

READING SKILLS IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: METHODS AND APPROACHES

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Abstract

The activity of reading has its own aims and purposes. There are different kinds of situation in which a person involves himself in reading activity. Such as a person may read to obtain information. Some may read to criticize the writer's view, ideas and the style used by the writer. While some prefer reading as their passtime and enjoyment. Some read for the improvement of the language being read. The goal for reading also arbitrates the correct method for reading comprehension. One should know that reading is considered as a life long skill which is not only used in schools and colleges. Reading skill is the key purpose of communicative approach. The communicative approach for language teaching has provided certain texts and methods for the instructors to develop reading skills among students. Based on the previous researches on reading skills it is found that reading teaching methods is a major element in developing students reading comprehension. Researchers stated that teachers should have a solid foundation with perfect strategies to handle students reading comprehension. This research aims at providing certain methods and techniques for the improvement of students' reading skills. It also aims at students self learning process.

Keywords: Reading, ELT, techniques, literature, technology, texts, comprehension, institution, self-learning.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a difficult "cognitive process" of deriving symbols through the process of decoding in order to get an exact meaning of the text. Reading skills has been considered important in the way it enables the readers to turn writing into a meaningful act. Thus it can achieve the aim of independence, meaningful context and the fluency of the language. A person can attain independence when only he can write his thoughts without the help of others. Writing comes only when he can read and understand the language properly. For example, if a person has to travel in public transport he should know to read so that he can travel without others help. In some other way if a person needs to enjoy literature, he can enjoy poetry, drama and novel only when he is able to read and comprehend the exact meaning. When it comes to students and their career, it is not enough that they possess only the knowledge of their area. He or she should be good at global language. He can understand the project only when he can able read and comprehend properly. Hence reading skill is considered as the most important skill for students to score good marks and to shine in their career with confidence. This research further shows the cause of poor reading skill among students and how to improve their reading ability with different techniques which can kindle their interest in the process of reading and having an ability to read properly.

TYPES OF READING SKILLS

The four basic type of reading skills are:

- Skimming
- Scanning
- Intensive
- Extensive

Among all the four basic reading skills each have its own technique and process for reading and understanding the text. Skimming is considered as "gist reading", where you will not understand the text completely. In the process of skimming one can understand only the gist that is most probably the overview of the text and sometimes the key elements of the text. Sometimes skimming can result in not conveying the actual meaning of the text. This can be sometimes the drawback in the process of skimming. Sometimes skimming may save one's time. Scanning is actually visualizing the text. For example, one can picture himself that he is landed in a historical city with a guide book in his hand. It stresses more importance to introduction and conclusion of the text. It is always used to get the simple piece of information from the text. Intensive reading is considered to be time consuming when compared to skimming and scanning. The reader should have a clear aim to have this

process. Because the reader should go through every vocabulary of the text. The reader will find the meaning of the vocabulary to comprehend the text. Intensive reading results in gaining knowledge about the language plus knowledge of the text. The obtained knowledge will retain in a person's memory for a long period. Hence the person will use those vocabularies in his own conversation. Reading for pleasure involves the process of extensive reading. But it requires large amount of reading for fun and also it motivates a person to read a foreign language.

REASONS FOR POOR READING SKILLS

There are so many factors which affect reading and comprehending. They are:

- Disinterest and lack of motivation for reading and gaining knowledge in a foreign language.
- Most of the surroundings of the students were filled with their native language speakers, so they do not find an apt reason to study the second language properly.
- Lack of confidence when the person encounters someone who can speak fluently the language which he is not good at.
- Lack of awareness for the importance of second language acquisition.
- Oral language deficit results in poor reading comprehension. Because students are filled with limited vocabulary.

DO'S OF GOOD READERS

- They possess the habit of extensive reading.
- They try to merge the information in the text with the knowledge already exist in their mind.
- They have their own flexible reading style which depends on what they are reading.
- They are motivated to read further and further to gain huge knowledge.
- They will read for a purpose and thus reading serves as a function.
- They will recall what they read so that it stays in their mind.
- They will try to concentrate in their process of reading.

