

The Effectiveness of Using POSSE Strategy in Improving Reading

Comprehension

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Abstract

The present study aims to reveal the effectiveness of using P.O.S.S.E Strategy in improving reading comprehension. To conduct the strategy, the teacher needs white board, POSSE sheet form (Appendix 1), reading passages. To evaluate the outcomes of the teaching process, the teacher needs an observation checklist (Appendix 2) and a reading achievement test. The achievement test includes some items that relating to creative reading, because the strategy includes some features of creative reading. The strategy fits all students from secondary to university levels.

1. Background of the Study

Carol Sue Englert and Troy Mariage developed an instructional procedure called POSSE. Using the POSSE procedure, students are trained to:

Predict (P) what happens in a text.

Organize (O) those predictions.

Search (S) for main ideas.

Summarize (S) the ideas.

Evaluate (E) the story.

Theoretically, Scholars "have been concerned with the process of reading for thousands of years"; and although extensive researches have been conducted, the teachers and the specialists still lack a "clear stated, empirical supported, and theoretical unassailable definition of reading comprehension" (Bernhardt, 1991:5).

Scholars like Englert and Mariage evaluated the effectiveness of POSSE with 28 fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students with learning disabilities. Students trained on POSSE recalled

significantly more ideas and produced better-organized written recalls than students in the control group. POSSE students also surpassed control students on a measure of reading strategy knowledge (Floris and Divina, 2009:38).

Introduction

To introduce this study the researcher would presents some scholars 'points of views. Hudson (2007:28) articulated assumptions that can help the teachers to make sense of competing models. The first of these is "reading is meaning based". Second, we should assume that "the active reader provides a lot of the information necessary to comprehend any text".

Reading classes, as well as language and literacy classes that organize reading as a prime component, may utilize intensive or extensive approaches or mixing of the two to reach the ultimate goal which is the comprehensive reading, to enable the learners and the readers to comprehend the text (Hedgcock, and Ferris 2009: 160-163).

The large lump of second or foreign language reading textbooks, as well teacher's guide book, endorse an intensive approach to comprehend the text, and only sometimes use extensive, self-selected reading, perhaps as an optional supplement to the reading syllabus (Aebersold and field, 1997).

The procedures of implementing P.O.S.S.E Strategy are based on three stages (Pre-Reading, Reading, and post Reading) presented by framework utilized by California state University Expository reading and Writing task force (2008). This framework outline crucial academic reading skills and strategies for intensive reading (Hedgcock, and Ferris, 2009: 165).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher observes many factors that affect negatively students comprehending of a given the text. The first factor is related to the reading strategies. EFL students lack reading strategies. The second factor is related to the EFL instructor who use translation strategy in teaching reading

skill, the majority of EFL teachers and instructors do not use pre-reading, reading, Post-reading activities due to the huge number of the students and short period of the course.

The third factor is related to the students' lack of active participation inside the classroom: to ask question, to derive the meaning of new words, and motivation to comprehend the new topic. The fourth factor is related to students' reading comprehension mechanisms such as lack of stock vocabularies, finding the main ideas, and the supported ideas, stated and unstated details.

To overcome these factors, and achieve the goal of studying the researcher suggests P.O.S.S.E strategy due to the following purpose: (1) POSSE Strategy consist of two pre-reading strategies: Predict and Organize (P and O), and tow during reading strategy: Search, Summarize, (S and S), and post-reading strategy: Evaluate (E). That means predict the main idea of each paragraph of text. Organize the ideas into a cognitive map. Search for structure, students search for main idea, vocabularies, structure ...etc. Summarize the main idea in once own words, Evaluate what have been predicted and compare it with the existed one.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The present study hopes to promote EFL students' reading comprehension Via implementing the steps of POSSE Strategy. The activities of POSSE Strategy correspond with the objectives of learning reading comprehension at English classes. The strategy may be useful as a model in teaching reading skill in English language. Also, it may consider as a method to solve reading comprehension problems.

