Semantics Mapping: A Strategy For Reading Comprehension (From Classroom Reading Activities Of The English Education Program FKIP, Unika Widya Mandira, Kupang, NTT)

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Abstract: In the context of classroom reading, comprehension has to be reavealed consciously. Among so many ways, semantic mapping is one that involves high level of thought from students. Expressing comprehension in a net form of ideas – lines connecting ideas in a reading text – demands students to really understand the text. Students may achieve this ability if they practice making semantic mapping very often when they read in the English class. In this article some of students' products of semantic mapping are promoted. The aim is to show how effective this comprehension technique is in establishing students' comprehension.

Keywords: semantic mapping, reading comprehension

BACKGROUND

In the S1 English Education Program curriculum, "Teaching Learning Strategies" is a course offered to semester V students. In the part of the Teaching of Reading in the course, the discussion is focused on different ways employed for building students' comprehension. One of so many ways for comprehension is semantic mapping. That students are asked to reflect their comprehension of a reading passage they are reading by connecting ideas in the text with "lines" is recommended. Briefly, the ideas of the text are identified following the principle of "coherence". Accordingly, each of ideas are put in a box. Since a good piece of writing is marked by coherently intertwined ideas, an idea in a box is to connect to another box containing a coherent idea. The line is drawn from the source idea to the one coherent to it.

To the semantic mapping strategy students are assigned to plan his or her teaching and does a simulation of what has been designed with a group of students in the class. This appears so attractive. Students participating in the simulation are highly motivated to do the tasks offered to them. Here are some products of selected students taking the course. The students have come up with various mapping of ideas.

This article aims to share what the selected students have been able to do and to highlight landmarks indicating how they have donw the mapping of ideas in a text.

SOME THEORITICAL UNDERPINNING

Ur (1996: 138) (also see: Talok, 2011 in Reference Journal of Language and Language Teaching Vol. 1 No. 3: 88-92) asserts that reading means "reading and understanding". Thus, when we read what we indeed do is that we want to understand what we read. To understand in this sense is that we, while reading, make a similar text in our mind as closely similar as to the original text.

Still, Ur (1996: 146) asserts that to understand a text students may be introduced to and may amploy different ways which may lead students to better understand the text they read, such as presquestioning, do it yourself questions, provide a title, summarize, representation of content in the form of drawing, coloring, making a map, etc. Likewise, Brown (1994: 291-296) promotes some ways for the enhancing of students' comprehension. Among others, there are skimming, scanning, guesing, vocabulary analysis, and semantic mapping.

Among so many strategies or ways for reading comprehension in the class, semantic mapping deserves our attention. When closely looking at this term, the two key words are of

worthly for discussion. Talok (2011, in Reference Journal of Language and Language Teaching Vol. 1 No. 3: 88-92) argues that semantic mapping comprises two words, namely: semantic and mapping. The first refers to "of meaning" or "related to meaning". In the context of reading comprehension, semantic may refer to "of meaning or related to meaning" of the text being read. Thus, semantic mapping may be defined as "a scientific attempt of making meaning of what is read in a net form while or after reading." Meaning, in this case, refers to an important information or a group of information to reflect the whole content of what is read. Thus, the net of meaning can be like a chain of ideas ordered in line with the flow of thoughts as originally exposed in the text.

