizing the reading objectives into the process of teaching and learning requires careful planning and thought on the part of the teacher. There are some points to be taken into her consideration in this connection.

- ✓ 2.3.1 At beginning level where students are beginners, an important point is to establish positive attitude to reading. Here, we need to select texts that appeal to students and relate to their knowledge of language.
- ✓ 2.3.2 At secondary school level and above, students are intellectually mature enough to deal with comprehension, language and content, and critical awareness. A very effective way of working towards these objectives and increasing students' knowledge of language is by adopting themes or topics as the basis for the organization of the program.
- ✓ 2.3.3 The choice of the theme or sub-theme should be based upon students' interest and needs and the availability of material. The way the theme or sub-theme is organized is ideally to move from the more familiar to the less familiar.
- ✓ 2.3.4 The selection of texts should be varied including different types or genres. Texts of

Different types could develop a variety of reading styles or strategies, and initiate reading for different purposes and familiarize students with the features of the different text types. In the 1994 curriculum the suggested text types cover narrative, descriptive, argumentative, dialog, various forms, brochure, leaflet, personal letter, diary, menu, ticket, timetables. With different text types, a reasonable approach to vocabulary can be developed and consolidated throughout the topic/sub-theme unit.

The selected text can be taken from various sources, such as:

- Integrated course books that include reading text.
- Supplementary reading comprehension and reading skills books containing text and exercises; and
- Text from 'real life' (authentic text), like leaflet, ticket, and brochure

### **The sources of difficulties students encounter in reading**

When we look into the reading process outlined above, our students will encounter difficulties in sampling and inferring the four cues. Based on experiences in handling reading help teachers facilitate student and teaching reading in the frame of communicative language teaching.

- ✓ 2.4.1 Decoding (sample graphophonic cue). The inability of students to translate the marks (letters or graphs) they see in a text into something they can say could create difficulties in the teaching of reading skill. The failure to decode a text, for instance, can demotivate students to continually read the text.
- ✓ 2.4.2 Vocabulary. The text difficulty of vocabulary. In our day-to-day classroom interaction, students lack or have inappropriate concepts for the words could be stumbling blocks upon comprehending the process of a text. Some SMA (High Secondary School) students say that they encounter many difficult words in one paragraph dealing with a certain sub-theme. In this connection, it is suggested that the

teacher should identify and determine readability of the text before they use in for teaching and learning purposes.

- ✓ 2.4.3 Syntax. Third source difficulty in syntax (word order). Consider these sentences: “Alfan ate the fish” or “The fish ate Alfan”. Eord order of the two sentences is different. The word order communicateas important information, such as, which element in the santence is the doer and which is acted upon (or object). Our experiences show that students are often fail to identify word order of the given sentences found in a certain text.
- ✓ 2.4.4 Cohesion. A fourth source of difficulty is cohesion, the relationships between sentences contained in a certain text student are often frustrated when they cannot identify the connections between sentences found in the text.
- ✓ 2.4.5 Passage structure. A fifth source of difficult is passage structure. There are certain conventions in writing text that follow us to see how larger elements of text are connected. For instance, if a text is organized from general to specific, an early paragraphs may become more specific using such markes as “There are three kinds of “. “The first is, the second is, and so on. Other common organizations are narrative, cause and effect, sequence, so on. Our experiences indicate that student cannot identify the main point or idea of the given paragraph because they do not know text or passage structure.
- ✓ 2.4.6 Prior knowledge (sample schematic cue). The final source is prior knowledge. Students are not really efficient in comphending a text because they are not familiar with the topic or sub-theme of the given text. For example, student who live in remote areas and never see or know telephone or computer will have difficulties in comprehending text about computer or telephone, it is the job of teachers, in this context, to select theme/sub-theme on the basis of student’ background kowledge.

### **Suggested teaching and learning strategies for reading as communication**

Knowledge of the natural process of reading will be beneficial for language teachers, at least, for two reasons: first, natural strategies that we know in reading can be used as the basis in designing strategies for teaching reading skill. Second, this knowledge can be uses to the intended learning objectives for reading skills covered in 1994 English Curriculum. The objective for reading are skills-oriented which can be attained throught strategic reading.

The following teaching stratigis are commonly applied in startegic reading which are generally developed from the reading model we discuss in the earlier section.

#### 3.1 P-W-P (Pre – while – Post ) Strategy

Strategic reading suggested in our curriculum is known as the three-phase-technique for teaching reading. This stratigis reading consists of three stages,namely:

#### **Pre-reading**

In pre-reading stage, teacher try to do the following:

- Brainstorming first.
- To introduce and arouse interest in the topic/sub-theme;
- To motivate learnes by giving a reason for reading to provide some language preparation for the text.

In order to help prepare for this stage, the useful questions below can be used by teachers to asks themselves:

- What knowledge, ideas or opinions might the learnesrs already have on the text topic, and how can this kowledge be draw and used?
- Why should anyone want to read the text,and can the same, or similar, reasaons be generated in the learners.

The answers to the question will give clues to ways of introducing the text, motivating learners, and at the same time will incorporate language preparation.

#### **While-reading**

This stage focuses on the text rather than the learners’ ideas before reading. The aims of this stage are:

- To help understanding of writer’s purpose;
- To help understanding of the text structure of clarily text content.

The following question are as guide to while-reading stage.

- What is the function of this text?
- How is the text organized or developed? (eg. A narrative, descriptive, and dialog)
- What content or information that can be extracted from the text?
- What can the reader infer or deduce from the text?
- What language may be learned from the text?
- What reading styles (or strategies) may be practiced.

