THE EFFECTS OF STUDENT’S PERCEPTION ON TEACHER’S PERFORMANCE AND LEARNING STYLES TOWARDS STUDENT’S READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

Reading has become an integral part of the English language learning. In the process of learning, students apply different kinds of learning styles to absorb the information. Teacher’s performance in the class is considered an important element how students learn the new language. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out the effects of student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles towards student’s reading comprehension. The method used is survey method. A sample of 60 students showed several significant findings. The most important finding is the significant effect of student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles towards reading comprehension. The findings therefore will help to provide more information on the issue and plan for better strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: perception, teacher’s performance, learning styles, reading comprehension.

1. Introduction

Reading is one important way to improve our general language in English because it helps learners learn to think in English, enlarge the English vocabulary and improve the writing. It is also a good way to practice the English if learners live in a non English-speaking country. Reading can help learners to prepare their study in an English speaking country and a good way to find out about new ideas, facts and experiences. (Mickulecky and Jeffries: 1996).

Since English in Indonesia is a foreign language, most students at any levels of education get difficulty in reading English texts. Most senior high school graduates are not able to read English with complete comprehension. The Indonesian students need help in reading comprehension. For students, reading is a key to improve learning outcome in many fields of study. Reading comprehension is not only needed for their lesson but it also can improve the score of their national exam. Reading is an inseparable part of any English course. (TEFLIN Journal: 2010).

Many students failed to go to foreign universities because of the low score of their English proficiency test. The test scores do not reach the minimal requirement of passing grade of the universities. The improvement of reading comprehension of the students should be the focus of teaching and learning process in increasing the human quality (Hamra & Syatriana, 2010). (English Language Teaching Journal: 2012)
The results of the study conducted shows that students in Senior High Schools in Indonesia got difficulties in answering questions related to English texts given to them. Besides, it was found that in general, students had low skills in comprehending English texts and had low participation in the teaching-learning process.

Based on the researcher’s teaching experiences, it was found that there were some factors influenced student’s reading comprehension which had impacts to student’s reading comprehension such as student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles.

2. Student’s Perception on Teacher’s Performance

Interpersonal interactions between teachers and students may contribute to student underachievement. For example, if a teacher has lower expectations for, or responds negatively to certain students, achievement by those students may be negatively affected. It is an absolute necessity that the relationships in the classroom should be seen or perceived by students to be without favour to the few, and fair and consistent towards all. It is found out that students perceived effective teachers to be those who demonstrate that they care about and value individuals. (Hay/McBer in Janet, Jenkin and Lord, 2006:54)

According to Hargreaves and Fullan in Richards “the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement”. (Richards, 2003:385) In other words, it is what teachers think and do at the classroom level that eventually determines what learners learn in the classroom. Richard added that effective teachers are typically defined as those whose students perform better on standardized achievement test. (Richards, 2003:21). Brown stated that there are four good language teaching characteristics such as technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities (Brown,2007:491)

In order to work well with the different roles, teachers need to establish an appropriate relationship with the students. Teachers need to spend time making sure that teacher-student rapport is positive and useful. According to Jeremy harmer, rapport means, in essence, the relationship that the students have with the teacher and vice versa. Schrivener in Harmer added that we can recognize rapport when we see it, a class where there is a positive, enjoyable and respectful relationship between teacher and students, and between the students themselves (Harmer, 2007:113)

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that teacher’s performance is related to both behaviours and results. Behaviours come from the teacher and transform performance from abstraction to action, the way in which the teacher gets tasks of anything ordered or undertaken (doing the work). It is also a record of a teacher’s accomplishments or outcomes of work (results). Teacher’s performance is the ability to perform the teaching and learning activities in a classroom, with indicators: (1) The ability of teachers in making preparations and instructional design, (2) The ability of teachers in delivering lessons, (3) The ability of teachers in using appropriate teaching aids and learning technologies, (4) The ability of teachers in making a variety of teaching techniques or strategies (4) The ability of teachers in using appropriate teaching aids and learning technologies, (5) The interaction of teachers with students.
3. Student’s Learning Styles

Nunan (1991:167) has defined learning styles as any individual’s preferred ways of going about learning. It is generally considered that one’s learning style will result from personality variables, including psychological and cognitive make up, socio cultural background and educational experience. Dunn, Thies, & Honigsfeld (2001) refer learning styles as a combination of many biological and experientially imposed characteristics that contribute to concentration, each in its own way and all together as a unit. Dunn & Dunn(1992) added that learning style is the way in which each learner begins to concentrate on, process, absorb, and retain new and difficult information. The interaction of these elements occurs differently in everyone. Therefore, it is necessary to determine what is most likely to trigger each student’s concentration, how to maintain it, and how to respond to his or her natural processing style to produce long-term memory and retention.