1. Definition

The researcher proposes the following operational definition of POSSE strategy (derived from the procedures of the strategy) that can be implemented inside the classroom which refers to:

- 1- Predict: to activate students' background knowledge by brainstorming what the theme will be about. To do so, the researcher uses the title, the picture(s) and sometimes read the first line of the first paragraph.
- 2- Organize: The students will use concept map to organize their predictions.

- 3- Search: The students will read the paragraphs of a given text to search for new vocabularies, main ideas for each paragraph, and the support ideas, and the structures.
- 4- Summarize: the students will use concept map through group discussion to identify the key idea of each paragraph.
- 5- Evaluate: The students will evaluate their understanding by comparing the two semantic maps which have been done in the prediction step and the one which completed after reading the paragraphs.

1.3 The Reading Process

Reading means to be able to comprehend a written text, to understand the required information successfully (Grellet, 1981:2). The popular types of reading metaphors are bottom-up views, top-down views, and interaction (or integrative) views (Ferris 2009:16).

The aim of bottom-up is how learners "readers" construct meaning ful messages from structural elements of a text. Whereas, the goal of "Top-down" is to clarify how learners "readers" construct meaning by fetching previous knowledge to the act of reading, and how learners "readers" utilize multiple textual "cues" to understand text messages. The third view is the interactive (integrated) view which aims at explaining how bottom-up and top-down processes interact with and complement on another (Bernhardt, 2005:141).

1.4 The Importance of context and Background Knowledge in the comprehension Process

Many language learners encounter difficulties when trying to comprehend a spoken or written text in the target language, especially when one is in the advance stages of learning a target language (Hadley, 2001:145).

Beginning in the 1960s, the role of meaningful and organization of background knowledge was particularly emphasized by cognitive Psychologists. For material to be meaningful, it must be based on existing knowledge that learner already Possesses. This existing knowledge must be

organize in such a method that the new information is easily attached to the learner's cognitive structure. Ausubel (1978) emphasises that teachers have to provide "advance organizers" (textual organizer) to facilitate the learning of new material (Ibid:144-146).

1.5 Advance Organizer Compared to other Pre-reading Activities

Many studies have investigated the effects of providing subjects with a title or topic for a passage before reading. The studies prove that presenting a title of a topic, or the topic in a brief sentence or two before reading has activated learners' knowledge, and promote comprehension of the passage (Schank and Abelson, 1997).

In addition, second language researchers have investigated the effect of summaries the main ideas of a passage. The summaries and questions are being used as advance organizers to examine their effects on college students comprehension (Herron, 1994)

1.6 Types of Text

A variety of definitions of text have been presented by linguists, reading theorists, and Specialists in text analysis. One general definition of text is "a verbal record of a communicative act" (Wallace, 1993:6). In addition, readers must grapple with multiple types of information encoded in text. These include (1) Orthograph (writing/spelling system). It can be divided into three categories: logographic [Chinese, Japanese], syllabic [Japanese kana, Korean hangul] , and alphabetic [Arabic, English, Russian, Greek]. (2) Word [it is the most basic unit of a written text]. (3) morphosyntactic information. (4) Cohesive ties, and text structure. Textual information includes typographic information such as capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing.

1.7 Type of Reading Comprehension

Brown (2001:312) mentions two types of reading comprehension. The first one includes silent and oral reading (to read aloud). The second one includes intensive and extensive reading. Readers use intensive reading when they focus on the linguistic details of the text; whereas, they use extensive reading when they are reading for pleasure. In the present paper, the researcher is concerned with intensive reading which helps the students to comprehend the text in a meaningful

way. The researcher believes that in order to implement intensive reading strategy, the teacher should follow three stages. The first is pre-reading activities. In this stage the teacher prepares the students to:

- 1- get ready to read (At least three distinct activity types can be included schema activation: (what do students already know about content, structure, and language of a given text); schema development, and establishing purpose for reading). (Hedgcock, and Ferris, 2009)
- 2- Surveying the text.
- 3- Making prediction and ask question.
- 4- Introducing key vocabulary.

