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Reading Nucleus In Atom Education

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Abstract

The paper delineates that reading enhances the readers' power of presentation. It also discusses the need for choosing the material that would interest the readers to orientate them towards reading. The teachers role in facilitating the intricacies that are discovered in the curriculum are specially emphasized in the paper. It briefly discusses the types of reading and argues that there is dire necessity to implement the extensive reading programmes in educational institutions

Key Words : Language acquisition, Independent learning, Skimming, Scanning, Message retrieval, Psychological guessing game, Metacognition, Linguistic competence, Global comprehension.

1.INTRODUCTION

Reading is a never-fading ornament that an intellectual ever loves to wear. A writer has umpteen secrets to reveal to the reader discovering which the reader will possibly gather strength to enjoy eternal victory over ignorance. Reading occupies the third place in the order of language skills because while reading the reader will be listening to the writer in his mind, that is unheard by others, he will also be discussing with his conscience before he has to admit or contradict with what he encounters in the text. Carrel and Esday assert "reading



is a receptive language process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs".(1998,P.12)

2.LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH READING

Krashen argues that extensive reading will lead to language acquisition in certain conditions like exposure to language, interesting material and a relaxed and tension-free learning environment. (Krashen,1982).

Language, if used just to communicate one's ideas, any focus on its learning and demand for exquisite presentation seem not only ridiculous but irrational also. One need not use grand style to make others understand one's ideas. It can be done in a simple day-to-day language also. More over many people feel comfortable when simple language is used for communication. But a good knowledge of a language fulfills its purpose to appreciate and comprehend a text of beautiful language and impresses and receives plaudits from men of letters and one can be adept at this through careful and disciplined reading habit.

Oliver Goldsmith in his *THE FAME COACH, A REVERIE* while describing Samuel Johnson writes:

This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance

I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable

Figures I had seen; but as he approached his appearance

Improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly,

I perceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow,

He had one of the most good-natured countenances



That could be imagined.

It is a sophisticated and profound expression which certainly reserves a room for appreciation. This can be said in a simple language as:

When I saw him at some distance, I found him serious, but, as he was coming towards me, I could see him better, and when I observed him keenly, I realized that though he looked serious there was kindness shown in his face.

Students who are used to use simple language will certainly learn to make profound expressions, when they are exposed to read such writings. Simple language makes communication more effective but it cannot be totally ignored that admirable presentation thrills the listeners and trains them for excellence.

The knowledge of the learner regarding the purpose and utility of specific language learning will galvanize him into learning that language. Hence the teachers of English language should contemplate on this aspect and accelerate the process of learning by adopting several techniques, methods and plans appropriate to the need to inculcate interest in learners to learn English.

The language teacher should familiarize the students with diverse patterns of sentences by involving them in reading activities. The teacher should see that major role is played by students and learning is taking place without their knowing that they are learning. Grellet explains, "It is better to start with global understanding and move towards detailed understanding rather than working the other way round. The tasks given to begin with should be of a more global kind-within the competence of the students. Gradually as they read more fluently and get the gist of a text more easily, a deeper and more detailed understanding of the text can be worked toward. Similarly, when constructing reading comprehension exercises on given text, it is always preferable to start with the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working on vocabulary are more specific ideas."(Francoise Grellet,1981; p 6)



When students are engrossed in reading, their brain will record so many things, and it is commonly witnessed that when they are asked to narrate a story that was given to them to read, they will do so by repeating some sentences in the story which are unknowingly recorded on their brain and are stored by the intellectual faculty. Despite not having the knowledge of grammar, they may use such sentence structures while speaking or writing other matter also, and this is how reading edifies readers.

Thorndike rightly says that reading should be a central part of school curriculum. According to him “Literacy is the foundation on which the great bulk of education has proceeded, and its importance in the educational scene is attested to not only the attention that is paid to it within the classroom but also by the enormous literature that has developed around the teaching of reading and the process of learning to read.” (Thorndike; 1973; p.13) Reading involves physical and mental labour. It brings lively interaction among the reader, the author and the text. While reading the reader will be;

- Identifying the sounds of printed words.
- Recognizing the grammatical function of words and sentences.
- Understanding the literal, implied and ambiguous meaning of the text
- Observing the punctuation and its purpose in the text.
- Examining the cohesion between sentences.
- Moving the thoughts beyond the text to establish cogent arguments.
- Introspecting and retrospection of oneself
- Broadening his thought process

The reader's attentive listening to the voice of the writer, who is obscure, will help them comprehend the author's message perfectly. Through reading readers learn pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and everything necessary to master a language. Teaching and learning both take place in reading.