SEMANTIC MAPPING IN PRATICE

What follows are some products of semantic mapping by students taken the course. The products are divided into two, namely paragraph semantic mapping and textual semantic mapping. There were about 40 students taking the course. They were divided into two groups. All examples are from group A.
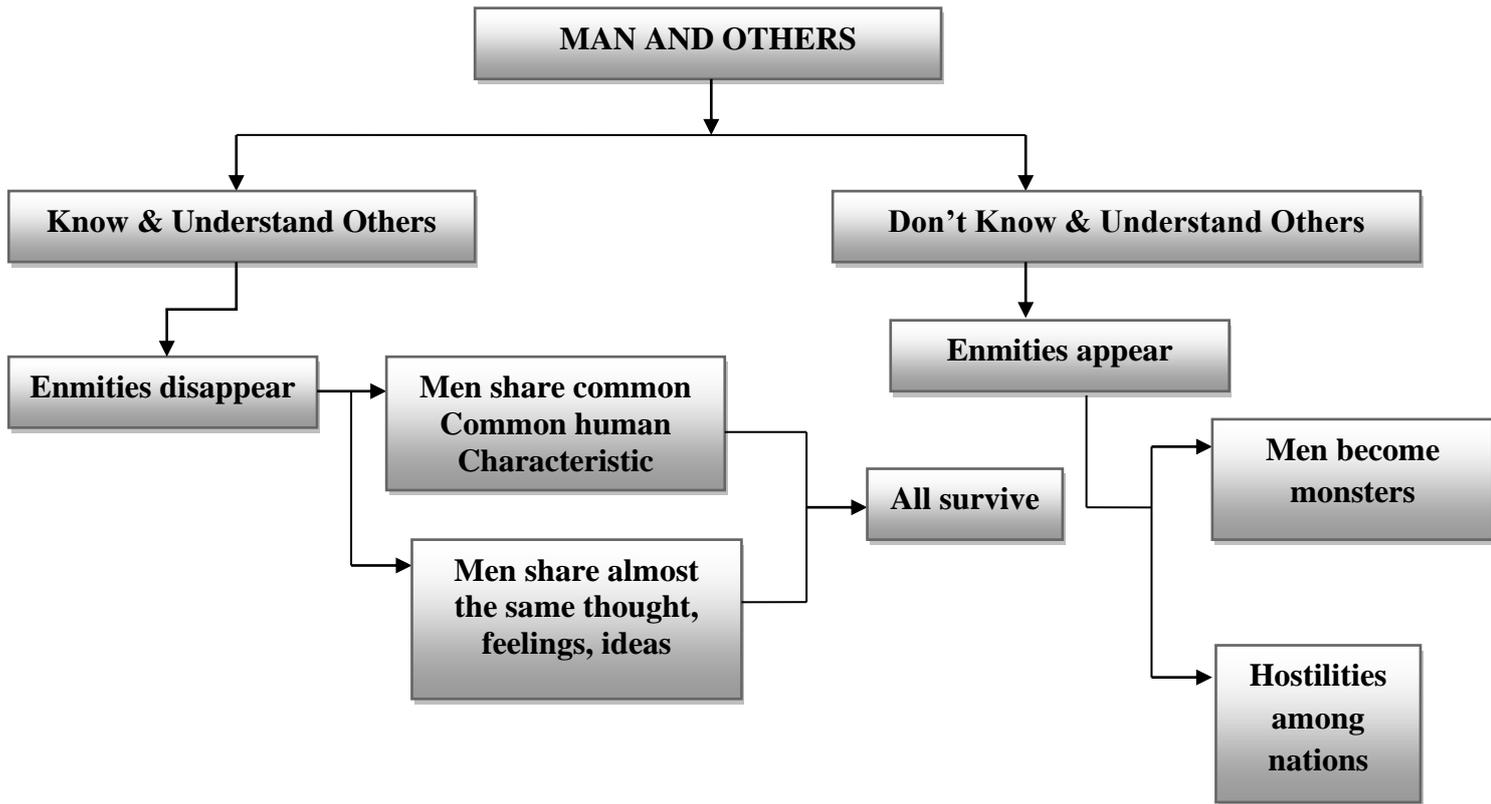
Paragraph Semantic Mapping

Here are two examples the products from selected students whose works are considered "good".