The second is during reading activity. In this stage, the teacher prepares the students for:

- 1- First reading: it is not part of the pre-reading stage, which refers to a quick read to a text to develop a sense of its main points and to predict its component. First reading means student are ready to read the text intensively.
- 2- Re-reading the text to monitor and ensure student comprehension.
- 3- Looking closely at language.
- 4- Considering the structure of the text. (Ibide 171-176)

The third is post-reading activities in this stage, the teacher prepare the students for :

- 1- Summarizing and responding. It requires an understanding of the key ideas in a text and an ability to distinguish among main points and supporting details. It is considered as a good review and comprehension check tool.
- 2- Reading Writing Connections (comprehension questions, vocabularies review, and summarizing) (Ibid:188)

2. P.O.S.S.E Strategy

2.1 Definitions of P.O.S.S.E Strategy

The P.O.S.S.E strategy is developed by Carol Englert and Troy Mariage in 1991, it is a reading comprehension strategy. P.O.S.S.E Stands for Predict, Organize, Search, Summarize, and Evaluate. It encompass some reading comprehension techniques such as advance organizer, text structures, self-assessment, activates previous knowledge, encourages the learners to organize their knowledge, and compare between what they knew and what they have learned recently (Aprilia, 2015: 24)

Freville and Collen (2006 cited in Aprilia, 2015) prove the notion of POSSE strategy, they say it is a multistep instructional strategy which helps learners to organize their knowledge and summarize and elaborate between what they knew and what they have learned.

Later, Westwood (2008: 45) states that "POSSE strategy is designed to activate learner's previous knowledge and to link it with new one".

Based on the characteristics of P.O.S.S.E Strategy, the researcher in this paper choose it to develop students' reading comprehension.

The Merit of P.O.S.S.E Strategy

The founder of POSSE strategy Englert and Marriage (1991) and Brownell (2012:116) State the following merit and advantages of using POSSE strategy in developing reading comprehension for the EFL learners as follow:

- 1- The learners have the opportunity to activate their previous knowledge and connect it with a specific topic to predict new information.
- 2- The learners have the opportunity to practice the experience of using advance organizer in learning new information of a foreign language.
- 3- The learners can infer a new topic by utilizing their background knowledge.
- 4- The learners have the opportunity to share information with whole group.

- 5- The learners have the opportunity to monitor, and evaluate themselves by comparing their knowledge before acquiring the new information and after the instructional process. The students (in groups) compare the first graphic organizer (done in prediction step) and the second one (done in search step).
- 6- The learners have the opportunity to learn how to summarize a text successfully, without missing necessary information. This activity develops learner's comprehension of the new information, and enlarge the vocabularies bank.

Tiarina, and Arianti (2014) found that it is necessary for the teacher who uses POSSE Strategy to arrange the students in groups, distributes POSSE sheet then explain the purpose and basic competencies of the strategy from very beginning.

They also prove that POSSE strategy is the most appropriate strategy to teach reading analytical exposition, because it is a kind of expository text, it covers all reading activities: Pre-reading, during reading, and Post-reading.

Pesa and Somers (2007) found that the 7th and 8th grade students have Skip 'predict' step. This lead to not be able to identify the main idea of the text, because the teacher did not take time to explain it, and the students did not have time to be familiar with the text before reading it, thus they skip this step. So, it is important to explain several times the procedures of using POSSE Strategy even if it takes several meeting.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

The following are empirical studies which investigated the effectiveness of using P.O.S.S.E Strategy in improving and developing students' reading comprehension.

Pesa and Somers (2007) conduct a study to investigate the effect of POSSE Strategy on 7th and 8th Chicago Middle School. The participants of the study were exposing to reading comprehension strategies; one of them was POSSE Strategy. Pre and Post text were used to collect the data of the

study. The results revealed that students do not use all steps of the strategy. This leads to only 21% of the students being able to comprehend the text.

