



Introduction to Reading Skill in English

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ABSTRACT

Reading skill research has a long and rich history. Reading opens the exit to academic achievement and shapes our leisure time as well. Good readers try to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts in the text, and they deal with inconsistencies or gaps as needed. When children learn to read in an educational environment that builds on their personal interests and motivations, they can succeed in school, lead rewarding lives in society. This article explores what Reading involves in, aims of Teaching Reading, methods, approaches and its types.

KEYWORDS

Aims reading, characters, methods, approach and its technique

INTRODUCTION

Reading offers language input, as other main skills do. Reading may be defined as the act of receiving meaning from the written form. Good readers are active readers from the outset they have clear goals in mind for their reading. They constantly evaluate whether the text, and their reading of it, is meeting their goals. Through the rich language environment, readers can acquire a large vocabulary and an implicit command of the limitless language forms, pleasurably and almost effortlessly. Good writing is probably the product of reading, too. We learned to write our mother tongue largely as a consequence of reading, not by practising spelling and writing. For second language students, reading becomes a means to improve other language skills. Reading is tool upon which continually rely.

Reading skills can be described roughly as “a cognitive ability which a person is able to use when interacting with written text” (Urquhart and Weir, 1998). It is a very complex process involving many physical, intellectual and emotional reactions. Reading processes differ in numerous ways depending on different purposes of reading. The physical variable is a prerequisite of accurate and rapid reading. However, many people, including several professional teachers, think that reading merely involves the ability to sound the words printed on a page. Your understanding of the skill you are teaching and your choice of how you teach the skill will very strongly influence what and how you teach. So we have to have an idea about to understand what reading involves and its types before going on to think about how actually to teach it.

AIMS OF TEACHING READING

Here we look at what it is a mature reader does when he reads. This should give us an in-depth understanding of the nature of the reading process and some idea of the purposes of reading. We will look at the objectives, not of reading but of teaching reading. The reading component emphasizes sub-skills which help develop pupils to become independent and mature readers. As such, the sub-skills in reading extend from basic word, phrase and sentence recognition to retrieval of specific information from the text and response to the text. The reading component will also provide pupils with the opportunity of developing study skills such as using dictionaries and encyclopaedias and extracting information from different source. Teacher should know the students' attitude and emotions for English reading by means of simple research method, like action research, taking these notions into account, these can be given to promote L2 reading ability.

1. To enhance vocabulary, grammar, discourse knowledge in English

2. To promote fluency and automaticity
3. To increase the amount of exposure for L2 reading
4. To relieve students anxieties and enhance students motivation etc

The use of a wide range of texts for the teaching of reading skills is recommended. A variety of texts for the teaching of reading skills is also recommended. A variety of text types will not only enrich pupils' vocabulary and language structure but will also promote the application of reading skills for different purposes. Towards this end, pupils are also encouraged to read extensively outside the classroom with minimal teacher guidance. Your aims can centre around one or more of the following areas: Development of reading skills; study skills; comprehension skills; Introduction of an important new genre, Creation of a new interest or a cashing in on current interest so that pupils will read more; the ironing out of old habits, e.g. word by word reading and the development of flexible reading strategies.

WHAT READING INVOLVES AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

There are generally considered to be much aspect to learning reading skill. Real reading involves not merely sounding of the words in a text but understanding the meaning or message the words are intended to carry. If one knows the phonetic rules of English, he would have read any text aloud but he still there is a possible of having no message if he had no enough knowledge of the world to make sense of the content. Understanding a text involves understanding the language in which it is written. Knowledge of the language in which a text is written is the first requirement of reading. It is not enough for a person to be able to sound out what is in print. He needs prior knowledge of the language in which a text is written to make sense of it. Just as language learning is a life-long process, learning to read too is process. It does not stop when you learn to convert printed words to sounds. In order to make a start to read a text we need to have a more specific diagnosis.

Reading involves utilizing previous knowledge. A lot of time learners simply don't know where to begin. We know we want to improve our reading skill but are not sure how to go about it. A rule of thumb we often use when we select a text to read is that it should in some way extend our knowledge or skill: give new perspective regarding old knowledge, provide new information, provide new opportunities for intellectual, emotional or spiritual development, etc. However, almost always the new knowledge is approached through existing knowledge. Its characters are as following.

- Reading is a thinking process. It is clear that reading in-

volves thinking. It is an attempt of the reader to know as nearly as possible the thinking of the writer.

- Reading trains sensory organs-eyes, mouth and ears-as in loud reading they work in co-ordination
- Reading is an interactive process when we talk to someone, we interact. That is clear. We listen to what the other person is saying.
- Reading is a life-support system.
- Reading initiates self education and deep study(silent reading)
- Reading develop the skill of speech and giving lectures (loud reading) etc

READING METHODS

To get maximum benefit from reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading. Whereas with the former a teacher encourages students to choose for themselves what they read and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement, the latter is often teacher chosen and directed, and is designed to enable students to develop specific receptive skills. Both methods have important role to play in helping learners gain fluency in the area of vocabulary, word recognition, and to developing better reading comprehension skill.

Extensive reading method:

Extensive reading involves reading of large quantities of material, directly and fluently. It may include reading simply for pleasure or reading technical/professional material. Depending upon the purpose of reading, the reader will require both intensive and extensive in order to understand the subject content and language pattern of message. Extensive reading should not start in the early stage of a child. If necessary, we should persuade our schools and institutions to provide such funds, or raise money through other sources. Grabe and Stoller (2001:98) point out several reasons why extensive reading is not promoted in L2 reading courses.

