

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION BY TEACHING TO FORMULATE QUESTIONS

Tolewbaeva Aliya Ondasinovna

Lecturer, Department of English language and literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages
Karakalpak State University, **UZBEKISTAN**
E-mail address: goodluck_0714@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

This article deals with some light on the major point of developing student's reading comprehension by making them to formulate questions by using cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy, and according to this points out some ways of using language functions as well.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy, questioning, language function.

INTRODUCTION

The most essential ability that a non-speaking student requires is asking questions for developing reading comprehension. This ability is crucial one that aids the teaching and learning process, as without it the student cannot deal with the range of literature he or she has to read during process of study. However, resources and materials that can be used to develop this ability are sometimes not available. Thus, teachers are faced with the task of preparing their own materials to meet their students' needs. The main problem for teachers in preparing reading materials is deciding on the different levels of comprehension to aim at. Unfortunately, this aspect is much neglected not only in teaching English but in other fields also [4, p.626]. These levels of comprehension are usually determined by the kinds of questions asked, and by the type of information these questions elicit and the type of thought process they stimulate [2, p.42].

Unfortunately, reading comprehension is too often kept at the low level of recalling information learned or of simply locating information explicitly stated in a text. This is partially according to the fact that the language teacher finds the content difficult to tackle in depth. Also the main emphasis is should be on language use, and language functions. Language function refers to what students do with language as they engage with content and interact with others. Functions represent the active use of language for a specific purpose. Students use language functions in order to express ideas, communicate with others, and show understanding of content in an academic setting [5].

In addition, comprehension questions should be manipulated to elicit certain language functions such as naming, giving definitions, listing, comparing, explaining and etc. According to the student's level of knowledge it's incredibly important to keep a balance between content and language. Questions asked about the content should vary in their cognitive level to allow for student's intellectual involvement.

Materials and Methods

Bloom's taxonomy in the cognitive domain can be used to settle which levels to aims at. The taxonomy includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation [1,p.18].

The cognitive level of the taxonomy is given in hierarchical way. It helps students to formulate questions from lower level to higher level ones. It is the teacher's responsibility to determine the levels of comprehension he aims at, and to prepare tasks that elicit certain thought processes consistent with these levels [4,p. 119].

Table 1. Tasks for formulation questions according to the Language function, Thought processes, and Cognitive level. (on the material of short story "A Dog and Three dollars" by M. Twain.)

Task for Question Formulation	Language Function	Thought Process	Cognitive Level
Ask questions about main characters of the story	Naming Definition Listing	Recall Recall Recall	Knowledge Knowledge Knowledge
1) General Miles; 2) an old man; 3) boy's friend;	Comparison Description	Understanding Understanding	Comprehension Comprehension
Put questions on underlined words: 1) A few days ago at my friend's house I met <u>General Miles</u> . 2) I went into the <u>hall of the hotel</u> and sat down on a sofa.3) <u>For an hour</u> I was walking along the streets of Washington.	Combination of functions	Understanding and using information	Application
Ask questions about: English proverb "Honesty is the Best Policy"	Explanation Analyzing	Understanding and using information	Analysis
Put questions for creating ideas: 1) General Miles; 2) an old man; 3) boy's friend;	Combination of language functions	Creating ideas	Synthesis
Ask questions about student's personal feelings on the main characters	Combination of language functions	Criteria forming	Evaluation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sample questions for tasks:

1. Ask questions about main characters of the story
 - Who are the main characters of the story?
2. 1) General Miles; 2) an old man; 3) boy's friend;
 - Describe the main characters of the story
 - Compare their attitude to each other
3. Put questions on underlined words:
 - 1) A few days ago at my friend's house I met *General Miles*.
 - 2) I went into the hall of the hotel and sat down on a sofa.

- 3) *For an hour* I was walking along the streets of Washington.
- Whom did the author meet at his friend's house one day?
 - Why did the boy find himself in the hotel one day?
 - Why did the boy wander for an hour along the streets of Washington?
4. English proverb "Honesty is the Best Policy"
- Explain the meaning of this proverb
 - Find out Karakalpak equivalents of this proverb
5. Put questions for creating ideas: 1) General Miles; 2) an old man; 3) boy's friend;
- What would you do if you were 1) General Miles; 2) an old man; 3) boy's friend;
6. Ask questions about student's personal feelings on the main characters
- What do you think about the author of the story and why did he sell the dog to General Miles for three dollars?
 - What do you think about General Miles and did General Miles recognize the author? Why could not he?

CONCLUSION

To sum up, I should say that it is some light on the major point of developing student's reading comprehension by making them to formulate questions according to the text content. I have also outlined some tasks that pinpoint some aspects of questioning to be considered before a reading course is attempted. I haven't dealt with details of the types of exercises for improving some reading skills, which are outside the scope of this article.

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