

SELECTING READING MATERIALS FOR READING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses about the ways how English teacher chooses reading texts for his/ her students. In selecting the texts, teacher pays attention to the words of the texts. The number of function and lexical words of the texts is considered in selecting texts. Function words are such as *the, a, an, this, those, that* and *these*. Lexical words are words that refer to someone, things, actions and properties.

Key words: texts, function words, lexical words

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the subjects at University. Reading, as a skill of English, absolutely needs reading materials. Reading cannot run well when there is no reading material. Some experts give definition of reading materials. Brown (1995: 157) says that when teacher is working with reading material, it will help them to transfer knowledge through the reading materials. He also suggests that there are three ways teachers can find material. They are through adopting, adapting and developing.

Moreover, Sariçoban as quoted by Ocak (2010: 2) declare materials in a language class are a source of activity for students to practice and they improve a teacher's effectiveness. Furthermore, Chingos and Whitehurst (2012) as quoted by Andriani (2016: 1) state that reading materials are important, so appropriate materials will give good outcomes. Teacher gives appropriate materials for appropriate level of students. It means that teachers should really prepare materials for teaching, because by reading the materials students will get input or knowledge.

READING MATERIALS

Reading materials as sources of learning are classified by some experts. Finch and McGough (1982) state that learning materials are classified into (1) printed matter e.g., manuals, textbooks, workbooks, modules, (2) audiovisual e.g., pictures, filmstrips, videotapes, and (3) manipulative e.g., models, mockups, trainers, simulators. It can be concluded that learning materials as the learning source can be in form of printed materials. Printed materials are not only text book that as usually used by English but also can be in form of modules.

In addition, for reading, English teachers usually use printed materials. Some teachers have assumption that printed reading materials are the easiest materials to be used. Smaldino (2007: 222) supports this assumption. He argues some advantages of printed materials. They are availability, flexibility, portability, user friendly, economical. Availability means printed reading materials are readily available on a variety of topics and in many different formats. Flexibility refers to they are adaptable to many purposes and may be used in any environment. Portability means they are easily carried from place to place and do not require any equipment or electricity. Then, user friendly refers to properly designed printed materials are easy to use, not requiring special effort to navigate through them. Last, economical means printed materials are relatively inexpensive to produce and can be reused.

In addition, the division of reading materials are also argues by other experts. Korsell as quoted by Carlson (2008: 9) defines learning materials as source of teaching to facilitate learning, and learning materials can be divided into primary and secondary pedagogical materials. The concept of learning materials has increasingly broadened, and mainly everything can be used as a foundation for teaching. It means that the learning materials are the

main factor that should be considered by English teacher. Since the learning materials are as the source of learning, so the learning cannot run well when there is no source of learning.

In line to Carlson, Tomlinson also divide some divisions of learning materials. According to Tomlinson (2008: 3) reading materials in language class can be informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, and exploratory. Informative means informing the learner about the target language, instructional refers to guiding the learner in practicing the language. Experiential is providing the learner with experience of the language in use, meanwhile eliciting means encouraging the learner to use the language and exploratory refers to helping the learner to make discoveries about the language. The reading materials should be exposure the students.

In choosing reading materials, there are some sources of reading materials. Hutchinson and Walters (1987: 96) state learning materials can be materials development, materials evaluation and materials adaptation. Materials evaluation means select materials from existing materials, materials development refers to write own materials, and materials adaptation means modifying existing materials. It is necessary to evaluate materials because evaluation is a matter of judging something to particular purpose. Evaluating materials is basically a matching process which matching the need, objective, materials also provide stimulus to learning. Good materials do not teach, but good materials encourage students to learn. Good reading materials contain interesting topic, give students capacity to think and give students opportunity to use their existing knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, Brown (1995: 167-177) states that there are two sources of reading materials. They are adopting and adapting. Adapting materials are materials that available then revise, edit, or evaluated by English teacher before they use. If it is long text, the teachers should make it to be simple one. Then, adopting materials are materials that are taken directly by the teacher without evaluating, revising and editing.

Along with Brown, Crossley et al (2011: 15-17) also declares that reading materials also can be from: simplified and authentic materials. Simplified texts are texts written (a) to illustrate a specific language feature, such as the use of modals or the third person singular verb form, and (b) to modify the amount of new lexical input introduced to learners. Authentic materials are originally created to fulfill a social purpose in the language community for which it is intended.

After knowing the sources of reading materials, English teachers should also know about the steps to choose reading materials. In choosing reading materials, Halliwell (1992: 128) says that there are some steps should be followed by teachers. First, teachers should identify some topic about students' live that are most relevant to them. Second, teachers should select the vocabulary that suitable for their students. To choose the reading materials, English teachers should pay attention to these steps to make them be able to select the appropriate reading materials for their students. Moreover, according to Marshal (2004: 10) reading materials in a learning should be relevant to the age of students and their emotional, intellectual, social and cultural development.