- Teacher sometimes do not feel that they are teaching when students are reading silently in the class; they think that extensive reading is something that should be done at home
- Sometimes there are limited resources for good class or school libraries.
- In some cases, schools have resources but they do not include books that interest students or they do not allow students to check out books to be read at home.
- There are cases in which teachers do not believe that reading large amounts of level appropriate text is an appropriate goal for academic reading development.
- Some teachers would like to involve their students in extensive reading but do not know how to incorporate it into their lessons

Having persuaded our students about the benefits of extensive reading, we can organise reading programmes where indicate to students how many books we expect them to read over a given period. We can explain how they can make their choice of what to read, making it clear that the choice is theirs, but that they can consult other students' reviews and comments to help them make that choice. We can suggest that they look for books in a genre that they enjoy, and that they make appropriate level choices. We will act throughout as part organiser, part tutor.

In the extensive reading activity, an EFL/ESL teacher provides his students with plenty of printed pages to read as a homework assignment with no help or guidance from him. The reading materials consist of 'interesting short stories, novels and plays and tales. Such books succeed because the writers or adaptors work within specific lists of allowed words and grammar. This means that students at the appropriate level can read them with ease and confidence. The chosen material should have neither technical or scientific vocabulary nor complicated grammar. Students are encouraged to read extensively without paying much concern to the vocabulary they do not know as long as they can understand the general concept

of the reading text. Though the material plays no role in the EFL/ESL programme, it is useful for developing good reading habit as an extracurricular activity. The material should be selected on the basis of its statement of purpose and its level of difficulty. If they are struggling to understand every word, they can hardly be reading for pleasure- the main goal of this activity.

Intensive reading method:

Intensive reading is the approach most often adopt in the reading classes. This type of reading ,which seeks to grasp the whole message, including both arguments and supporting details, encourage careful ,literal processing of text. It means detailed study of linguistic and literary aspects and collection information from a text or any source with an immediate or not very remote purpose like examination, lecture or critical study. In the class EFL/ESL teacher supplies his learners with short passages to practice reading in the class or at home. The primary purpose of this activity is to teach new vocabulary and concepts and to develop comprehension skills of the students. In this activity the reading teacher provides his students with a variety of exercises for learning syntactical devices and lexical features. Students are never asked to produce or use grammatical patterns, but to recognize the structural clues for decoding the message

Anderson (1999), while highlighting the superiority of extensive reading, still emphasises the importance of intensive reading through which readers can develop strategies and skills which they can transfer to extensive reading contexts. They are also trained to use lexical clues to decode messages from the reading text. Teaching complicated grammatical forms, discourse markers and other structure details should be done in the class because most students have difficulty in understanding them by themselves. Teacher's instructions should facilitate students reading. However, teachers should be careful not to put too much emphasis on intensive reading, so that student will not think it the only way of reading. It is considered an essential part of the established EFL/ESL programs. It assists and promotes the degree of understanding of students. Nutall (1996) also states the importance of teaching how meaning is produced through intensive reading which is intended to train readers to cope with the texts.

READING APPROACHES

Reading approaches can be grouped into three major categories: a) synthetic approach b) analytic approaches and c) eclectic approach.

Synthetic Approaches

It stress part-whole relationships and stress to build meaningful words or sentences from letters, sounds and or syllables that are mastered. In other words, the elements of reading are broken into segments in this approach. Synthetic approaches include several traditional reading methods. These methods are the alphabetic method, the phonic method, the syllabic method and linguistic method.

Analytic Approaches:

Analytic Approaches concentrate on whole words and comprehension of meaning, which can be examined further for their elements. The analytic approaches consists several methods: the language experience approach, the global method and the generative word method etc

Eclectic Approaches

It involves successful elements of both synthetic and analytic approaches in an attempt to offer pupils an effective reading program. It may contain the presentation of whole sentences, identification of speech-print relationships by phonics, look-say practice with flash cards, use of the learner's own language, and a variety of other features drawn from several methods.

READING TECHNIQUES

Skimming

Skimming refers to the way of reading in which readers'

quickly run their eyes across a whole text for its gist. It is a type of rapid reading technique. It is also common part of many reading tasks. The purpose of this technique is to read rapidly. It is widely used to gain quick information from a text or article by passing over it swiftly. She/he may also skim-read to test and assess materials for skipping or selecting. In these cases he/she may want to have a general overview of the reading material and need not read it precisely and thoroughly. We may also skim-read newspapers, magazines, familiar books or articles. Skimming is an economical and time saving technique. To skim-read correctly, you need to be familiar with the organizational patterns of writing and the following procedures. There are four types of skimming: Skimming main ideas, skimming for revising a textbook, and skimming a newspaper, and skimming a magazine or journal.

Scanning

Scanning or searching reading is also a common reading activity when readers extract necessary pieces of information from a text without reading through the whole text. It is a type of speed-reading technique. The purpose of this technique is to examine closely and rapidly a piece of printed or written material. It is used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information or fact without necessarily understanding the whole of a passage or script. The reader, for example, may scan-read a chapter of a book as rapidly as possible in order to find out information about a particular date, name, figure, or amount. Scanning comparatively is easier than skimming because the reader knows ahead of time what he wants to find. Scanning is used widely in the following situations: in searching through a telephone directory, Looking up a name in a list, reading a time table or advertisement for getting information and Looking up days and dates in a schedule. The spread of the internet may well accelerate the need for this type of reading.

CONCLUSION

Effective methods, approaches and techniques have to adopt for helping students to develop reading skill. As we know reading involves an interaction between thought and mind, a beginning reader will face many difficulties in following both the teacher and text. Many early readers will require greater teacher assistance and support. Teachers should provide students with lots of instructional support in the beginning stages of reading instruction, and gradually reduce the support as students learn more about reading skills. The ultimate goal is for students to read on their own without the help of a teacher.

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