The Implementation of Interactive Teaching Approach to Facilitate English Majors' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: *This study sought to examine the perspectives of English major students on the utilization of an interactive teaching style, namely the hybrid approach that combines bottom-up and top-down reading strategies, in order to address reading difficulties. A total of 60 senior English students completed a questionnaire, and subsequently, 10 of them took part in the interview sessions. The research highlights the interplay of various sub-processes, including (1) activating students' prior knowledge, (2) generating predictions by connecting prior knowledge with new information from the text and (3) developing a more communicative learning classroom. This leads to an enhancement in students' motivation to learn reading. The findings presented applicable insights for enhancing students' competences in reading courses.*

Keywords: *Bottom up; interactive teaching approach; reading comprehension; top down*

1. Introduction

Developing and improving reading comprehension is a crucial ability for language learners (Salari & Hosseini, 2019). Reading should not be seen merely as a mechanized, automated procedure of identifying symbols and comprehending the significance of various words. It is a more intricate undertaking that involves the interpretation of texts in order to uncover its communicative purpose, specifically the writer's aim (Kovács, 2018). Consequently, English-majored students at Dong Nai Technology University have a significant obstacle in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As per the syllabi of the program, the senior students are expected to undergo training and complete academic reading assessments at a level corresponding to CEFR B2 by the conclusion of the skill courses. Our initial findings, derived from casual conversations and the analysis of reading test scores, indicate that these senior students encountered several difficulties with their English reading abilities. It is hypothesized that employing a more efficient reading technique would be advantageous for a proficient reader. This study aims to examine the perceptions of English-majored seniors at Dong Nai Technology University regarding the reading methods required for performing proficient reading comprehension. The study was anticipated to provide comprehensive insights and ramifications for both the students and teachers in the program, which they could utilize to enhance the caliber of teaching and learning reading in English.

Research question

To what extent do students perceive the role of interactive teaching strategies used in reading comprehension?

2. Literature Review

Developing and improving reading comprehension is crucial for language learners. Individuals are unable to remain upright without engaging in daily reading and are compelled to consume various forms of written content such as news, messages, notes, novels, and other literary works. Reading is crucial for students, and they experience greater academic success when they possess advanced reading skills (Rahim et al., 2017). Reading comprehension (RC) is a cognitive process that involves actively engaging with a material and utilizing one's knowledge effectively (Shin et al., 2019). RC encompasses the capacity to comprehend, analyze, deduce, and assess texts in various situations, going beyond the literal meaning of individual sentences. The reader's understanding level is influenced by various factors, including their prior reading experience, sensory and perceptual abilities, cognitive skills, familiarity with word strategies, reading objectives, and observations during the reading process, personal value placed on reading, and the accessibility of resources (Suwanto, 2014). Moreover, RC is intrinsically linked to the student's learning preferences, and their learning outcomes are hindered without a genuine interest in the reading material. Various achievements in RC can be influenced by different teaching-learning conditions (Zhao et al., 2012). Hence, it is imperative for teachers to instruct RC in order to facilitate

students' comprehensive understanding of the reading material.

Egiyantinah et al. (2018) emphasized that teaching strategies play a crucial role in influencing the success or failure of students' reading comprehension process. Reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that involves the interplay of various factors such as the teacher's instructional approach, the learning environment, the readers' prior knowledge, the specific task, and the text being read (Yukselir, 2014). Hence, the educators responsible for instructing students in reading should carefully select the most suitable instructional reading methodologies to cater to their students' individual requirements.

Interactive teaching is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' learning interest and stimulating their desire for information in the context of reading comprehension (Sun et al., 2020). Interactive teaching is a teaching method that combines the benefits of both bottom-up and top-down techniques. It aims to facilitate the reading process by encouraging readers to actively engage with texts in order to understand the meaning of written language or symbols (Anyiendah et al., 2019). Students gain knowledge from texts through an interactive approach that involves identifying meanings based on grammatical knowledge of words, phrases, clauses, sentence syntax, and detailed analysis of texts. They also extract meanings by integrating their background knowledge of the texts they read and their reading comprehension skills. By implementing these strategies collectively as an interactive teaching method, students can enhance their capacity to connect their prior knowledge to reading material and acquire the skills of questioning, summarizing, recognizing, and decoding information within the text (Anyiendah et al., 2019). Interactive reading models are perceived to offer a more precise understanding of reading performance when compared to exclusively top-down or bottom-up reading strategies.

3. Research Methodology
3.1. Participants
The research included a cohort of sixty senior English majors who were currently enrolled in the researcher's classes. The researcher as the teacher collected all of the data without using a control or experimental group.

3.2. Research Design
3.2.1. Procedure of the approach
The researcher, acting as the teacher, employed the interactive teaching method within the context of a teaching model that involved planning, acting, reflecting, and evaluating.