### Post-reading

The aims of post-reading are:

- To consolidate or reflect upon what has been learned;
- To relate the text to the learner's own knowledge, interest, or views.

Teachers could use the following question to get ideas for the stage.

- Do the learners know of a similar situation to that presented in the text?
- Does the text present a situation for recommendations?
- Does the text present a situation needs for solving?
- Does the text present views that might need to be counter-balanced?

### K-W-L strategy

KWL is stand for **Know-What-Learned**. This involves three major cognitive steps: assessing students' background knowledge about the topic, and evaluating what they learned about the topic. The steps used in fails strategic reading cover the following:

- Talk with Aa about what they already know about the topic of the text. This information should be freely volunteered and written, for example, in section 1 in the given strategy sheet.
- Ask students to categorize the information they have volunteered. This can be done through various grouping strategies, such as, semantic webbing or word map. This can be recorded in section 2.
- Ask students to make predictions about the information the text will contain. These prediction should be based on students' background knowledge and on the categoris of information generated in step 2, this can be re-corded and discussed in section 3in strategy sheet.
- Have students generate their own questations about the text this can be discussed and recorded in the "W"-what we want to find out section.
- Have students read the text and record any answers to their question. This can be recorded in section 5 in the strategy sheet.
- Upon completion of the text, provide Aa with an opportunity to discuss and record ( in section 6 in the strategy sheet) the information learned and how that data relates to their prior knowledge. For example, talk about questions posed for which no information was found in the text.

### Jigsaw technique

This technique or procedure involves the following steps:

- ✓ 3.3.1 divide the class into groups ( the number of group depend parts of the information on a topic given);
- ✓ 3.3.2 give each group a part of the information on a topic given;
- ✓ 3.3.3 ditribute worksheet to each member of the group, the ask them to get share the information from the texts ( it could be a split paragraph, postcard, so on)
- ✓ 3.3.4 reorganize the groups to form new groups. Each new group consists of at least one member of group, for example, one from A,B,C and so on. In this new group, each member of the group exchange the information on the worksheet, so that they can complete the whole task given on the worksheet.

Basically, the activity suggested by this procedure consists of two main stages:

1. READ – EXTRACT INFORMATION
2. COMMUNICATE – SHARE INFORMATION

### Example of the Strategic Reading

#### A. The Three Stage Strategy

Suppose, you teach reading with the theme about "Shopping" to your student. The sub-theme is "Shopping advertisements". In teaching reading with this sub-theme, you apply the P-W-P strategy that works as follows:

Specific aim : To train the students to read the text quickly in order to locate specific information.  
Skill Involved : scanning (see object)

Why? : When. As are trying to locate specific information we need not read the whole text carefully. What they do is try to find out in which paragraph the information they are looking for is likely to be, then read this paragraph carefully.

Suggested text type : Advertisement, Menu, leaflet and so on.

Level : First years Student of SMA.

**Pre-Reading**

To begin with the pre-reading, the teacher might put on the board of wall shopping ads that you take from newspaper or magazine like.



To arouse student’s interest, you may ask the questionations below:

1. What is it about?
2. What things are advertised?
3. Do you like it?
4. What do you want to buy?
5. Now, list what you want to buy after you read the ads.
6. Ask our friend whether s(he) is intesting in buying something after s(he) is reading the ads. Use the following questionation as guide.

\*Are you interested in buying things advertised here?  
 \*If s(he) say’s ‘yes’, ask “What do you want to buy”?

**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**  
Reader's Offer



**SAMSUNG**  
Mobile Champ Deluxe Duos GT-C3312

Today's Special Price **RP.500.000,-**

- 7.11cm (2.8") Touch Screen • Dual SIM Standby (GSM + GSM)
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**While-reading**

In this stage, you provide the students with the questions that train them to apply ‘scanning’ skill. The following are questions specifically designed to train this skill (related to the above ads)

1. You want to buy these things. Which store probably sells them?

Put a tick (V) on the given space.

	Cell phone store	Mall	Alfamart
Shampoo	.....	.....	.....
Burger	.....	.....	.....
Handphone	.....	.....	.....

2. Are these statements’ true (T) or false (F)? Then, cross (X) your choice.

- |  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| a. Deli stand near town square.                | T | F   |
| b. There is no promo special price.            |   | T F |
| c. Pantene is containg shampoo and conditioner | T | F   |
| d. Special price Hp samsung is only 500.000    | T | F   |
| e. Deli Stand has a delivery service.          | T | F   |

(source:Richards,J.C.etal., 1992)

**Post-reading**

In this stage, you have to give the opportunity to the students to consolidate what they get from the text. You may ask them to transfer the information they take from the text into other forms, such as ask the students to compare what s(he) wants to buy with what her/his friends want to buy by using these question:

- Do you want to buy things advertised here?
- What do you what to buy?

Then, ask the students to put what they compare in the give table.

What I want to buy	! What my friend wants to buy
Shampoo	headphones
...	

By providing this activity, the integration of one language skill to other skills can be realized with ease. This is commonly suggested when we use this technique.

**5. Conclusion**

Our knowledge of the comprehension process gained through natural strategies of reading can inform the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. In order to apply the strategies effectively in new instructional settings, teachers must have a clear understanding of the reading comprehension process and the natural reading strategies that commonly applied by our students. By knowing this, they can select and demonstrate appropriate reading strategies that their students need in reading the text.

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