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Reading comprehension instruction: Method analysis for content area reading

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the theoretical framework underlying the analysis of EFL reading instructional methods in relation to preparation for content area reading in English within the EFL context. The framework used in this paper is based on Richards and Rodgers's (2001) model of method of analysis of language teaching which was adapted to suit the analysis of the method of EFL reading instruction reflected in EFL curriculum documents. At the level of *Approach*, the analysis of method of EFL reading instruction was described in terms of theories of SLA and L2 reading theories. At the level of *Design*, the analysis of method of EFL reading instruction was described in terms of types of reading tasks, the level of cognitive demand of reading tasks, and types and length of reading passages.

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Introduction

According to Richards and Rodgers's (2001) model, language teaching can be analyzed at the levels of *Approach* (foundational theory), *Design* (e.g., selected language skills, learning tasks, learner roles), and *Procedure* (e.g., classroom techniques, classroom observation, teacher interviews). This model can also be used to analyze second language (L2) reading comprehension instruction. Based on Richards and Rodgers's (2001) model, this paper attempts to present the method of analyzing English as a foreign language (EFL) reading comprehension instruction in relation to how it prepares students for content area reading in English through an examination of EFL key curriculum documents including the EFL textbook. Since curriculum documents do not provide the data regarding actual moment-to-moment techniques, practices, and behaviors that actually take place in the classroom, the *Procedure* level of Richards and Rodgers's (2001) model cannot be addressed in this paper. To analyze the method of EFL reading instruction at the level of approach and design this paper provides a review of major approaches to L2 instruction and L2 reading instruction in terms of their underlying second language acquisition (SLA) and L2 reading theories, types of reading task, and level of cognitive demands of reading tasks. By analyzing these components, the EFL reading instructional methods proposed in EFL curriculum documents can be determined.

The design of EFL reading comprehension instruction in the form of types of reading task, the level of cognitive demand of the reading tasks, and types of passages used in an EFL reading curriculum are described. The rationales of why these instructional elements at the design level should be analyzed in determining EFL reading instructional methods and how such instructional methods may prepare students for content area reading are also included.

Theories and Approaches to L2 Instruction

The following sections provide the review of major approaches to L2 reading instruction in terms of the underlying theories of SLA and L2 reading, types of reading task, and cognitive demands of reading tasks.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approaches and Related Theories

In contrast to a direct approach or traditional approach, the communicative approach is considered an indirect approach to L2 instruction (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Terrell, 1997) and is also viewed as a learner-centered approach (Nunan, 1988). Current communicative approaches to L2 instruction are the products of Communicative Language Teaching methodologies which emerged in the 1970s and spread in the 1980s. CLT as a general approach to L2 instruction is based on the theory of language as communication. This is in line with socio-cultural theory (SCT), which views language as a tool in a socially mediated process (Vygotsky, 1978) and as a central tool for the development of thought processes or the crucial means of mediation for one's cognition.

The CLT approach is based primarily on the principle of providing students with meaningful communicative language activities in which the language activities are suitable to learners' needs and thus promote the development of communicative competence (e.g., Savignon, 1983). Every component of the CLT approach is carried out with communicative intent (Larsen-Freeman, as cited in Rao, 2002). These features of CLT can be found in more specific communicative approaches to L2 instruction such as Task-Based Instruction (TBI), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), and the Natural Approach, each of which will be explained briefly

Task-Based Instruction (TBI)

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) is a form of CLT in which tasks or activities are viewed as central to meaningful language learning (e.g., Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1998). Reflecting a social interactionist view, Hatch (1978) found that the types of interaction in which the members of a particular learning community are involved may provide appropriate scaffolding for the learning of new linguistic forms. Therefore, within the context of L2 reading, interaction not only assists in developing better understanding of text meaning, but also assists in the development of the linguistic aspects of the second language.

