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Research in Teacher Education: What, How, and Why?

Widhiyanti, Editor
Satya Wasandita, Editor
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PREFACE

This 'seminar proceedings' is the compilation of unedited papers from the presenters in the 6th FBS-LTC International Seminar 2012. This year seminar officially picked up a theme: *Research in Teacher Education: What, How, and Why?* as a response to the professionalism demand of English teachers. Thus, the papers collected in this seminar proceedings are the results of English teachers' and future English teachers' studies, reflections, and opinions on their teaching experiences. This book is printed with the hope that it presents valuable insights for English teachers and anyone who are interested in English teacher education.

I am thankful to all contributors, who are also the presenters of this seminar, for their brilliant ideas shared in the seminar through presentations and papers. Such contribution is important for developing standard of English language teaching and teachers' professionalism on the field. I am also grateful to the committees of the International seminar for making this International seminar successful and that they managed to gather academics, teachers, and scholars in this special fruitful event. Moreover, I am very thankful to Prof. Anne Burns and Dr. Willy Renandya for their valuable presentation in our seminars.

I hope that this International Seminar and this seminar proceedings book give precious experience, exchange of ideas, and insights for further development of studies in English teacher education.

Christian Rudianto, M.Appling

Seminar chair

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PROMOTING SCHEMATIC KNOWLEDGE TO ENGLISH TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVELS

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Abstract

To be successful in conducting the English teaching and learning process, English teachers of secondary schools are demanded to gain two types of knowledge sufficiently. They are systemic knowledge and schematic knowledge or background knowledge. The former is concerned with the knowledge of the language that embodies the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic knowledge. The latter deals with non-linguistic knowledge, which consists of four issues, namely the general knowledge, topic/thematic knowledge, genre knowledge, and social-cultural knowledge. Both types of knowledge should be equally taken into account to establish them to be competence English teachers. Also, the types of knowledge are of great importance for English teachers of secondary school level to deal with the process of English language teaching and learning in order to facilitate their students to maximally acquire the target language (English). However, it is evident that most English teachers of secondary schools tend to give an emphasis on the systematic knowledge rather than the schematic knowledge when they are involved in English language teaching and learning. This may lead to the failure of the acquisition of the macro-language skills, reading in particular due to misinterpretation or miscomprehension of the use of the target language. To cope with such a problem, this paper deals with promoting the schematic knowledge to English teachers of secondary school levels. It aims at providing English teachers of secondary school levels with comprehensive insights of schematic knowledge which is fruitful to acquire the target language.

Key Words : Systemic Knowledge Schematic Knowledge

A. Introduction

In English language teaching and learning, English teachers of secondary schools are demanded to be familiar with two types of knowledge, which include systemic knowledge and schematic knowledge. This statement is supported by Lopes (1986) who states that English teachers or second language learners should make use of two types of knowledge: systemic knowledge (the knowledge of language) and schematic knowledge (knowledge of

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content and formal schemata, namely the content area of a text and the routines of language interaction as reflected in the rhetorical structure of language). The systemic knowledge embodies four types of knowledge which include phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic knowledge. The schematic knowledge consists of four issues, namely general, thematic, genre, and social cultural knowledge (Hedge, 2008).

The phonological knowledge refers to the knowledge how sounds are generated by vocal apparatus and how selected phones differentiate meanings as depicted in English words (McMohan, 2002). This knowledge facilitates English teachers to deal with phonological issues such as segmental elements of English (consonants, vowels, diphthongs) and supra-segmental elements (stress, intonation, rhythm, and the like). Such knowledge is fruitful when English teachers of secondary school levels are engaged in the process of English language teaching and learning. Morphological knowledge is defined as a linguistic competence, which concerns how words are constructed (Rahman, 2010:53). This deals with the analysis of a word category used in English constructions. Added to this, morphological knowledge also concerns the derivation and inflectional processes through affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, and the like. The syntactic knowledge deals with how words are constructed to form phrases, clauses, or sentences (Finegan, 2008:139). Semantic knowledge means the knowledge of the meaning of any English constructions, which include words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Rahman, 2010:62). Those types of systemic knowledge are merely concerned with the study of the internal structure of the language.