Exercept 1

MAN AND OTHERS

"Never has it been truer than today that men need to know and understand one another if they are to survive. The lack of knowledge and understanding of man's relationship with others has made monsters of men and has caused hostilities to arise between nations. Enmities disappear only when people realize that they share with others common human characteristics; that their thoughts, feelings, and ideals are very much alike (student 2). (Lydia G. Ledesma, et al, 1986: 55)

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                          │   MAN AND OTHERS    │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                                    │
              ┌─────────────────────┴─────────────────────┐
              ▼                                            ▼
    ┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
    │ Know & Understand Others│              │ Don't Know & Understand     │
    │                         │              │ Others                      │
    └─────────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────────────┘
              │                                            │
              ▼                                            ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐                        ┌─────────────────────┐
    │ Enmities disappear│                        │  Enmities appear    │
    └──────────────────┘                        └─────────────────────┘
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MAN AND OTHERS

Know & Understand Others

Don't Know & Understand Others

Enmities disappear

Men share common Common human Characteristic

Men share almost the same thought, feelings, ideas

All survive

Enmities appear

Men become monsters

Hostilities among nations

(student 2)

Excerpt 2

　　If you are an average reader you can read an average book at the rate of 300 words a minute. You cannot maintain that average, however, unless you read regularly every day. Nor can you attain that speed with hard books in science, mathematics, agriculture, business or any subject that is new or unfamiliar to you. The chances are you will never attempt that speed with poetry or want to race through some passages in fiction over which personal intersets, if you are an average reader you should have no trouble at all absorbing meaning and pleasure out of 300 printed words every 60 seconds. (student 6). (Lydia G. Ledesma, et al, 1986: 85)

An average Reader

Read 300 words/minute

Keep this by regular reading

Novels, biography, travel, hobbies, personal, interests

Cannot read 300 words/minute

Science, math, agriculture, business, or unfamiliar subjects
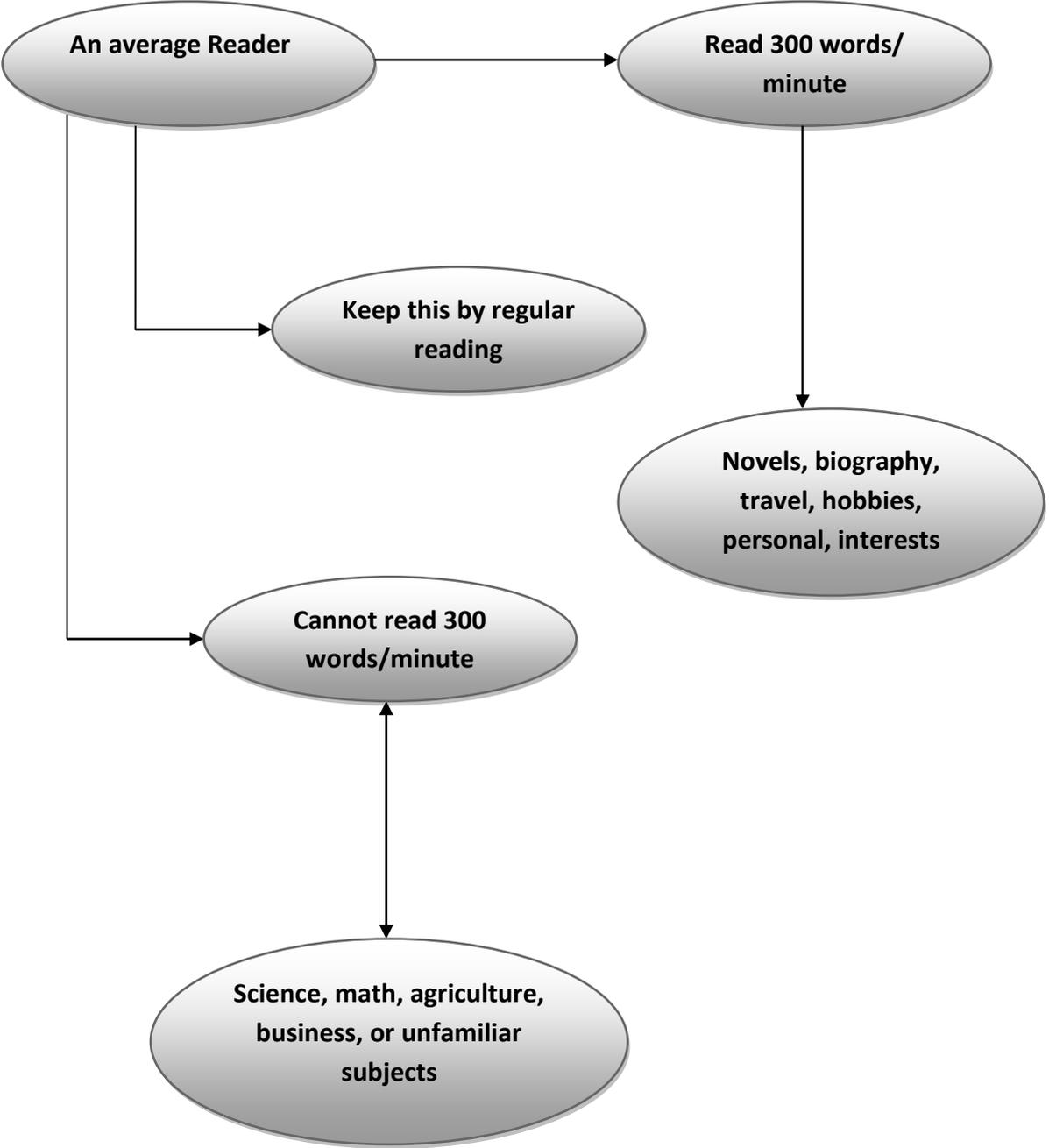
(Student 6)