TBI teaching and learning activities typically involve learners collaborating in fulfilling a specified real world task in relation to the instructional objectives or learning outcomes such as making travel arrangements with a travel agent (Crookes, 1986; Prabhu, 1987).

Within the context of L2 reading, when reading tasks foster meaningful communication, such tasks engage learners as problem solvers within the communicative approach (e.g., Oxford, Lavine, & Crookall, 1989). When reading is situated within communicative activities based on texts as part of a problem solving process, readers collaborate to negotiate text meaning in order to build a mental representation of the text as intended by the author. Such reading tasks require a high level of cognitive demand. In addition, learners are also positioned as the monitors of their own learning by attending to the grammatical forms that are highlighted in the tasks and as risk-takers who have to attempt the target language by devising language innovation, such as paraphrasing, restating, using paralinguistic signals due to their lack of control or knowledge of the L2 (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Many L2 researchers have recommended TBI as a suitable and practical instructional approach for second and foreign language learning because it promotes real-time communication and learning is meaning-centered (e.g., Basturkmen, 2006; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). However, some L2 researchers have argued that the focus on tasks may put learners at a disadvantage in developing linguistic competence which they need as academic preparation (e.g., Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Widdowson, 2003) because the focus of TBI is primarily on the fluency of communication flow and task completion rather than on language accuracy.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is an L2 communicative instructional approach that assists students in academic areas (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). CBI is based on both information processing cognitive theories of SLA and socio-cultural theories. At fundamental level, cognitive theories of SLA perceive language as an interaction between the surface structure or grammatical forms of a language and the deep structure or meaning (Shirai, 1997). The information-processing theory of SLA involves linguistic information processing, textual information processing, and the synthesis of text information and prior knowledge processing (Koda, 2005).

Linguistic information processing refers to cognitive processes for the mapping of forms and their functions (MacWhinney, 1992) such as word processing. Textual information processing refers to comprehension processes involving building a mental representation of the propositional content for the purpose of understanding the author's message (e.g., Pulido & Hambrick, 2008). The synthesis of text information and prior knowledge processing includes cognitive processes such as inferencing, reasoning, and remembering (e.g., Nassaji, 2007). CBI focuses on developing learners' information processing abilities through comprehensible yet challenging content information presented in the foreign language, a combination of processes which places a high cognitive demand on the student (Met, 1991). However, CBI also builds on socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theories such as Swain's (1985) theory of communicative competence which characterizes CBI as a communicative instructional approach.

In terms of reading passages, the types of text used in CBI vary. Some researchers suggest that the content be only

expository and related to academic content (e.g., Curtain & Pesola, 1994) while others contend that the content can also be narrative (e.g., Eskey, 1997; Genesee, 1994). In contrast to TBI, which is organized around a central task or activity, CBI is designed around the content or information as well as the discourse of the content that is intended for learners to acquire (Eskey, 1997). According to Schleppegrell (2001) as well as Schleppegrell, Achugar, and Oteiza (2004), in addition to helping students achieve the ability to read grade-level texts, CBI may also assist in the development of second language proficiency. Schleppegrell (2001) as well as Schleppegrell, Achugar, and Oteiza (2004) contend that based on the functional theory of language, it is important to develop students' ability in mapping specific linguistic features to the meaning of the text, which makes linguistic development central to content learning. This link between language and content or knowledge is in line with the socio-cultural approach. The socio-cultural theory of SLA views language as a central tool for the development of thought processes or the crucial means of mediation for cognition. Thus, CBI emphasizes cognitive activity related to text information processing (learner-input mental processes) as well as communicative activity. Hence, the goal of CBI is to concurrently prepare learners for general L2 proficiency as well as a strong L2 academic language in their content areas (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989) via communicative negotiation of meaning.

Past studies related to CBI showed that CBI may assist learners in both general L2 as well as academic language development (e.g., Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Crandall, 1993; Short, 1993). However, some researchers contend that content-based and task-based approaches are not necessarily suitable in certain EFL contexts (e.g., Swan, 2005) due to factors such as limited hours of instruction (e.g., Lightbown, 2000) and also lack of expertise in the content subject matter among EFL teachers (Murphy, 1997).

