



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

DESIGNING READING COMPREHENSION MATERIALS FOR AUTOMOTIVE
ENGINEERING STUDENT AT MARA VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE IN THE CONTEXT
OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and etc, seems to focus learners to fit 'register' nicely into the structures and vocabulary used in the fields given. Learner's competency and proficiency in the respective fields lies greatly on comprehension of the language learnt and acquisition of the subject matters.

In this study, the researcher develops the reading comprehension materials as one of the tools in helping learners especially the Automobile Engineering Technology learners to encounter, acquire and comprehend difficult technical jargon or 'register', vocabulary or structures in their readings of manuals, and other reference materials.

This study focuses on the development of five reading comprehension texts extracted from Automobile Engineering Technology references for Automobile Engineering Technology learners. The focal point of comprehension exercises obtained from Nuttal (1982) reading strategies that are word-attack and text-attack skills. The skills include lexical items, synonym, sequencing, and inference skills.

Significantly the designed texts of their own fields promote students' interests to read and comprehend the texts so as to do the tasks. This proven in the test results in data on page 23 showing that more than 80% of the students manage to pass the tests.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Reading skill is one of the focused skills included in M-Tech Syllabus for technical students who study at MARA Vocational Institute (IKM). In order to acquire such skill English teachers at MARA Vocational Institute (IKM) need to adapt the reading comprehension materials that focus on technical passages.

Reading comprehension becomes the focus because 'for most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies. (Brown, 1994). With these strategies students can enhance their reading abilities when they 'read in the real world for any number of reasons, and the nature of reading according to the reader's purpose and situation' (Knutson, 2003)

Furthermore reading comprehension skills help to boost students to become efficient readers as stated by *Brown, 1994, p.291* in the model of micro skills for reading comprehension. For instance, develop and use a battery of reading strategies, such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts, distinguish between literal and implied meanings, from events, ideas, etc., described, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will review number of related studies to support the need of designing reading comprehension materials for automobile engineering student in the context of ESP using word-attack and text-attack skills.

2.1 Automobile engineering student at Mara Vocational Institute

The objective of vocational education and technical training is to produce skilled, productive and disciplined force. Technical and vocational training is one of the core factors that ensure the success of Malaysia's objective of becoming an industrialised nation by 2020 (see *Appendix : Mesyuarat Sekretariat latihan teknikal dan vokasional bil. 1/2001, 27 June 2001*). In Sarawak, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) is one of the providers of vocational training through Institut Kemahiran MARA. The programmes offered by this technical/vocational training institution covers courses such as engineering, electronics, IT, building construction, and welding. Automobile Engineering Technology is offered with the objectives to train trainees in servicing, maintenance and identifying faults in automobile (Buku Panduan Latihan Kemahiran, n.d.)

2.2 Proficiency and Literacy for Automobile Engineering students

Automobile engineering students need to be proficient and literate in Bahasa Malaysia and English apart from their own mother tongue. These languages are necessary as an increasing number of references and manuals on advanced technology are of these languages (see *Appendix 2.1 Mesyuarat Sekretariat*