However, such systemic knowledge of language should not become the only focus of the study of the target language because the study of the internal structure of language does not confer a comprehensive description of how the target language is used in the actual context. Porter and Samovar in Rappel (2009:54) claim that learning language is not simply concerned with a collection of structures for the sake of making meaning of language but it deals with making use of language according to the context. This implies that there must be a switch paradigm of the teaching of English for secondary school levels from learning about language to learning language use in context. This is in line with the statement advocated by Philipson as quoted by Rappel (2009:38) who explicates that English language teaching must shift from a view of learning *about* language to learning language for *use* in communication amongst people of different cultures and linguistic backgrounds in an increasingly interconnected world. This suggests that English teachers of secondary schools should take into account not only the systemic knowledge but also the schematic knowledge. In other words, both schematic and syntactic systems of knowledge should go hand in hand when

English teachers deal with the target language. This is supported by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995:10) who promote the term *communicative competence* (the collaboration between knowledge and skills) which consists of two types of knowledge, namely (1) linguistic competence (the knowledge about language) and (2) non-linguistic competence (discourse competence, actionable competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence). The former is called systemic knowledge while the latter is schematic knowledge.

In reference to the two types of knowledge above, ideally English teachers of secondary school levels are familiar with them on the grounds that both facilitate English teachers to effectively and efficiently carry out the process of English teaching and learning at secondary school levels. Added to this, those types of knowledge drag English teachers to provide students with the actual use of English in spoken and written forms, which assist students to cope with the possible language barriers when they deal with the use of language in different contexts. However, it is evident that English teachers of secondary schools tend to give an emphasis on the systemic knowledge exploration. They somehow ignore the schematic knowledge when they are involved in the process of English language teaching and learning. This seems to be one of the common trends conducted by a great number of English teachers of secondary school levels. This is likelier to be one of the causes of the lack of English competence of English teachers of secondary school levels as reflected in the average score of the test of teacher competence which is less than 6. This directly or indirectly causes the failure of the acquisition of the target language of secondary school students.

With regard to the above problem, this paper deals with promoting the schematic knowledge to the English teachers of secondary school levels. It aims at revealing the issues of schematic knowledge which embodies four types, namely socio-cultural knowledge, topic knowledge, general knowledge, and genre knowledge which become hot issues in English language teaching and learning process in order to facilitate students to maximally acquire the target language.

B. The Nature of Schematic Knowledge

As previously mentioned, schematic knowledge is defined as any knowledge which deals with external structure of the language. It is concerned with the knowledge of beyond language. According to Widdowson (1990), schematic knowledge refers to socially acquire knowledge. Erten and Razi (2009:61) divides schematic knowledge into two types, namely formal and content schemata. Formal schematic knowledge refers to *textual schematic knowledge* (Singhal, 1998). It deals with knowledge of how texts are organized and what th

main features of a particular genre of writing are (Alderson, 2000). It is identical to genre knowledge (Margana, 2010). Content schematic knowledge is further categorised into two different types: background knowledge and subject matter knowledge. The former deals with the knowledge that may or may not be relevant to the content of a particular text. It is defined as “pre-existing knowledge structures stored in the mind” (Nassaji, 2002, p. 444). The latter is directly concerned with the text content and topic (Alderson, 2000). Another type of schematic knowledge is cultural schema (Yule, 1996). It refers to a culture-specific extension of content schema which is needed to fully comprehend the meaning intended by the writer or speaker (Ketchum, 2006).

In reference to the above explanation, there are four common types of schematic knowledge. They include general knowledge, thematic/topical knowledge, genre knowledge, and social-cultural knowledge (Hedge, 2008; Margana, 2010). General knowledge is identical to background knowledge or schemata. It is defined as socially acquired knowledge as the results of natural and nurturing learning practices. Orasanu in Alyousef (2006) states background knowledge refers to a framework which contains slots of the activated text. For example, if the text deals with supermarket, a second language learner should have information slots of market, types of sold things, mode of payment, and the like. If he/she does not have such issues, they might not readily communicate with the text.