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL)

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), also known as Collaborative Learning (CL) builds on the socio-cultural view of language as a tool to mediate interaction geared towards language learning. Therefore, CLL that is learner-centered in nature emphasizes the role of social interaction in language instruction. The purpose of CLL is to provide learners with naturalistic L2 acquisition and to promote communicative functions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Learners are viewed as problem solvers who collaboratively work towards achieving the same goal. Since learners play a role as problem solvers, such task fulfillment requires high cognitive demand. In general, learning tasks under CLL are primarily group tasks (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994) in which learning is interdependent and collaborative (Coelho, 1992). CLL can be used as the vehicle for L2 instruction to assist students in L2 development as well as L2 reading development such as in literal and higher order reading comprehension skills (e.g., Ghaith & El-Malak, 2004; Shaaban, 2006). CLL is more learner-oriented instruction through engaging communicative activities based on texts which may help improve reading skills in L2 (e.g., Eljana, 2009; Jacobs & Yong, 2004).

Naturalistic Approach

Krashen and Terrell (1983) argued that learning activities in the form of drills such as the ones advocated by the Audiolingual Method do not provide learners with the necessary skills for communication. Krashen and Terrell's Natural

Approach to L2 instruction views language as communication and therefore its goal is to promote communicative abilities via communicative exchanges. Hence, the Natural Approach promoted by Krashen and Terrell is also known as the Creative Construction Approach. The Naturalistic Approach is based on five interrelated hypotheses which characterize the learning tasks as comprising comprehensible input, non-threatening learning environment, sub-conscious learning, and sequential language learning, in which language is presented in stages according to its sequence. Since this approach focuses on the importance of meaning making, such feature is crucial in L2 reading comprehension. The Natural Approach can be connected to text-based L2 reading instruction in which learners attempt to construct meaning via a discussion based on a reading text (Beck & McKeown, 2006). Communicative reading tasks as a vehicle for meaning making place high cognitive demands on learners. The Natural Approach to L2 instruction is considered effective for L2 development by a number of SLA researchers (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Furuhashi, 1999; Lin, 2008; Long, 1996; Nunan, 2004; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989).

Theories of and Instructional Approaches to L2 Reading
Theories of L2 reading that undergird each approach to L2 reading include Bottom-Up, Top-Down, and Interactive theories. Bottom-Up theory focuses on the lower level processing skills at the word level, because language learners need to be able to process vocabulary and words before they can process the text at the sentence and text discourse level for reading comprehension. On the contrary, Top-Down theory downplays the roles of lower level processing skills and places importance on the roles of higher level processing skills such as semantic processing in reading comprehension process. The current Interactive theory postulates that reading comprehension may best occur when there is an interaction among the text, the reader, and others.

Bottom-Up Theories and L2 Grammar Translation (GT) Reading Instruction
Bottom-up theories of reading are text-driven in nature and focus on the lower level components of the reading process such as phonological processing, word recognition, and word identification (e.g., Nassaji, 2003). Comprehension is perceived to be dependent on linguistic skills or decoding skills (Carrell, 1988), which reflects both a structuralism view of language learning. One reading instructional approach based on the Bottom-Up theory is the Grammar Translation (GT) instructional approach. GT was originally used to teach literature to L1 speakers (Chen, 2008). In an EFL classroom, GT involves the teacher translating the English text, explaining grammar rules, and focusing on vocabulary (Wang, 2009). Learners are often instructed to read the text individually and their attention is commonly directed to learning grammar rules and vocabulary (e.g., Griffiths & Parr, 2001). This form-focused instructional approach for reading centers on the teacher, involves substantial drilling, and generally disregards the role of meaning (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1995) and does not provide students with enough exposure to high level cognitive demand reading tasks.

