

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION TO  
WEAK READERS:  
AN INVESTIGATION ON TEACHERS' BELIEFS ON  
THE USE OF CHUNKING AS A READING  
COMPREHENSION STRATEGY**

**SARAWATHIASLINDA ABDUL WAHID**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Master of Education TESL**

**Faculty of Education**

**December 2005**

## **Abstract**

The ability to read and understand what is read is an essential aspect in learning, as it plays an integrative significant role in disseminating information through other skills of speaking, listening and writing. However, the issue of students' weak performance in English today is said to be caused by their inability to understand their reading. Due to that, improvement in the areas of teaching strategies is often debated.

This research is an effort to investigate the teachers' perceptions and readiness to adapt a reading strategy named chunking. A sample group which consisted of 17 English teachers of Sek. Men. Kebangsaan Seksyen 16, Shah Alam was asked to answer a survey questionnaire and attend a workshop on chunking.

Using a quantitative approach, the data were analysed to look into the insights of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers' reading strategies on the students, their hopes, beliefs and willingness to adapt to changes in teaching pedagogy such as chunking. An informal interview was conducted to get further elaboration or information on certain issues pertaining to the survey questions.

The findings showed that the students' weak performance in English is due to the weak teaching strategies practiced by the teachers. In teaching reading, most of the activities were teacher-centred approaches. This kind of dominant role played by the teachers affected the students to be over-dependent learners. As a result, they failed to perform satisfactorily in their academic achievement. Nevertheless, the teachers show positive beliefs towards chunking strategies which offered better student-centred learning and they are willing to adapt the strategies to their weak learners. The research also concludes by highlighting factors that influenced teachers' performance and discussing the ways to improve teachers' pedagogical skills.

## **Candidate's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and be subjected to the disciplinary rules of Universiti Teknologi MARA

Candidate's Name: SARAWATI HASLINDA BINTI ABDUL WAHID

Candidate's Signature .....

Date .....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **In The Name Of ALLAH, The Most Gracious And The Most Merciful**

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Faculty of Education, section 17, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam for giving me the opportunity to pursue my study.

My heartiest thanks to my most patient, dedicated and helpful supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Noorzan Hj. Mohd Noor; her hard work and constant monitoring has motivated me throughout the completion of my dissertation. Her invaluable guidance and great support are highly appreciated.

Special thanks to all the lecturers who had patiently taught me during my semesters.

My highest appreciation to the administrators and teachers of SMKS 16, who had generously helping me to complete this study.

My special thanks to Dr. Chan Yuen Fook for his help in teaching me to use SPSS.

Last but not least, my abundant of love and admiration to my supportive husband who had encouraged me to further my study and to my wonderful children, 'Aisyah and 'Ammar Fahmi, who had become my main inspiration to complete my study.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>		i
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>		ii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>		v
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>		
1.1	Introduction	1
	1.1.2 Approaches in Teaching Reading Comprehension for Second Language Learners.	1
	1.1.3 English in Malaysian Education	3
	1.1.4 Problems in Teaching Reading Comprehension to the Second Language Learners	5
	1.1.5 Chunking Method in Teaching Reading Comprehension	6
	1.1.6 Chunking Activities in the Teaching of Reading Comprehension	7
1.2	Statement of Problem	9
1.3	Purpose of the Study	12
1.4	Significance of the Study	12
1.5	Definition of Terms	13
1.6	Limitations of the Study	13
1.7	Conclusion	14
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>		
2.1	Introduction	16
2.2	Second Language Learners' Reading Strategy	16
2.3	Weak Readers' Strategies	18
2.4	Success or Failure in Reading	20
2.5	Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension	20
2.6	Teaching Vocabulary Using Short Text	21
2.7	Reading Using Context	22
2.8	Chunking Instructional Design	23
2.9	Top Ten Principles in Teaching Extensive Reading	25
2.10	Conclusion	26
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>		
3.1	Introduction	27
3.2	Research Method	27
	3.2.1 Information on the School	27
	3.2.2 Information on the English Language Teachers	30