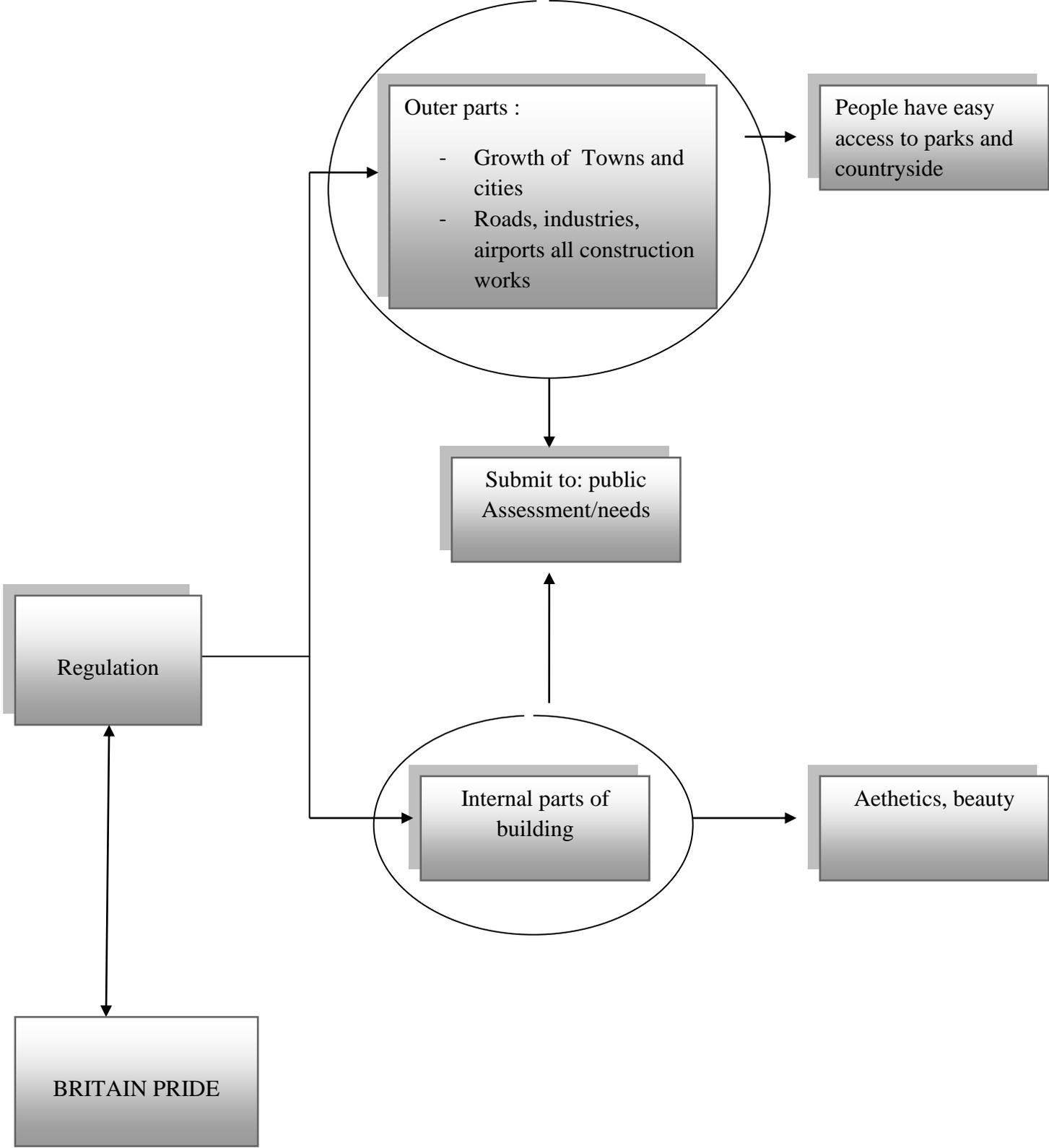**Textual Semantic Mapping**

PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The growth of towns and cities in Britain is subject to careful planning control. Green Belts, within which the building is severely resticted, to prevent the sprawling of larger towns and to ensure that their inhabitants have ready access of "lungs" of parkland or countryside. Within the towns building is also subject to controls, which are designed to maintain aesthetic and safety standard, to protect existing amenities and to preserve a balance between residential, commercial and industrial development.

Not only towns and cities, but also roads, industries, airports and indeed, all construction works is subject to close public scrutiny. Plans must be presented for approval to local authorities, which in turn must submit their broad proposals for development available for examination by the general public. In addition, important new schemes are usually the subject of discussion in both local and national press and broadcasting programs.

Other legislation, some of it long-standing and some of it passed recently to deal with never threars, is designed to protect the environment against pollution by industry or any other source, including the general public. Various regulations limit the emission of noxious chemicals into air and water, whether by factories, aircraft or motor traffic, or by private householders – many urban areas are now smokeless zones. Other laws control the amount of noise that may be made by industry or traffic.

Britain is a nation that is proud of its heritage of landscape and of history, and great efforts are made to protect them. Large areas of countryside, including forests, and of the coastline are set aside as national parks, within which construction and other works are either forbidden or