Research has shown that the reading process does not only involve linguistic competence, but also discourse competence; that is, having knowledge of discourse markers and how these markers connect parts of the text into a coherent whole (Koda, 2005). Hence, GT may not contribute to the development of learners' higher order processing skills in EFL reading because reading instruction is primarily focused on lower level text

processing skills as well as learning the rules of grammar with less attention to text content or information processing for meaning.

In relation to knowledge acquisition, another important purpose of L2 reading instruction is for learners to construct meaning of new concepts presented in L2 (Grabe, 2008), which GT fails to address. Lu (1996) compared GT and the natural acquisition instructional approach among ESL learners and found that the natural acquisition instructional approach is superior to GT in developing ESL learners' text information processing. Holden and Usuki (1999) contend that GT also limits learner autonomy in L2 learning. Despite the criticism for the primarily form-focused characteristic, some studies found that GT is effective for language structure, clause, and sentence acquisition (e.g., Hadley, 2001; Fotos, 2001), which contribute to the linguistic competence that L2 readers also need for text processing at the word level.

Interactive Theories and Communicative L2 Reading Instruction
The interactive theory of L2 reading is a combination of reader-driven and text-driven processes which integrates both lower level and higher level processes (Grabe, 1991; Nassaji, 2002) and takes into account readers' background knowledge of content, text structure, and cultural factors (Roebuck, 1998). Grabe (1991) defines the term *interactive* as describing two important and related characteristics of reading processes: (a) the interaction of various processes: text-driven and reader-driven; (b) the interaction between the reader and the text/the author: a process whereby the reader attempts to construct a mental representation of the text by integrating text information and the reader's world knowledge. "Thus, in interactive models, reading involves the continuous integration of the available information, from both 'inside' and 'outside' the text, in order to construct a coherent representation of the text," notes Roebuck (1998, p. 3).

However, within the present decade, L2 reading researchers have begun to shift their focus towards the importance of having students be actively engaged with the text by linking social context and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1987). Hence, the Interactive theory of L2 reading has been expanded to include communicative theories of SLA, especially sociocultural theory. In line with socio-cultural theory, socio-cognitive theory, and the communicative approach, the interactional theory of L2 reading promotes discourse competence around text information using language as a tool in a socially mediated process (Vygotsky, 1978) and also as a central tool for the development of thought processes which may assist in enhancing L2 reading processing. The growing interest in the communicative instructional approach has extended the current interactive theory of L2 reading to include the interaction between the reader, the text, and the reading context.

One of the communicative L2 reading instructional approaches that is based on Interactive theories and socio-cultural theory (SCT) is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). In contrast to the Grammar Translation instructional approach, reading within Content-Based ESL Instruction, which is a communicative approach to L2 instruction, is designed to concurrently train learners in foreign language skills as well as in academic-related subject matter (Hyland & Hamps-Lyon, 2002; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). Since Content-Based ESL Instruction places importance on both language skills and meaning construction in L2 reading, it reflects an interactive theory.

CBI and other communicative instructional approaches to L2 reading that are grounded in interactive and sociocultural theories focus on collaborative and communicative text-based discussion as ways to enhance students' engagement with texts and to support student comprehension.

Content-Based ESL Instruction is a form of CBI that is commonly practiced in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) courses and also in general English as a Second Language (ESL) or EFL programs.

Therefore, Content-Based ESL Instruction is also commonly used in EFL reading lessons using expository type content-based texts such as Science and History (e.g., Shang, 2006) for students to learn new concepts presented in L2. The goal of Content-Based ESL Instruction is to provide students with academic literacy in content areas as well as to enhance students' genre knowledge of expository type texts for academic success (Song, 2001). Content-based texts are texts of advanced literacy that require more cognitive demands in terms of knowledge and language (e.g., Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Schleppegrell, 2001).