Talking about reading materials, those also relate to the principles of reading materials. In choosing reading materials some factors should be considered by English teachers. The factors are the principles of reading materials. Tomlinson (2010: 2) classifies there are some principles of materials. They are: first, make use of activities which get learners involved in the materials before during and after experiencing a written text, second, make use of activities which get learners to visualize before during and after using it, third, make use of activities which help the learners to reflect on their mental activity during a task and then to try to make more use of mental strategies in a similar task. It can be concluded that reading materials should be suitable to the learners so that learner will enjoy to read the materials. It can be seen that the reading materials should involved the learners themselves during the learning and teaching process.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that reading materials are very important in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the reading materials should be appropriate for students. English teachers should evaluate the material whether it is suitable for their students or not. When choosing reading material, English teacher also should consider the difficulty of the text.

Chingos and Whitehurst (2012: 3) states that materials have a direct influence on students learning as students interact with them. It can be described by following figure:

It is clear that interaction between students and teachers is framed by the materials that teachers are provided by their school. Materials for English skill consist of speaking materials, reading materials, writing materials and listening materials. It can be concluded that there is strong evidence that the choice of reading materials for teaching reading has large effects on students learning. The evidence also suggests that choice of reading materials can have an impact as large as or larger than the impact of teacher quality. The sources of reading materials can be from adapted, adopted, simplified or authentic.

In choosing reading materials for reading class, teacher should pay attention not only to how many new vocabularies in the texts but also to function words and content words in the texts.

FUNCTION WORDS

Biber et al (2007: 55) say function words are the main building blocks of texts; function words provide the mortar which binds the text together. Function words include auxiliary verb, determine, pronoun, most preposition, conjunction and some classes of adverb.

Auxiliary verb

Auxiliary verb is a verb that cannot stand on its own but that helps (combines with) another verb. For example, 'be' (is, am, are, was, were), 'do' (does, did) and 'have or has' and the modal auxiliary verbs, shall, should will, would, can, may, must, or ought to.

Pronoun

Pronoun is a word that is used to replace a noun or noun phrase. Pronoun is to substitute for more complex nouns and noun phrase in order to make the language more efficient and avoid repetition. For example, I, you, we, myself, himself, themselves.

Preposition

Preposition is a word which is used to show the way in which other words are connected. Preposition has similar meaning to subordinators because they link and show a meaning relationship. Preposition usually introduces dependent noun phrase. Preposition is a word that is indicating location (in place and time), direction and relationship. For example, under, on, in, at, in front of, beside, between, etc.

Determiner

Determiner is article that belongs to a class of words. Determiner usually comes before a noun or at the beginning of a noun phrase. Determiner is a word that points or specifies, for example, an, a, the, etc.

Conjunction

Conjunction is a general term to describe a word that joins two or more words or sentence together. Conjunction can be divided into coordinating and subordinating conjunction. coordinating conjunction is to join, or coordinate two or more clauses such as 'and, or and but' while subordinating conjunction is used to make clear that one unit is less important grammatically than another (if, so, that, although).

Some Classes of Adverb

Some classes of adverb mean those adverbs which are not included in two kinds of adverbs above. For example, here, there, now, then, always, etc.

LEXICAL WORDS

Miller (2002: 35) states that lexical words are words that have a denotation apply to people, places, things, actions, states and properties. Lexical or content words include nouns (villa, baby, idea), verbs (e.g. buy, destroy, think), adjectives (e.g. wooden, strong, abstract) and adverbs (e.g. rapidly, hopefully).

Moreover, Biber et al (2007: 55) defines lexical words are the main carries of meaning in a text. Lexical items or content words are those which contain the main semantic information in a text, and they are fallen into the four main lexical word classes: noun, verb, adjective and adverb.

Noun

Noun is a word which names things and persons. The lists are like woman, man, boy, book, desk, chair and so on. In linguistic, a noun is a member of part of speech which can occur as the main word in the subject of a clause, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition.

Adjective

Adjective is a word that gives more information about a noun or pronoun. Adjective is also a word that modifies a noun (beautiful, good, and cheap) and describes qualities (proud, happy and excited). Moreover, the functions of adjective as the pre-modifier to the head noun in a noun phrase (a brilliant artist) and following an intensive verb as the complement of a clause (the artist is brilliant).

Verb

Verb is called as doing word. Verb is a lexical category which often expresses a state, act, event, or emotion. For instance: go, work, stand, cut, etc.

Adverb

Adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective or other adverbs e.g proudly. Johanson (2008: 67) declares that adverb is counted as lexical items are all adverbs that derived from adjectives. For instance: quickly, beautifully, slowly and happily.

In selecting reading texts, English teacher should consider the number of lexical and function words. The number of lexical words is more than function words. As suggested by Biber et al (2007:55) the number of lexical words is large and the number of function words is small. Therefore the texts are easy to be understood by students.

CONCLUSION

Reading texts consist of lexical words and function words. Lexical words are the main part of text that carries meaning in a text. Therefore, English teacher should choose texts that have large number of lexical words than function words. The texts that have a high proportion of lexical words contain more information. English teacher should counting the lexical and function words of a reading text before using it in the reading class.

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