



Analyze the Influence of the Top-Down Approach on the Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

The goals of this study was to describe the effect of top-down approach in reading comprehension for students at Nias University. This study used descriptive qualitative design as the research design. The sample of this study was eighteen students of English education study program. The data collection technique used in this study was through a test containing several questions for students. The questions were top-down questions based on the indicators of top-down questions. As for the results of data collection, the researcher obtained several student answer sheets based on the questions given, namely there is a significant effect of using the Top Down approach on students' reading comprehension. This means that students who are treated using the top down approach are better. It is evident that students who have taken the test given are able to understand and do the test given by the researchers.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan pengaruh pendekatan top-down dalam membaca pemahaman bagi mahasiswa di Universitas Nias. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif sebagai desain penelitian. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah delapan belas mahasiswa program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah melalui tes yang berisi beberapa pertanyaan untuk siswa. Pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut merupakan pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang disusun berdasarkan indikator-indikator dari pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang bersifat top-down. Adapun hasil dari pengumpulan data, peneliti memperoleh beberapa lembar jawaban mahasiswa berdasarkan soal yang diberikan, yaitu terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan dari penggunaan pendekatan Top Down terhadap pemahaman membaca mahasiswa. Hal ini berarti siswa yang diberi perlakuan dengan menggunakan pendekatan top down lebih baik. Terbukti bahwa siswa yang telah mengikuti tes yang diberikan mampu memahami dan mengerjakan tes yang diberikan oleh peneliti.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills in English that should be mastered by learners. Reading is not only the process of perceiving the meaning from words to words, but it is also one of the ways of interaction between the author who expresses his/her point of view into the text and the readers who try to interpret the words provided by the author (Yang et al., 2019). Reading text is not only the process of comprehending the components in a sentence word by word but also comprehension process combining schemata or background knowledge with information in the text. When people read the text, they have access to proper knowledge that is related to the text from a wide variety of sources to comprehend it (Kubby et al., 2005) in (Yang et al., 2019).

Reading comprehension involves complex information, which is not only concerned with word meaning, but also thought, culture, situation and so on. Although basic skills such as vocabulary and grammar knowledge are important factors to comprehend the text for the beginners, applying schemata and experience to making inference is also essential processing in order to improve readers' language proficiency. In order to encourage different kinds of readers to improve their reading skills beyond beginner level, teachers should provide more diverse ways to teach reading comprehension (Yang et al., 2019).

The relationship between reading comprehension and reader's background knowledge is discussed widely in the field of psycholinguistics. Owing to the recent research emphasis on linguistic input, psycholinguistics has more focused on the characteristics of individual language users than the language itself. Gowie (1978) explained that readers link their personal experiences or knowledge of the world to the components of the text, and comprehension is influenced by the interaction between the linguistic processing and prior knowledge.

Two psycholinguistic approaches have been proposed to explain the process of reading comprehension, top-down and bottom-up processing. Top-down processing is an approach which relies on the reader's schemata and background knowledge, expecting the comprehension of the components of the text as much as the actual words read (Wilson, 2008) in (Yang et al., 2019).

Top-down reading strategy is characterized as a reading procedure or psycholinguistics guessing game. Top-down reading strategies emphasize the importance of schemata, or prior experiences and background knowledge, in

understanding a literary work. In top-down strategies, the reader must have knowledge, comprehension, and language skills that play a major role in interpreting the meaning of the text (Nadea & Jumariati, 2021).

Salem (2000) defines the top down approach as a model that emphasizes readers bringing meaning to text based on their experiential background and interpreting text based on their prior knowledge (whole language). In reading comprehension through top-down approach it's important of activating students' background knowledge to decode a text has been already described. As soon as schemata are activated, interpretation takes place. In order to build up interpretation, the top-down model may be taken by readers. The top-down model encourages students to come up with the general idea of information through the activation of their prior knowledge.

This strategy requires readers to activate their background knowledge in order to understand more than the text being read. In other words, learners' level of knowledge is the most important factor in determining how much information they as readers will comprehend. Alderson (2000) indicates that the top-down approach emphasizes the importance of these schemata, over the incoming text. Bartlett (1977, as cited in Landry 2002) regarded schemata as an important part of top-down processing.