Social cultural knowledge refers to the knowledge of the social environment and physical environment that constraint use of language. This refers to the fact that learning target language is tied with a social process of the speakers of the target language (Alsagoff, 2012:106). Further, he states that socio-cultural knowledge refers to the insights of any issues outside linguistics which should be explored as one of the approaches to deal with the study of language (2012:106). The social-cultural knowledge provides the issue of “more nuanced, multi-levelled, and complicated framings of the word around us (Block, 2007:864). In other words, this knowledge is of great importance to English teachers of secondary schools to comprehensively learn the target language on the grounds that language and culture are inseparable (Corbett, 24). This is supported by Kumaradavelu in Alsagoff et al. (2012:12) who state that language and culture are inextricably connected. More specifically, Johnson (2006: 237) explicates that studying the target language is not only concerned with the accumulated information of language but also with practices of the target language in context as language represents the live experience of an individual (Derrida, 2001: 196) which is subject to change depending on the situational and cultural contexts. This suggests that the

knowledge of the socio-cultural issue escorts English teachers to perform the use of language in appropriate contexts.

Further, he explicates that discourse competence refers to the knowledge of how words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are constructed to form required texts such as descriptive, recount, and the like. More specifically, it deals with the generic structure of the texts. Actionable competence refers to an ability to convey ideas and respond to communicative intent. This also deals with the knowledge of the functions of language used in different communicative events. Socio-cultural competence refers to how to communicate messages which meet social-cultural contexts. Strategic competence refers to an ability to select an appropriate strategy to deal with communication practices.

Thematic knowledge refers to knowledge of register or semantic domain of use of target language. For example, the word *morphology* confers different meanings with regard to what register it is used. In a linguistic domain, the morphology means the study of how morphemes and words are generated. On the other hand, in a biology domain, the morphology refers to the study of the form of the body of human beings. More specifically, in a genealogy, morphology means the study of the forms of sperms. Such meanings of morphology are successfully understood with the use of thematic knowledge. Another example is the word *mouse*. In the technology domain, a mouse means a device, which is used to move the cursor, but in the biology domain, a mouse refers to a small mammal with short fur, a pointed mouth and a long tail.

Schematic knowledge or non-linguistic competence is of great value for English teachers as it provides them with contextual and comprehensive understanding of how language is used according to its domain. In addition to this, it facilitates English teachers to gain wider knowledge of the target language because it is treated as a social behaviour. This suggests that understanding the target language requires schematic knowledge. Grabe (1991) advocates that to be successful to make sense of spoken and written texts, second language learners should be familiar with schematic knowledge which embodies formal discourse structure knowledge and content/world background knowledge besides the knowledge of language.

With regard to the above explanation, to be successful in acquiring the target language, English teachers of secondary schools are encouraged to take into account for the schematic knowledge besides systemic knowledge on the grounds that both knowledge are intertwined in nature.

C. Use of schematic knowledge in making sense of English texts

As a matter of fact, schematic knowledge is applicable for the study for macro-language skills which include productive language skills (speaking and writing) and receptive language skills (listening and writing). Even, it is applicable to deal with the study of micro-language skills. However, for the sake of this article, the writer gives an emphasis on the application of the schematic knowledge in dealing with reading comprehension as it confers practical use of schematic knowledge to make sense of the English texts. This is in line with the statement uttered by Anderson (1999:1) who states that reading comprehension is viewed as an active, fluent process to build the meanings of words in a text which does not reside on the printed page but connect the words on the printed page with the reader's background knowledge and experiences.

In support of the above issue, Nassaji (2002) states that to achieve high comprehension, second language teachers should bring the schematic knowledge to the texts. In the same spirit, Pulido (2004) claims that when second language readers bring relevant schematic knowledge to the reading process, they can allocate more space for textual analysis and interpretation. This implies that existing schematic knowledge may contribute to the functioning of what are described as *automatic processes* by McLaughlin (1987).