strictly comtrolled. In addition, many rights of way are preserved, sometimes across private land, to form long, continuous footpaths and bridleways through areas of outstanding natural beauty. Other areas are protected as nature reserves and many species of plants and animals are also protected by low throughout the country.

PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Outer parts :

- Growth of Towns and cities
- Roads, industries, airports all construction works

People have easy access to parks and countryside

Submit to: public Assessment/needs

Regulation

Internal parts of building

Aethetics, beauty

BRITAIN PRIDE

(Student 9)

LANDMARKS OF HOW TO DO

From the three maps, the selected student were able to reflect their understanding of what they read. They appear to know the core of source idea of what they read. Also they reflect the ability to come up with ideas coherent to the core or source idea. As a matter of fact, the maps they did indeed reflect the content of what they read. To be forthright, the students did more readings was clearly declared to them. By doing more reading, not only their understanding of what they read is good, but more than that, they were surer to articulate their understanding in a map form.

From the three products from students taking the course, some tips are proposed. They are as follows:

1. Students have to fully understand the paragraph or text they are reading
2. Students have to be able to identify the core idea of what is read
3. Students have to be able to discover coherent ideas to the core idea
4. Students have to be able to weave ideas, from the core idea or source idea to ideas coherent or it
5. Students have to be able to map ideas of the paragraph of the text
6. In addition to the marking of the map, to the students comprehension questions of what is read may possibly be done