Top-Down Theories and Whole Language Approaches to L2 Reading Instruction

Top-down theories of L2 reading emphasize higher level text processing skills such as contextual and background knowledge sources based on the idea that readers' ability to use syntactic and semantic cues compensates for their lack in graphic cues (Goodman, as cited in Nassaji, 2003, p. 262). In contrast to the bottom-up model of L2 reading, as exemplified by the Grammar Translation instructional approach, the top-down model undergirding approaches such as Whole Language signifies the importance of higher level text processing skills (e.g., semantics) and de-emphasizes the functions of lower level text processing skills (e.g., word recognition).

In contrast to the Grammar Translation instructional approach, the Whole Language approach to L2 reading instruction is a recent approach to L1 and L2 literacy education (see, Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Goodman, 1987) in which reading is considered a process of constructing meaning from whole to part (e.g., Bergeron, 1990).

The Whole Language instructional approach was developed based on the theory of language as communication or social activity. Learners use their experiences to construct meaning from the text. The primary goal is to teach reading and writing skills by using real communication. Learners are viewed as collaborators with their peers and evaluators of their own learning (Goodman, 1989). In L2 reading instruction, learning tasks assimilate the use of language in real world such as reading activities for comprehension and for real purposes that are related to learners' real life experiences (Moorman, Blanton, & McLaughlin, 1994).

The tasks require higher order thinking and linguistic skills such as arguing about the author's viewpoint in a discussion with reasoning, discussing cause and effects of events in an expository text and so forth. Reading and writing are integrated in meaningful and functional activities (e.g., Freeman & Freeman, 1992) such as writing in response to a reading activity.

The findings of past studies of the Whole Language approach varied depending on how this approach is defined. However, many L2 studies have found that the Whole Language instruction contributes to reading comprehension development (e.g., Beccera-Keller, 1993; Chen, 1991; Liaw, 2003).

Description and Justification of L2 Reading Components at the Design Level of the method of EFL Reading Instruction

The micro-skills of L2 reading can be analyzed in the forms of types of reading tasks, the level of cognitive demand of reading tasks, types of reading passages, and types of learner roles. Each of these L2 reading instruction components will be described and the justification of including these instructional elements as important components in analyzing the method of L2 reading instruction is provided.

Types of Reading Tasks

Past studies in first language (L1) and L2 reading have shown that the types of reading tasks assigned to students influence their reading abilities (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 2001; Scanlon & Vellutino, 1997). Therefore, it is important to analyze the types of reading tasks in determining how the instructional method of L2 reading prepares students for content area reading. Reading tasks can be grouped into three major categories: identification of main ideas, identification of details (textually explicit), and the drawing inferences (e.g., Anderson, Bachman, Perkin, & Cohen, 1991; Koda, 2005). Content area texts are often highly condensed with information which requires students to have information literacy, part of which is the ability to analyze such texts (e.g., Rockman, 2004). Therefore, particularly at the university level, when reading in the content areas involving EFL, students are expected to be able to analyze reading texts by identifying details and main ideas, and making inferences for implied text information.

Levels of Cognitive Demand of the Reading Tasks

Past studies on foreign language learning have indicated that the level of cognitive demand of language tasks is an important factor in language mastery (e.g., Bialystok, 2002; Sawaki, Kim, & Gentile, 2009). Students need to have the required level of reading skills that will enable them to achieve information literacy for academic success (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 2002). Moreover, students' ability to perform reading tasks of various levels of cognitive demands may reflect their cognitive abilities in foreign language reading comprehension (e.g., Alderson & Lukmani, 1989; Bernhardt, 1983). Past studies (e.g., Alderson, 1990; Whalley et al., 2006) have also examined the level of cognitive demand reflected in reading comprehension questions, as these questions identify students' "internal mental processes" (Chamot, 1983, p. 463) related to the tasks that they are expected to perform. In analyzing the level of cognitive demand, taxonomies such as Bloom's (1956) and Anderson and Krathwol's (2000) can be used as guidelines.