FLUENCY IN SECOND LANGUAGE

The term 'fluency' is also called as volubility and as well as eloquency. This term actually represents the speech delivered by a person with quick information and with expertise. In language, fluency determines the ability of the person in that particular language. It measures or characterizes a person's skill in the language. If a person is fluent in the language, then the message delivered by him will be coherent, natural, and fluid. There are four types of fluency, and they are also interrelated with each other. They are:

- **Reading fluency-** This kind of fluency connects between the acknowledgement of words while reading, which signifies the speed and accuracy of the person reading the text.
- **Oral fluency-** It takes place during conversation, that is whether the person is both able to read and also understand what other person is conveying, thus providing the conversation smoothly without any difficulty.
- **Oral reading fluency-** It is different from the actual oral fluency. It refers to the ability to read quickly and with exact accuracy with correct vocal expression.
- **Compositional fluency-** It is associated with the length of the composition. That is it actually measures the number of words produced in a minute. And also number of phrases produced naturally with accuracy.

Fluency is the most difficult action one can acquire in second language. The adults might be generally good in their mother tongue, and for them second language fluency will be difficult to attain, and thus it requires more practice and confidence. They must put large effort in order to get flow with the second language phrases instead of the phrases that belong to their mother tongue.

REASONS TO DEVELOP READING SKILLS

Most of the students may not know the importance of reading and writing skills till they reach college. So they will be unprepared to do their reading and writing tasks. Students are prepared with their basic reading skills but they lag in interpreting the text and analyzing the text. During high school many students just memorize everything and reproduce it in their exams for the sake of getting scores. But by the end of under graduation courses a large number of students these days acquire decoding and phonemic awareness. This awareness is largely due to the new findings and research based approaches to reading. Students have to read in order to acquire new information and new vocabulary to inherit fluency in second language. In order to form conclusions, judgments and critical thinking students has to develop all the four language skills that are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The necessity for reading in the current world's marketplace is in

more demand comparing to the past. These days even working area itself provide the courses that help in the development of communications skills for their employees in order to get more number of projects throughout the globe.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING READING SKILLS

Most of the students struggle a lot while reading a text from second language; they always look for linguistic correctness for every word while they are reading which results in poor reading. They did not adapt the strategies their teacher conveys to them and they would not use the strategies they actually use for reading their native language. One of the most important things for a language teacher is to let pass this particular level of the students by letting them to inherit strategies for second language reading. Teachers who can teach the language in an effective way will show their students how to adapt their reading behavior at various situations, differences of input and purposes of reading. They also help the students in developing a set of strategies that could be used to each reading situation.

Strategies that can help students in effective reading are:

- Preview of the text: Before reading a text, a student has to review the titles, headings of the each section and captions in order to get the apt sense of the structure and the exact content of that particular text chosen to read.
- Text prediction: by using the knowledge of the subject matter to make guesses about vocabulary, the text content and to check comprehension; to use the knowledge about the type of the text and its purpose to guess about structural discourse; to use the knowledge about the author to make guesses on writing style of the text, types of vocabulary and content.
- Scanning and skimming: by using a quick survey of the text material to know the main idea, identifying the structure of the text and to validate or question the predictions.
- Paraphrasing the text: after reading each section and comprehending it and reading the information once again to know the ideas that prevailed in the text.

Teachers can also help the students in using reading strategies in many ways, they are:

- Teachers should allow the students to have a discussion during the process of previewing, scanning, skimming, paraphrasing and while making predictions.
- To know the importance and value of the reading strategies among students, teacher has to allow each student to take part in the activity with their individual performance.
- In order to review the vocabulary and to guess the meaning of the vocabulary from the text's context teacher has to give fill in exercises for students during language classes.
- In order to develop the flexibility of using strategies, teachers should encourage the students to talk about the strategies they use while reading and also allow them to explain which strategy is more convenient to develop their skills.

By using reading strategies, language learners will gain more confidence in developing their reading skills and their reading experience.

CONCLUSION

This research may not give all the solutions to develop reading skills and the syllabus formation for second language learning. But to the certain extent this research provides the reason behind poor reading skills. It also insists the importance of reading skills. Thus it recommends certain techniques and strategies for language learners as well as teachers in order to develop language skills.

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