Learning style is more than merely whether a student remembers new and difficult information most easily by hearing, seeing, reading, writing, illustrating, verbalizing, or actively experiencing. Perceptual strength is only one part of learning style. It is also more than whether a person processes information sequentially or analytically rather than in a holistic, simultaneous, global fashion. Information-processing style is just one component of style. It is important to recognize not only individual behaviors, but to explore and examine the whole of each person's inclinations toward learning.

It can be inferred that learning style is a way preferred and adapted by anyone in the process of learning and getting new knowledge so the information and knowledge may easily mastered. Learning style is the key to developing the performance of the work, at school, and in interpersonal situations. It is something on how a person absorb and process information, learn and communicate into something easy and fun in order to reach the learning goals.

Several approaches to learning styles have been proposed. This part focuses on some of them, mainly connected with those which will be used later in the research. Furthermore, based on Brown (2007:410) classification of learning styles, in this study, researcher just focused on three major part of the area of sensory learning styles that can be divided in to three types as follows: visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

3.1 Visual

Students who learn more toward visual and kinesthetic styles often face difficulties in the traditional college classroom. Unless they also have a digital or auditory processing style on which to rely, they are often left behind in lecture-based courses, through no fault of their own. So, additional forms of stimuli may be necessary in order to optimize their learning experience. Individuals with a primarily visual learning style rely on their sight to take in information. They work well with maps and rarely forget a face, a scene, or a place. Some gravitate to artistic fields where they can express their flair for design and color. Consistent with their visual nature, these individuals organize knowledge in terms of spatial interrelationships among ideas and store it graphically as static or animated snapshots, flowcharts, pictures, or diagrams. Some even have photographic memories. (Flemming in Nilson, 2010:232)

These learners absorb information most effectively if it is provided through the visual channel. They tend to prefer reading tasks and often use colorful highlighting schemes to make certain information visually more salient. Moreover Kinsella pointed out, some visual learners may be overwhelmed by
extensive printed material and require a less verbal presentation of information through media such as pictures, graphs, charts, and other graphic forms. (Suparman, 2009:115)

3.2 Auditory

Students with an auditory learning style perform well when they are given information in a form they can hear, such as a discussion, a lecture, a debate, or another type of verbal presentation. In fact, they learn best when they can hear themselves express an idea. Consequently they benefit from most standard teaching methods, especially those that require student participation. As they process and store information in chronological relationships, they thrive in fields that base data and analysis on stories, cases, and events, such as history, political science, law, business administration, and literature. Many also have musical talent. Strong auditory learners can retrieve knowledge in “memory tapes” and are aided by mnemonic devices. (Flemming in Nilson, 2010:232)

This auditory learners use most effectively auditory input such as lectures or audiotapes. They also like to talk the material through by engaging in discussion and group work. They benefit from written passages to be read out and they often find that reciting out loud what they want to remember is helpful. (Suparman, 2009:115)

3.3 Kinesthetic

Those with this learning style benefit most by doing. It uses active involvement as the primary learning mode. Those strong in this style demonstrate superb eye-hand-mind coordination and natural-born mechanical ability. In the recent past, these learners were rarely taught their way except in shop or home economics courses. While mechanical skills may seem narrow and unintellectual, kinesthetic individuals make excellent surgeons, dentists, health care professionals, musicians, technicians, engineers, and architects. In processing information, they easily grasp physical interrelationships and store knowledge as experiences with both physical and emotional components. (Flemming in Nilson, 2010:232) The kinesthetic style refers to learning style most effectively through complete body experience (e.g whole body movement), whereas tactile learners like a hands on, touching learning approach. (Suparman, 2009:115)

To learn, it depends on our senses to process the information around us. Most people tend to use one of their senses more than the others. There are three most commonly known styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Successful learners use all three modalities to receive and learn new information and experiences.

4. Effects on Reading Comprehension

There are ten kinds of comprehension skills as written by Mikulecky and Jeffries (1996:15-167) namely scanning, previewing and predicting, vocabulary knowledge for effective reading, topics, topics of paragraph, main ideas, pattern organization, skimming, making inferences and summarizing.

Research has shown that a teacher’s expertise makes a big difference in the effort to teach reading comprehension explicitly yet, few teachers receive adequate pre-service preparation or ongoing professional development focused on reading comprehension. Finally, research has also shown that improving reading comprehension and preventing poor reading outcomes require measuring outcomes at every stage of learning. (Snow, 2009:xii)
Sensory learning styles (kinesthetic, auditory, and visual) affect the way that students prefer to learn and the areas in which they will have difficulty in learning.

- Kinesthetic learners tend to like to read how-to books and action-oriented books, but they will have trouble sitting still or listening for more than four minutes.
- Auditory learners tend to like to read plays and dialogues, but they will have trouble reading silently and with speed when not allowed to vocalize.
- Visual learners tend to like to read for pleasure, but they will have trouble working in an environment with noise and distractions.