Based on the explanation above, it is seen that using top down approach in reading comprehension by applying background knowledge is necessary to the reading process. In other words, background knowledge is very important to build a comprehension. Hence, the student's background knowledge will help to arrive in comprehending a text if he/she is able to relate his/her background knowledge to the text. This concept is commonly called top down approach.

According to (Sabouri, 2016:235) in (Susanti, 2018), there are some stages to apply top down strategy in reading, those are:

a) Recognition stage

In the recognition stage, the students recognize the visual graphic of the written text. The students read the little and pay attention of the key word that have given by their teacher.

b) Prediction stage

The student anticipated and predicts as it seeks order and significance of input. The students predict about the meaning or the content of the text by key word available.

c) Confirmation stage

After prediction, the students' tries to check their prediction by confirming or disconfirming original prediction using follow-up information, whether or not the information is as expected. Verification of prediction by the students read the text to confirm their prediction to check whether the predictions are correct about the content of the text.

d) Correction stage

Reprocessing when it finds inconsistencies. If the prediction cannot be confirmed or incorrect, the students will make corrections. The students write down the correction of the prediction that outcome of the text

e) Termination stage

The students make summary what have they comprehended of the content of the text as formal ending of reading.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this research, the researcher used quantitative and qualitative research approach. Quantitative research is regarded as the organized inquiry about phenomenon through collection of numerical data and execution of statistical, mathematical or computational techniques (Adedoyin,2020). According to (Harefa, Lase, & Zega, 2023 ; Zebua, 2022) in Gea et al. (2023), qualitative research is describes events and our thoughts or reactions to them in terms of the interpretations that people make of them, this is how qualitative researchers observe things in their natural surroundings. The instruments that used by the researcher is reading test to the students to find out their improvement in reading test through top down strategy.

The procedure of data collection is the researchers ask 18 students as sample, then the researcher tested them by asking them related the topic, in this case the researcher used the narrative text and gave essay test and stimulated students to activate the background knowledge so the students could guess or predict the general information about the text and then the researcher looked at the students prediction by paying attention to the students' answer. After that, the researchers give a score to each students' answer by using the rubric :

- 1) Making prediction,
- 2) Note-taking organizing,
- 3) Rubric of summarizing

Table 1. Making Prediction

No.	Criteria	Score
1.	Prediction about possible events in story is clearly presented	5
2.	Prediction about possible in story somewhat unclear	4
3.	Prediction about possible events in story is very unclear	3
4.	Prediction about possible events in story in missing	2
5.	The student answer over but prediction is no connection with the story	1

Table 2. Note-taking organizing

No.	Criteria	Score
1	The notes are very clearly organized and illustrate understanding by explaining examples and details in a clear manner, such as labels and titles	5
2	The notes are organized and show understanding of the reading passage by explaining examples and details within the provide box categories	4

No.	Criteria	Score
3	The notes are somewhat organized and show some understanding of the reading passage	3
4	The notes are very poorly organized and show little understanding of the reading passages	2
5.	No assignment organization not evident	1

Table 3. Rubric of summarizing

No.	Criteria	Score
1	The student identifies the main (super ordinate) pattern running through the information along with the all minor (subordinate) patterns	5
2	The student identifies the main (super ordinate) pattern running through the information	4
3	The student addresses some of the features of the main (super ordinate) pattern running through information but excludes some critical aspects	3
4	he student does not address the main (super ordinate) pattern running through the information	2
5	No judgment can be made	1

Furthermore, the researchers aims to describe the types and frequency of indicators in top down approach on the reading comprehension. The researcher would like to calculating the percentace of the frequency for each type of indicators with in this formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{\sum n} \times 100$$

In which:

P : each type of error percentage

f: Each type of frequency/ score

$\sum n$: Each type error total number.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Top-down processing is closely tied to the concept of schemas in second language acquisition. Brown (2007) refers to top-down processing as conceptually driven processing in which we draw on our own intelligence and experience to understand a text. It is occurs when the system make general prediction based on higher level, general schemata, and then looks for the input information to fit into these partially satisfied, higher order schemata. Considering the information mentioned above, it is possible to say that it is easier for students to comprehend the passage if

students have background knowledge about it. It is believed that when students are familiar with the topic, then they are able to process it much better.