3. THE PURPOSE OF READING

The purpose of reading is either for pleasure or for information. Greater emphasis is laid on this activity as it serves several purposes. It is necessary for social identification. Gates presents evidence that in certain instances failure in reading may be a contributing cause of juvenile delinquency as well as various other kinds of antisocial behaviours (Gates,1933). It plays a vital role in decision making. In order to achieve awareness concerning the facts and solutions of the nation and of one's onus to contribute one's share, a citizen of democracy ought to possess the competence of reading. It is essential for national integration and international understanding too. According to Strang *et al* "Through reading it is possible to build sound values and to arrive at means and methods for creative living in this machine age." (Strang et al, 1961)

The students' learning, which ought to be independent when their career is started, is done only through reading. They are introduced to manifold unknown matters, related to science, technology, history, philosophy etc. This acquired knowledge, which is stored in the mind of students in the form of schema, will later be applied to fetch success to them. Carnegie stipulates, "Reading is the most subject to be learned by children; a child will learn little else in today's world if he does not first learn to read properly..." (Carnegie,1962:1)

4.TEACHING READING

The teacher of a language, according to ML Tickoo needs to think about two questions;

1. What must a learner-reader do to become a proficient reader?
2. How best can I as a teacher help in that?

The reason why students show off-hand attitude to reading is due to their poor vocabulary, lack of sufficient exposure to certain grammar items which they have rarely encountered, deficient analytical ability and failure to fix attention on a particular thing. Laufer's (1989) research suggests that learners need to be familiar with at least 95% of running words in a text if they want to comprehend and thus perhaps learn from the text.



The teacher's task here is very crucial. He has to take care that the standard of the text meets the understanding ability of students. It is more advantageous to students, if they are trained to guess what they are going to read and why. This particular section of the work, generally through pre-reading tasks and encouraging the students to predict what they are going to find in the text, has to be done relentlessly both by teachers and learners. According to Ringler and Weber (1984) pre-reading activities are the enabling activities, because they provide the reader with necessary background to comprehend the material. Brown says, "before you read, spend some time introducing a topic, encouraging skimming, scanning and activating schema. Students can bring the best of their knowledge and skills to a text when they have been given a chance to 'ease' into the message."

Especially in bilingual classroom the learner is frequently interrupted by the interference of mother tongue. The complexity of the text will do no better to them than to develop anxiety in them, and this is exactly where the learners rely on mother tongue to alleviate their distress. The intricacies in the text confirm them that self understanding is impossible. Hence the teacher should select the reading material that could be easy for students or reduce the complexity of the text by replacing unknown words by known words, and unfamiliar grammatical sentence patterns by familiar ones. As Davis (1995:329) states, "The watch words are quantity and variety, rather than quality, so that books are selected for their attractiveness and relevance to the pupils' lives, rather than for literary merit." (1995:329).

One or two new words per page and one new sentence structure would be ideal. If a few words appear again and again through out the text, students start with a fuzzy understanding of a new word which gradually gets clearer and clearer as they encounter it again and again in new context. Students can feel at ease to guess the meaning of the word because of its frequent appearance in the following passage.

The young consider the ideas of the old antediluvian. They feel



they are modern and any antediluvian thoughts, suggestions have no preference in modern society. They are too innocent to believe that their antecedents are the men of out-dated tastes and, fashions and cannot go abreast with the young. Antecedents insist on, spend less: save more, which is a secret behind one's wealth. If the so called young ridicule this because it is said by their antecedents and therefore antediluvian, they should wait to endure the ordeal of their economic destruction.

The words ANTIDILUVIAN, ANTECEDENTS appear many times in the passage so the meaning will become clearer to the reader.

Students should be motivated to develop positive attitude towards the new text. They will look more illuminated when they get familiarized with multitude of opinions instead of being circumscribed by a single opinion of a teacher. This exchange of knowledge which they enthusiastically perform builds firm base for comprehending the text that may contain entirely new information. They have more freedom to extend their fellow students ideas to develop their own thinking.

In reading, the reader is an active participant, making predictions, processing information, for readers recognize not only what the text says but also how the text portrays that subject matter, and this is how it helps them validate the theory that each text is a unique creation of a unique author.

“Insuperable barriers like concentration, memory and language processing beset the readers in intensive reading process where the readers' prior knowledge and purpose of reading and language proficiency carry him through the task. During the reading process the readers bring information, knowledge, experience, emotions and culture to the printed word and



make decisions about something mean. More information is contributed by the readers than by the print on the page.

That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take stimulus

beyond its graphic representation and assign its membership to an appropriate

Group of concepts already stored in their memories..... skill in reading depends

on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world”

(Clark and Silberstein 1977:136-7)

To help the students understand the global meaning of the text, the teacher should teach the students to link their prior knowledge with the text.

According to Goodman (1971), reading is a “psychological guessing game.” He further states that in the reading programme, the reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display. Through reading the readers retrieve and construct the meaning of the word that is presented in the text and this knowledge will help them to comprehend the next matter. This previously acquired knowledge is called the readers’ background knowledge.