In reference to the above issue, the following presents the example of how to use schematic knowledge to make sense of the text.

- (1) **Marrying** our gardens is one of the milder effects of weeds- any plants that thrive where they wanted.
- (2) Weeds **clog** waterways, destroy wildlife habitats, and impede farming.

To make sense of Example (1), the English teachers may use general knowledge of the word *marry* which means *paying too much attention or spoiling* the plants in the garden under the issue of gardening. Similar knowledge should be applied to make sense of Example (2) by looking at the word *waterways* which means a way of water. The word *clog* should be interpreted as *obstruct, block, hinder*, and the like.

- (3) Every atlas has its own **legend**.
- (4) There is a difference between a **university catalog** and a **card catalog**. One given information about the courses of study, the other gives information about books in a library.
- (5) Samuel Latham Mitchell helped found Rutgers Medical College in New Jersey in 1826 and he produced several important **works** in chemistry and geology.

With the use of topical knowledge, the word *legend* in Example (3) should not be interpreted as mythical story or famous person because the word *legend* is used in the topic of astronomy which means explanation of symbols. In Example (4), the word *catalog* is used in two different issues, namely the list of the courses and the list of books in a library. In Example (5), English teachers should interpret the word *works* as books not accomplishments or factories as the topic is concerned with the academic issue.

- (6) When drawing human figures, children often make the head too large for the rest of the body. A recent study offers some insights into this common disproportion in children's illustrations. As part of the study, researchers asked children between 4 and 7 years old to make several drawings of men. When they drew front views of male figures, the size of the heads was markedly enlarged. However, when the children drew rear views of men, the size of the heads was not so exaggerated. The researchers suggests that children draw bigger heads when they know they must leave room for facial details. Therefore, the odd head size in children's illustration is a form of planning ahead and not an indication of a poor sense of scale (Roger, 1999).
- (7) The last gold rush belongs as much to Canadian history as it does to American. The discovery of gold along the Klondike river, which flows from Canada's Yukon Territory into Alaska, drew some 30,000 fortune hunters to the north. The Yukon became a territory and its capital of the time, Dawson, would not have existed without the gold rush. The gold strike furnished material for a dozen of Jack London's novels; it inspired Robert Service to write "The Shooting of Dan Mc-Grew" and other poems, and it provided the background for wonderful Charli Chaplin movie, *The Gold Rush*. It also marked the beginnings of Modern Alaska (Roger, 1999).
- (8) An old proverb states, "Beware of oak, it draws the stroke." This saying is handy during the thunder storm season. In general, trees with deep roots that tap into groundwater attract more lightning than do trees with shallow, drier roots. Oaks are around 50 times more likely to be struck than beeches. Spruces are nearly as safe as beeches. Pines are not safe as these two, but are still much safer than oaks (Roger, 1999).

To make sense of Example (6) and (7), English teachers need to apply socio-cultural knowledge. Otherwise, some mis-interpretation may occur. In reference to Example (6), with the use of the socio-cultural knowledge, the English teachers can make a conclusion that the odd head size in children's illustration happens because children plan ahead when they are drawing pictures. The disproportion of in children's illustration is not caused by having insufficiency sense of scale. With regard to Example (7), the English teachers should know the social cultural knowledge of the text. With the use of it, English teachers could tell a lot about the contents of the texts, for example: the significance of Klondike gold strike i

creative arts and the beginnings of Alaska. In Example 8, the author wants to highlight that trees with shallow roots are more likely to avoid lightning than those with deep roots.

English teachers may apply the genre knowledge in order that they can make sense of an English text easily. The following presents the example of the use of the genre knowledge.