Susanti, 2018 states that top-down approach is well known and used by many teachers because of its effectiveness. Top-down strategy gives the opportunity to the students to understand the gist. Students become aware of what they are doing, the purpose of the issue and they capture the weaknesses and strengths of that issue. The students comprehend the subject with its main idea thus; they feel confident during the lesson. As a result of this, students become more productive and think intellectually. This process makes the students to benefit from critical understanding of the issue.

According to the research, it can be seen that through top-down approach there is a significant influence of using the Top Down approach on students' reading comprehension. This means that top-down approach influence the students' reading comprehension. It is proven that students who have taken the tests given are able to understand and complete the tests given by researchers. This top down approach is very important for students' reading comprehension where students can activate their background knowledge related to their reading. The data found by the researchers from 18 students are as follows :

Table 4. Data from 18 Students

Students	Scoring		
	Making Prediction	Note-taking organizing	Summarizing
S1	4	4	5
S2	5	3	4
S3	4	4	4
S4	5	4	4
S5	5	5	5
S6	4	4	4
S7	5	5	4
S8	5	3	4
S9	5	3	4
S10	3	5	5
S11	5	4	5
S12	4	5	3
S13	5	5	5
S14	5	3	4
S15	4	3	4
S16	4	4	4
S17	4	3	5
S18	5	4	4
Total	81	56	77
Percentage	37,85 %	26,16 %	35,98 %

After scoring the students in the table above, the researchers want to categorize the indicators that were most commonly understood and mastered by students when reading with a top-down approach. The table below illustrates this.

Table 5. Scoring and Percentages

No.	Indicators	Scoring	Percentages
1.	Making Prediction	81	37,85 %
2.	Note-taking organizing	56	26,16 %
3.	Summarizing	77	35, 98 %

Based on the findings of the data in table above, it can be described:

a) Making Prediction

In the top-down approach to reading comprehension, making predictions is an important step in understanding the text. This involves using prior knowledge and context clues to anticipate what might happen next in the text. By making predictions, readers can actively engage with the text and make connections between what they already know and what they are reading. This can help to improve comprehension and retention of information. Predictions can be based on a variety of factors, including the title of the text, the author's purpose, and the reader's own experiences. It is important to note that predictions are not always correct, but they can still be useful in guiding the reader's understanding of the text.

b) Note-taking organizing

In the top-down approach to reading comprehension, note-taking and organizing are essential components of the macroprocess. This involves students using their background knowledge to make general predictions and understand the text's gist. Note-taking and organizing help students capture the key points and structure of the text, allowing for a deeper understanding. Cognitive strategies for reading comprehension, such as note-taking, summarizing, and organizing, are important for developing stronger knowledge structures and improving comprehension. Additionally, in the top-down processing, readers involve their knowledge of syntax and outside reference materials, and note-taking is mentioned as a strategy to improve reading ability.

c) Summarizing

In the top-down approach to reading comprehension, summarizing is a crucial skill that involves condensing and paraphrasing a reading selection into a brief statement of its overall main idea, important secondary ideas, and major types of evidence used in support of the main ideas. Summarizing activities have been shown to improve students' reading comprehension, leading to increased understanding of texts and higher enthusiasm for sharing their comprehension. Strategies in using summarizing activities include helping students master the passage they are reading and increasing their learning and comprehension. Summarizing is part of the macroprocess of the top-down approach, which also includes note-taking and organizing, and is an effective practice for improving reading comprehension, particularly for struggling readers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis discussed above, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using the Top Down approach on students' reading comprehension. This means that students who are treated using the top down approach are better in reading

comprehension. It is evident that students who have taken the test given are able to understand and do the test given by the researchers.

Furthermore, researchers found that the categories in the top-down approach that most students understand are making prediction first with a percentage of 37,85 %, then summarizing with a percentage of 35, 98 %, and the last note-taking organizing with a percentage of 26,16 %. Through this, it is seen that top down approach is very important for students' reading comprehension where students can activate their background knowledge related to their reading and the third categories of indicators in top-down approach is known and mastered by the students. It means that, top-down approach in reading influence the students' comprehension.

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