Planning: Interactive teaching involves the utilization of two distinct teaching approaches: the bottom-up method and the top-down approach. In order to effectively employ the top-down technique, students must possess schema information pertaining to the reading content they are engaging with. Consequently, the teacher employs several techniques such as semantic mapping, brainstorming, pre-teaching vocabulary, and K-W-L to assist students in retrieving their prior knowledge related to the text they are about to read. The teacher organizes reading activities and provides reflective exercises/ questions that are directly related to the reading text. These activities and questions are designed to encourage students to think deeply about the content of the reading text. During the process of creating this activity, the teacher arranges evaluative exercises or questions to test the students' level of achievement in reading comprehension. These evaluating inquiries might be utilized to inquire pupils at the conclusion of the readings or modules.

Acting: During this stage, the teacher imparts knowledge to the students according to the pre-determined methods she planned beforehand. When implementing the aforementioned plan, it is unlikely that things will unfold exactly as she initially anticipated. Hence, it is imperative for the teacher to document any divergences from the lesson plans, together with the rationale behind such deviations.

Reflecting: During the "reflecting" stage, the teacher provides the students with reflection questions related to the reading content. In order to enhance the students' comprehensive grasp of the reading material, the teacher also assigns homework at the conclusion of the lecture sessions.

Evaluating: In this study, the teacher utilizes formative assessment methods, such as student questionnaires and interviews, to evaluate the instructional context, including concerns and tasks, within and between texts or units. Consequently, the teacher assesses the data obtained from the student questionnaire and interview as a formative assessment. As part of this study, the instructor assesses the students' responses to evaluative questions about the reading material at the conclusion of each text or unit.

3.2.2. Research instruments
The researchers employed a closed-ended questionnaire designed as a Likert scale and sent online to 60 senior English majors following the conclusion of the 4-week trial. Each statement comprises five answer options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A),

unsure (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The study collected data on the students' perspectives regarding the implementation of interactive teaching methods. The interview data collected from 10 volunteers helped to clarify any ambiguous findings from the questionnaire. Field notes were employed to record the participants' noteworthy remarks and quotations. The gathered data were transcribed, and examined to address the study inquiries.

Findings and Discussion

In order to enhance the instructional process, the instructor initially engaged in introspection regarding her instructional events pertaining to the students, the reading method, reading material, and classroom work. This introspection was facilitated through the use of indirect reflecting tools, namely student questionnaires and interviews. Next, the instructor, acting as the researcher, examined the reflected outcomes and identified the instructional strengths and faults. The teacher analyzed the outcomes of her teaching and made adjustments to address her areas of weakness, resulting in improved instructions for reading comprehension. Their shared instructional strengths and limitations were as follows.

3.1. The strengths of the interactive teaching approach

No.	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	The anticipation of the content of the reading texts was necessary.	6.7	88.3	5	0	0
2	Techniques to activate students' prior knowledge were effective.	8.3	75	11.7	3.3	1.7
3	The use of slides and videos were necessary.	6.7	88.3	5	0	0
4	The reading text was more exciting and easier through interactive approach.	6.7	73.3	8.3	11.7	0
5	The interactive teaching strategy should be used in the class.	8.3	78.4	8.3	5	0

By engaging in the process of formulating predictions, students are required to anticipate the information that will be presented in the text, which could encompass important ideas or responses to specific inquiries. Additionally, this can be effectively employed as a catalyst for conversation, enabling students to express their viewpoints on the subject matter. It is advisable for teachers to utilize visual aids, such as presentations and actual videos, in order to actively involve students in their courses. This recommendation is supported by 95% of the participants who agreed on the importance of using visual aids. A few of the participants expressed:

"Before starting a class, we were given a list of five or six brief sentences taken from the book we were about to read. Next, we read each statement and marked our agreement or disagreement with it; In another lesson, we watched a YouTube video that provided a critical overview of geothermal energy, it piqued our interest enough that we were able to anticipate what we would read and, as a result, enjoyed and understood the material."

Using strategies like semantic mapping, pre-teaching vocabulary, and K-W-L (Know-Want to Know-Learnt), the majority of students (50 out of 60) were pleased with the teacher's ability to build on students' existing knowledge. They should be able to deduce the meaning of the unknown word or grasp the overall concept by applying what they know about context and co-text.

Semantic mapping can be used to assess students' background knowledge and pre-teach new words. Once students begin to draw deeper connections to the reading material, the map should transform into a helpful synopsis of the ideas and terms they will meet throughout the reading. Students can also benefit from this method by expanding their knowledge of both language and subject matter. Thus, when asked about their preferred method for activating students' background knowledge in the pre-reading stage, seven out of ten interviewees named semantic mapping. Additionally, this method allowed them to collaborate with their peers in smaller groups, which not only engages the students but also helps them hone abilities like effective communication, teamwork, and problem solving.

Eighty percent of students said that when they were well-prepared to read, the material was more engaging and simpler to understand. According to a few of the participants:

"If I am familiar with the topic, it is easier for me to understand. Knowledge about the topic supports my inference. When I am familiar with the topic, I am better able to understand ambiguous text."