Although the utility of Bloom's taxonomy (1956) has been widely argued (e.g., Bereiter & Scardarmalia, 1998; Moore, 1982), the taxonomy is still widely used in the cognitive sciences as a reliable indicator of the level of cognitive process (e.g., Baniulis & Rekleitis, 2002; Bergandhl & Tibell, 2005). Anderson and Krathwol's taxonomy (2000) is the revision of Bloom's taxonomy with the current taxonomy comprises a slight difference in the positioning of the synthesis/creative level, nevertheless these skills are still considered to represent higher order cognitive levels in both taxonomies.

Besides the above taxonomies, the combination of Marzano et al.'s Core Thinking Skills taxonomy (1988) and Marzano's Core Cognitive System taxonomy (2000) taxonomies which are used in English as a first language reading can also be used as guidelines as the of the level of cognitive demand for reading tasks. These taxonomies incorporate a wider range of thinking

skills and were also developed to provide more research-based theory to assist teachers in attempting to improve students' thinking (Marzano, 2000).

Types and Length of Reading Passages

In general, there are two major text types; narrative and exposition (e.g., Avaloz, Plasencia, Chavez, & Rascon, 2007; Gaddy, Bakken, & Fulk, 2008; Koda, 2005). The common features of narrative text include characters, settings, problems or conflicts encountered by main characters, plots, and affect patterns (Gurney, Gursten, Dimino, & Carnine, 1990). In contrast to the narrative genre, expository texts are often written for the purpose of knowledge sharing and thus the content is often informational (Koda, 2005). Expository texts often use text structures such as cause and effect, problem and solution, or compare and contrast (e.g., Meyer & Freedle, 1984; Meyer & Rice, 1984; Taylor, 1980). These features of narrative and expository passages can be used to analyze types of reading passages used in EFL reading instruction.

Types of passages are important to include in analyzing the method of EFL reading instruction because content area reading is particularly crucial in EFL reading instruction, especially at the university level because content area texts are primarily in the form of expository English texts. Graddol (1997) found that 28 percent of the world's yearly book production is in the English language; a finding which suggests that at least 28 percent of academic references as well as textbooks are offered in the English language and presented at grade-level.

Therefore, if students are not given enough exposure to expository texts, such instructional choice may result in reading difficulties, especially at the university level. Past studies across EFL countries have shown that students, especially at university level often struggle when reading in English (e.g., David & Govindasamy, 2003; Day & Bamford, 2005; Vlack, 2009). This phenomenon could be due to reading problems that are not addressed, such as lack of exposure to expository texts. Thus, in relation to content reading, the use of expository texts should be made an important component in EFL reading instruction in order to ensure that students will not have difficulties to read expository texts especially at the university level.

Unlike in English as L1 reading curriculum, grade-level texts factor in L2 reading curriculum has not been given appropriate attention in L2 reading comprehension. In the L1 context students' ability to read at grade-level is highly emphasized (e.g., Leslie & Caldwell, 2004, 2006), because when students are not able to read at grade-level this may cause reading problems in the present and higher grades.

In terms of text length, some L2 studies have claimed that shorter or simplified passages may better facilitate L2 reading comprehension (e.g., Leow, 1997; Oh, 2001; Shook, 1997; Young, 1999). Some studies examined the role of authentic and simplified texts in which authentic texts are commonly longer than simplified ones (e.g., Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy & McNamara, 2007; Tomlinson, Dat, Masuhara, & Ruby, 2001).

The focus of such studies on text length was often related to the manipulation the linguistic features of texts, such as in the case of simplified texts. It is still inconclusive whether shorter or longer texts are best used in L2 reading comprehension instruction (e.g., Day & Bamford, 1998).

However, the question is how the type and length of passages used in L2 reading instruction would affect students' ability to read expository grade-level texts in the content areas; such texts are commonly long and complex in nature (e.g., Beck,

McKeown, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1991). Thus, text types and grade-level text are included as part of the essential components of the methodology of EFL reading instruction at the design level in relation to preparation for content area reading.