If specific sensory learning styles are a variable in struggling readers, then teachers could create lesson plans that use the strengths of those styles to build comprehension skills. A teacher must be very clever in choosing learning methods that can attract students. This can enhance student’s motivation in learning reading comprehension skills. Selection of teaching methods which implemented a teacher is part of the creativity of teachers in implementing effective and innovative learning that can eliminate student’s boredom.

The ability of creativity above simply cannot be implemented without the willingness of the teachers themselves to continuously improve performance of teaching in the classroom. The pleasant atmosphere and good relationship between teacher and students at the time of studying will further enhance student’s perception to be more interested to learn English, especially reading comprehension.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study conducts a field research to get empirical data through survey using questionnaire, test and correlation approach. The research is the sample research, where the selected subjects represent the whole population.

There are three variables: The students’ perception on teacher’s performance (X1) as the first independent variable and students’ learning style (X2) as the second independent variable which has contribution on students’ reading comprehension (y) as the dependent variable.

The research problem can be illustrated in the following figure:

Picture 1. The model constellation of relationship between independent variable and dependent variable

\[ Y = \text{Student’s reading comprehension} \]
\[ X_1 = \text{Student’s perception on teacher’s performance} \]
\[ X_2 = \text{Learning styles} \]

Based on the objective of this study that is to examine the effect of student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles towards reading comprehension the above theoretical framework was developed.
6. Methodology

6.1 Sample and data collection method

In this research, the samples will be taken using random sampling technique because all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. 20 students in each selected school become samples. As a result, 60 students in grade ten in the first semester of 2013/2014 academic year to be samples in this survey research. The sample is using proportional random sampling technique.

To collect the data, the researcher uses two sets of questionnaires and reading comprehension test scores. So, there are three kinds of scores to be collected, namely one from the reading comprehension score, then from the first questionnaires, the researcher obtains the items inquiring the students’ perceptions toward teacher’s performance, while the second questionnaire measures the students’ learning style.

6.2 Instrumentation

The data collection process uses three kinds of instruments, namely (1) questionnaires on students’ perceptions on teacher’s teaching performance, (2) questionnaires which is used to measure the learning style, and (3) students’ reading comprehension score which is taken from their reading comprehension test.

Instruments or the used tools in collecting data are divided into two models. The first model is in the form of a questionnaire drawn up according to the Likert - scale model for the variable student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles. The second model is in the form of test to measure student’s reading comprehension.

The following Table 1 indicates the measures of the study variables used in the study.

Table 1 : Instrumentation of the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Variables</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student’s perception on teacher’s performance</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5-points Likert Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning styles</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5-points Likert Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Multiple Choice Test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Finding & Discussion

Table 2: The Results of the Calculation of Coefficient of the Effects of Variable X₁ and X₂ towards Variable Y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>7.320</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>69.389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Style, Student's Perception on teacher's performance

The table above shows that the multiple correlation coefficient of the influence of free variable Student’s Perception on Teacher’s Performance (X₁) and Learning Styles (X₂) together towards Student’s Reading Comprehension (Y) is equal to 0.842.

Calculation of significance testing of multiple correlation coefficient can be seen at a significant mark (a) in column R. From these calculations obtained that the correlation coefficient is significant, in other words that there are significant effects of free variables Student’s Perception on Teacher’s Performance (X₁) and the Learning Styles (X₂) together on Student’s Reading Comprehension (Y).

While the coefficient of determination of 70.9% indicates that the contribution Student’s Perception on Teacher’s Performance (X₁) and the Learning Styles (X₂) jointly affect Student’s Reading Comprehension (Y) is equal to 70.9% the rest 29.1%, due to the influence of other factors.

![The Pie Chart of Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning Styles](image)

Figure 1. The Pie Chart of Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning Styles

The data of the student’s learning styles shows that 58.3% from 60 students use visual style as their learning style, 31.7% of them use auditory learning style, and 10% of them use kinesthetic learning style. It means that all kinds of learning styles have the average score and be used by all students.
8. Conclusion and Future Recommendation

Although the findings showed significant effect of student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles towards reading, further studies need to include other variables beside teacher’s performance and learning styles as predictors of learning, so it can be more complete for student’s reading comprehension. Student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles accounted for 29.1% of the variation in increasing Student’s Reading Comprehension. So there is still another source of variation of 70.9% of student’s reading comprehension that cannot be explained by the perception on teacher’s performance and learning styles. Outside of the student’s perception on teacher’s performance and learning Styles there are other variables that affect student’s reading comprehension. Variables may be in students such as critical thinking skills, and can also come from outside themselves, such as teaching methods, curriculum, and others.

References


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