In sum, the majority of students (52/60) would prefer to study reading using both bottom-up and top-down tactics, and they believed the teacher's actions might effectively promote their learning. This aligns with classroom action study conducted by Nur and Ahmad (2017), which provides significant evidence that the adoption of the interactive approach and its efficacy led to enhancements in students' English reading skills.

3.2. The weakness of the interactive teaching approach

No.	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
6	Reading tasks focus on paraphrasing and varied word usage were necessary.	8.3	25	41.7	25	0

7	Reading tasks to break down and decode complex sentences were necessary.	10	31.7	50	8.3	0
8	Reading tasks to identify the writer's stance in the text were necessary.	0	33.3	8.3	41.7	16.7
9	Students depended on teachers.	16.7	50	25	8.3	0
10	Teachers should use more English in the classroom.	13.3	36.7	8.3	31.7	10

Activities that emphasize paraphrase and varied word usage in the text are suitable for students at intermediate level for practice. Nevertheless, it appeared that the students were having difficulty with paraphrasing assignments, as 25% of them did not believe that it was necessary and were not uncertain about it. For students at a higher level, deconstructing and understanding complicated sentences is a valuable exercise. When half of the class wasn't sure it was necessary, it didn't get nearly enough attention either. According to a few of the participants:

"We were given the assignment to analyze conjunctions to determine the relationship between clauses; we were also asked to find words and phrases that reveal the writer's position on the ideas they're expressing, but we weren't sure if it was a good idea or not."

"To be honest, I think paraphrasing is the most challenging task, I don't have much vocabulary, my grammar is not that good; I always made mistakes in paraphrasing, I did not even recognize the relevance between 2 sentences; I was afraid whenever my teacher asked me to paraphrase"

Regarding the utilization of conventional bottom-up and top-down methodologies as demonstrated in Çetinkaya et al. (2019), several students exhibited adverse responses due to their fear of providing wrong responses.

70% of the participants believe that their instructor is the most important factor in their learning. Although half of the students would like it if their teacher could utilize English more often in class, the other half may not have been proficient enough in English to support an all-English classroom. According to some:

"We would have preferred it if the teacher spoke English exclusively; at times, we struggled to grasp her explanations because she spoke so much English. We wanted her to explain every aspect of the text, down to the grammatical features and individual word meanings."

Although students can successfully understand texts via top-down processing, it is more important for low-level students to use bottom-up processing to build their reading foundation (Dehghan & Sadighi, 2011). The effectiveness of the method, however, will depend on the students' level of competence. Good readers rely more on connecting their prior knowledge with their anticipation of reading, while bad readers typically follow the text word by word to understand what it means.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrated that employing an interactive teaching style had a positive impact on enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities and level of engagement. The students successfully applied their prior knowledge to comprehend the reading materials, resulting in a reduced level of difficulty. Nevertheless, the participants have demonstrated an inability to handle the reading texts autonomously, relying heavily on the assistance of the teacher.

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The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga:

The majority of individuals within Balram's social stratum are deprived of independent thought, for as he aptly observes, "*the Rooster Coop is guarded from within*". They must "*prevent other servants from becoming reformers, experimenters, or entrepreneurs*" (1, 212). For characters like Brahmins or Kshatriyas, it resembles a cosy golden cage, offering absolute protection for their privileges, shielding them from the harsh realities beyond its gilded confines. In a world teeming with incessant flux, change has become the least changed thing. But the Rooster Coop still exists in a dignified and challenging manner. Its fortress is the blurry zone of mental limits.

When Balram is frustrated by having to obey Mrs Kusum, he sits quietly in the car with a lotus position (a sign of Brahman caste or Buddhist equality), noticed by the drivers, who rush over to scratch the car, scratch the windows, and "*stare at me as though I were some animal in a zoo*" (1, 219). He wonders, in a society where everyone acts mechanically according to others, "*will they gather together - will they break the Rooster Coop*" (1, 331). The answer is only the White Tiger dares to escape the Rooster Coop. For Balram, "*freedom is so precious to know, only in one day, only in one hour, only in one minute, how it feels not to be a servant*" (1, 51). Nowadays, people are increasingly less surprised to see trailblazers là gì lagging in a journey always aimed forward.

3. Conclusion

The White Tiger urges us to question long-held beliefs about poverty, class, and what it means to succeed. Its fearless exploration of unconventional ideas adds a new and exciting layer to the story. Balram, the protagonist, epitomizes the courage to think differently and strive for more. The novel's cold-eyed view and humorous tone pinpoint the key weaknesses of contemporary India. These include the rich-poor divide, environmental pollution, caste discrimination, wastage of human resources, and the limitations of thinking... Aravind Adiga, a realist writer, decisively answers the question of destiny, proactively (though the resolution at the end of the story is somewhat brutal). The symbol of the Rooster Coop vividly and profoundly illustrates the deeply ingrained negative prejudices that affect human thoughts and emotions. It governs individual behaviour according to herd mentality and dependency. Until individuals exhibit the initiative to emancipate themselves from the constraints of conventional paradigms and actively pursue avenues for authentic advancement, our trajectory along the path of development remains unfulfilled.

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