Interpretation of the Analysis of EFL Reading Instructional Method

Figure 1 illustrates the model of analysis for the method of EFL reading instruction at the level of approach and design using the adapted Richards and Rodgers's (2001) framework. At the approach level, EFL reading curriculum is developed based on certain theories of SLA and L2 reading. For example, the structuralism theory of SLA and Bottom-Up theory of L2 reading reflects the Grammar Translation (GT) Method and based on the review of past studies on GT, this type of EFL reading instructional approach might not prepare students for content area reading in English. The socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories of SLA and communicative-interactive theory of L2 reading would reflect communicative EFL reading instructional approaches. Nonetheless, reading tasks that primarily reflect cognitive information processing theory translate to EFL reading tasks that disregard the role of others in the reading context.

Based on the review of CLT instructional approaches, such reading tasks may not be effective in developing self-regulated EFL readers. Instructional approaches to reading that disregard the roles of meaningful interaction with others in the reading context have been debated as less effective in developing EFL reading comprehension abilities (e.g., Ghaith & El-Malak, 2004; Shaaban, 2006), and as such, may not prepare students for content area reading in English (e.g., Faizah, Zalizan, & Norzaini, 2002; Nambiar, 2005).

At the design level, EFL reading instructional approaches that prepare students for content area reading in EFL should equally emphasize important types of reading tasks such as identifying main ideas, identifying details, and making inferences, as well as other reading skills such as fluency, the use of schemata, and vocabulary.

Therefore, the lack of emphasis on such primary reading tasks might not effectively prepare students for content area reading in EFL. In terms of reading passages, the type of reading passages can be analyzed as either expository or narrative while the length of reading passages can be analyzed using Leslie and Caldwell's (2004, 2006) taxonomy of grade-level texts for L1 English readers in Qualitative Reading Inventory III and IV.

These inventories provide grade-level taxonomies from elementary to post-secondary level. Since grade-level text factor has not been highlighted in the L2 reading comprehension domain, to date, grade level text taxonomy for L2 reading has either not yet developed or if it has, it is not published. By significantly using grade-level expository texts in EFL reading instruction, students are frequently trained to process and comprehend such EFL texts especially in content areas. Thus, EFL reading instruction should explicitly emphasize the use of grade-level expository passages.

As previously noted, the levels of cognitive demand of reading tasks can be analyzed using either Bloom's (1959) or Anderson and Krathwol's (2000) taxonomies or the combination of Marzano et al.'s (1988) and Marzano's (2000) taxonomies. EFL reading instruction should use reading tasks that aid the development of students' ability to deal with reading tasks that demand use of various levels of cognition, especially those that require high cognitive demands.

Figure 1 Method of analysis for the teaching of second language reading comprehension



In order for students to meet high academic demands they need to be engaged in challenging literacy tasks (e.g., Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). To develop cognitive capacity students should be given tasks which require high cognitive demand (e.g., Paas & van Gog, 2009). Therefore, teaching learners with core cognitive skills is considered crucial in order for them to function in content area reading (e.g., Crano & Johnson, 1991; Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, 1998). Thus, in analyzing the cognitive demand level of reading tasks, EFL reading instruction that emphasizes high cognitive demand reading tasks is considered effective in preparing students for content area reading in English while lack of exposure to such reading tasks indicates otherwise.

Conclusion

The method of EFL reading instruction can be described in terms of the components identified at the level of approach and design. The analysis of EFL reading instructional methods described in this paper may provide the general guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of EFL reading instructional methods in preparing students for content area reading across EFL contexts. Since the nature of EFL contexts may vary, the model provided in this paper can be adapted to suit a particular EFL context when examining the method of EFL reading instruction in curriculum documents regarding the preparation for content area reading in English.

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