Meljulita (2012) investigates the effect of POSSE Strategy in improving reading comprehension of the 8th grade students of SMP N2 Jujuhan. Pre-Post tests were used to collect the data of the study. The findings reveal that the strategy has improve students' reading comprehension.

Yunetri (2014) investigates the effect of POSSE and Picture walk strategies on improving students' reading comprehension. The participants were from senior high school. Pre-and post test were used to collect the data of study. The findings reveal that POSSE strategy activates students' reading abilities.

Aprilia (2015) investigates the effect of POSSE strategy on improving students reading comprehension. The participants were from eighth grade. Pre and posttest were used to collect the data of the study. The findings reveal that the strategy has allowed the learners to predict the text, organize the prediction, searching the man idea, maximizing their vocabularies, successfully. The learners become independent learners in comprehending text.

Arianti and Tiarina (2014) investigate the effect of POSSE Strategy on developing students reading analytical exposition text. The participants were from senior high school students. pre-post test were used to collect the data of the study. The findings reveal that the strategy has activated students' background knowledge, and it helps learners to comprehend the text easily.

Jameel (2017) investigates the effectiveness of using P.O.S.S.E Strategy in improving reading comprehension for the second grade university students in Libya. To achieve this aim, the researcher conducted an action research. The total number of the participants is 69 (Male and Female Students). An observation checklist, Pre-post tests were used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data of the study. To collect the data of the study, the researcher used the following table:

No.	Pre-Treatment	During and Post Treatment	
		Phase One	Phase Two

1.	The learners knew some vocabularies in general.	The learners start to increase their vocabularies, but still in low level.	The learners enrich their vocabularies and be able to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.
2.	The learners encounter obstacles in understanding the theme.	The learners begin to comprehend the theme via using POSSE strategy.	The learners can comprehend the theme via using POSSE strategy.
3.	The learners learn individually.	There is interaction between the learners in groups.	The learners share ideas and exchange information, and even the lazy students has a role to participate in the activities.
4.	Most learners were unable to answer a comprehension question or give a meaning of a word.	Some learners be able to answer comprehension questions via using the information in the 'search' and 'summary' steps.	All students were able to answer comprehension questions, and can provide summary of the text successfully.

The results showed that there was positive statistical significance difference on the students' scores on the post-test due to the treatment. Also, there was an observed improvement on students' reading comprehension.

2.3 Implementing POSSE inside Classroom

To implement the strategy, the teacher provides students with the following procedures:

- 1- Provide students with POSSE strategy sheet.
- 2- Explain that the strategy sheet highlights each step in the strategy and includes a concept map to assist students in organizing their thoughts and searching for the structure of the text.
- 3- Tell students that the strategy sheet is organized with two activities to complete before reading (i.e., predict, organize background knowledge) and three activities to complete during reading (i.e., search, summarize, and evaluate).

- a- Predict:** activating background knowledge. Have students brainstorm what the text will be about using cues from the title, headings, pictures, or initial paragraphs. Assist in the process by asking questions such as “What do you think this text is going to be about?” “What clues from the text helped you make your prediction?”
- b- Organize** background knowledge. Have students prepare for reading by organizing their brainstormed predictions into the semantic map found on the strategy sheet. Discuss with students what new ideas students have learned about the topic.

Provide students with a POSSE cue card. Explain that the cue card is used to guide discussions about the texts they read. Demonstrate how to use the cue card to discuss a reading assignment.

Highlight the following:

- c- Search** for the text structure. Tell students that they are to read the text to confirm their predictions about the ideas in the text.
- d- Summarize.** Have students state what each paragraph is mainly about.
- e- Evaluate.** Evaluate includes four processes: question, compare, clarify, and predict.

To elaborate the POSSE strategy, the teacher may add the following features (QCC):

- **Question (Q):** Have students turn the summary statements into questions. The answer is recorded on the strategy sheet.
- **Compare (C):** Have students compare the semantic maps they prepared before reading the text with the maps they prepared as part of the discussion.
- **Clarify (C):** Have students ask questions about unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear referents, and information not provided by the author of the text (Jameel, 2017: 131).