(9) **Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.** *First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.* Therefore, it is suitable for jewellery, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coins remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. *Another important characteristic of gold is usefulness to industry and science.* For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronaut's suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside spaceships. **In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.**

(10) There are **three reasons why Canada is one of the best countries in the world.** *First, Canada has an excellent health care system.* All Canadians have access to medical services at a reasonable price. *Second, Canada has a high standard of education.* Students are taught by well-trained teachers and are encouraged to continue studying at university. *Finally, Canada's cities are clean and efficiently managed.* Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to live. **As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.**

With the use of the genre knowledge, English teachers of secondary schools could analyse the organisation of the text which includes the topic sentence, supporting details, sub-supporting details, concluding sentences. Such elements facilitate English teachers to make sense of the text. In Example (9), it is evident that the topic sentence of the text is "Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics." It consists of topic (Gold) and controlling ideas (two important characteristics). The two controlling ideas generate two supporting details, namely *gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion* and *gold is usefulness to industry and science*. Then, each supporting detail is supported by sub-supporting details. The last sentence of Example (9) is called a concluding sentence which functions to sum up the previous explanation. Similar analysis can be implemented to make sense of the text as performed in Example (10).

D. How to promote schematic knowledge to English teachers of secondary school level

As previously mentioned, schematic knowledge is of great use for English teachers of secondary school levels to equip them to be competence English teachers. For such reason, schematic knowledge should be socialised to them.

In relation to socialising the four types of schematic knowledge to English teachers of secondary schools, some practical efforts can be made. The efforts include (1) embedding the issues in the course of in-service training or in-house-training, (2) establishing the English teachers of secondary level to be autonomously acquire various resources such as electronic and non-electronic ones, (3) encouraging English teachers of secondary schools to be actively involved in some conferences, (4) establishing teacher exchange program to inner or outer English speaking countries, (5) encouraging English teachers to make use of authentic materials, (6) encouraging English teachers to make use of movies, drama, and the like in the process of English language teaching and learning in the secondary school levels, and (7) facilitating English teachers to concern intercultural awareness by recognising their own culture and the culture of inner- English speaking countries and outer-English speaking countries and the local culture. Those efforts are of great importance to establish the schematic knowledge.

Of the seven recommended efforts, establishing an autonomous learning is believed to be one of the efforts which is highly advocated to English teachers to enhance their schematic knowledge. This relies on the fact that by having autonomous learning English teachers of secondary schools can explore the schematic knowledge from various resources as much as they could. In practice, they can search out social cultural lives of the people who live in inner English speaking countries such as America, Australia, Canada, England, and the like, outer English speaking countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, and others. This can be conducted by accessing them via internet. Added to this, they have to recognise their culture which to some extent can be used to acquire the target language successfully. Besides, English teachers can also make use of authentic materials from different resources to teach their students and analyse them according to the relevant schematic knowledge, for example genre knowledge.

More specifically, to equip with genre knowledge, the course designers of the in-service-training and in-house training should incorporate the course of types of genre used in secondary school levels which include narrative, recount, descriptive, report, procedural, explanation, and the like. Those texts can be explored in terms of the generic structure of the texts and distinctive language features. In other words, the course also includes the recognition of the types of each genre and the way of analysing it.

E. Final Remarks

As previously mentioned, schematic knowledge is one of the types of knowledge that English teachers of secondary school levels have to be familiar with. The schematic

Knowledge embody four types, namely general knowledge, genre knowledge, topic knowledge, and socio-cultural knowledge. This relies on the fact that schematic knowledge offers a great number of advantages to do with learning macro skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Of the four types of macro-language skills, schematic knowledge contributes to success of making sense of the texts on the grounds that second language readers are driven to apply their higher thinking skills to gain comprehensive understanding of the texts.

In relation to promoting the schematic knowledge, there are seven efforts as explored in point D. Of the seven efforts, establishing an autonomous learning is believed to be one of the efforts which is highly advocated to English teachers to enhance their schematic knowledge. This relies on the fact that by having autonomous learning, English teachers of secondary schools can explore the schematic knowledge from various resources as much as they could. This suggests that promoting the schematic knowledge establishes wider insights for English teachers of secondary school levels to pose a challenge in dealing with English language teaching and learning at secondary school levels.

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WIDYA SARI
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