Conclusion

Out of the above information, the researcher infers that POSSE strategy is a useful and implacable strategy that can improve learners' reading comprehension, and creative reading ability.

The steps of implementing the strategy are simple and available at any schools, the strategy does not need complicated instruments or techniques. EFL teachers can use the strategy at any level

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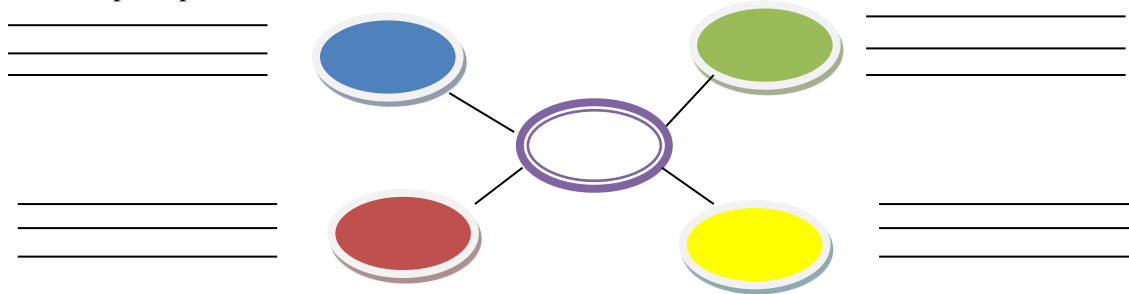
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Appendix 1

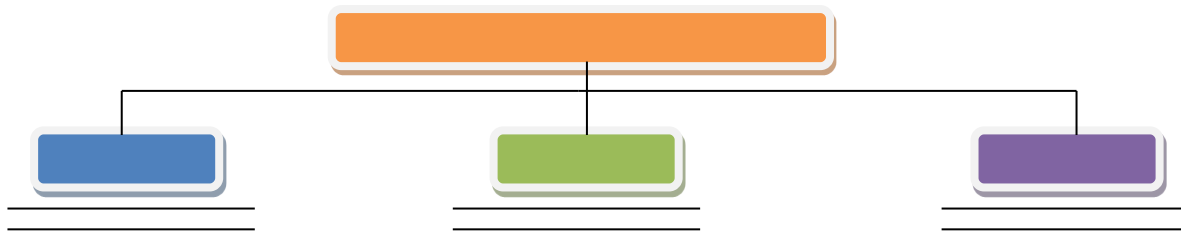
POSSE Sheet (Form)

Predict: What Ideas are in the text.

Organize: Organize your thought (use your ideas from above and then organize them into this concept map)



Search: Search for the main idea and confirmation of your predictions (after reading the text complete the main ideas advance organizer)



Summarize: Summarize the main idea in 1 or 2 sentences.

Main idea sentences or comprehension questions and answers

Evaluate: Compare maps- clarify any new words- predict what you will read about next.

Predict: I predict that . . .

Search/Summarise: I think the main idea is . . .

My question about the main idea is 'What ...'

Evaluate: 'Compare the ideas in this map...with the after reading concept map or

i		Pre-Reading			
1-	Predict	The researcher demonstrates the form of P.O.S.S.E STRATEGY and explains the procedures of the lesson.			

2-		The students suggest vocabularies and idioms related to the subject.			
3-		The researcher asks some question about the title and picture(s) of the subject.			
4-		The learners predict the theme.			
5-	Organize	The students write down their ideas in a sheet of paper.			
6-		The students organize the ideas in the POSSE Form.			
ii		During Reading			
7-	Search	The students read the paragraphs (in groups) silently.			
8-		Each student writes down the difficult words.			
9-		The students discuss in group then write the main idea of each paragraph.			
10-	Summarize	The students in groups ask the help of the researcher to write the summary.			
11-		The students (in group) summarize the subject.			
iii	Evaluate	Post reading			
12-		The students write the new words			
13-		The students search the meaning of the new words.			
14-		Each group presents its PSSE sheet.			
15-		The students (in group) answer the comprehension.			