5. READING BENEFITS

For learners, to study any discipline, whether language or content subject, comprehending the text is compulsory. Comprehension and learning go abreast. It is high time to realize that academic failures of students are mainly due to their comprehension deficiency which is again an adverse consequence of scarcely organized reading programme in schools and colleges by involving in which, students invariably interact with reading materials, and as a result, widen their comprehension potential. Reading is the foundation of most academic



endeavors of children. Children accrue their accomplishments by being participants in reading programmes.

The educational institutions should aim at preparing students for life-long independent learners. The very purpose of reading is to comprehend a large percentage of the lexical items occurring in non specialized writing and being able to derive the meaning of unfamiliar items from the contexts in which they occur; this understanding of the syntactical and morphological forms characteristic of the written language words will result in the total comprehension of the text. It cannot be expected that all the lexical items should be aufait to students. So many times they facilitate their difficulty by deriving the meanings of unfamiliar words from their use in the context. Readers insight into certain essentials of written language like punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, italicizing convey a particular meaning and reading of this kind is a kind of exercise to mind.

The reader will apply meta cognition strategy to identify the writers purpose and central ideas, understand the subordinate ideas which support the thesis and draw correct conclusions and valid inferences from what is given, recognize the author's attitude towards the subject and identify the methods and stylistic devices by which the author conveys his ideas. Flavell states that metacognition includes the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of information processing activity. (Flavell, 1976, p. 232).

In this type of instruction; the learners need a great deal of support from the teacher who is expected to be a more skilled person. The teacher's help is often required to suggest the students not only the type of skill they should use to read the text but also when and how it should be used. Then the teacher has to supervise whether or not the suggested strategy is being operated by students during the reading activity. Students are actually animated by the instructor and the content, because the teacher provides high quality feed back that elevates students' understanding and prepares them in the successful completion of the task. Then the



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teacher should proceed to evaluate the reading task done for feedback necessary to further improve the application of the strategy learned.

According to the review of Stotsky (1983) and Krashen (1984) it was proved that students who had good exposure to reading had shown excellence in their writing skill. It is input-based, and acquisition-oriented. Hence, it is an effective means of fostering improvement in students' writing.

Everybody relies on a particular language for communication and when one has to communicate in a language which is not of one's native origin, it is necessary for him/her to be aware of its vocabulary and grammar. Hence a serious and determined effort to acquire its skills is by all means obligatory. Reading is more effective in improving other language skills than traditional skill-based instruction. Reading for pleasure, even simple comic books, is the most effective way to increase vocabulary. It has a salubrious effect on language development. According to Krashen, "language learning is a conscious process. It is conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them"

(Krashen,1988:10) .Hyland claims, "texts are either milked of every last drop of meaning by intensive study or employed as vehicles for presenting linguistic patterns"(Hyland,1990:14). Pino-Silva (1992) advises teachers to explain to their students the merits and importance of reading for pleasure in a foreign language, since it not only improves the reader's vocabulary and structure of the language, but also gives them a feeling of satisfaction to be able to read text in a foreign language.

In language teaching programme, reading allocates major amount of industry to students and therefore lessen the labour of the teacher. Students combat with the reading passage to decipher the vocabulary and to comprehend its complexity. Many problems in learning a second or a foreign language are shown successful solutions by applying reading principle.



6. IMPLEMENTATION OF EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMMES

The course books cannot possibly hope to concentrate on all language features. They introduce a piece of language like tense, vocabulary, comprehension or coherence and introduce the function of it, based on which, the students are asked to analyze it and find out how it works. This is checked by the teacher to find out whether that introduced language item is understood by the students and can be manipulated and controlled by giving some kind of drill or test. This type of language learning is fine, but to what extent this learning of language in bits at intervals, would help the students seems enigmatic.

Looking at the intensity of syllabus and monotonous examination pattern, one would be moderate in contradicting the statement that stipulates any demand for implementing extensive reading process in education institutions as a burdensome and superfluous activity. But there are several reasons to believe that learners can develop their language knowledge through extensive reading. The language benefits of extensive reading cannot be in any way denied for several reasons such as:

- Learners feel relieved of inflexible classroom atmosphere and enjoy liberty to read at their own level of proficiency
- It allows learners to read the text of their own choice and interest.
- It provides an opportunity for learning outside the classroom without being dependent on teacher.
- It can provide comprehensible input.
- It will help with speaking and control over syntax. (Elley; 1991)

The benefits of extensive reading according to Day&Bamford are :

- Students read as much as possible.
- A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.
- Students read what they want to read.



- The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
- Reading speed is usually faster.
- Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of reading vocabulary and grammar.
- The teacher is a role model of a reader for students.
- Reading is individual and silent.

Day and Bamford (1998, pp. 6-8)

Krashen (1982) argues that extensive reading will lead to language acquisition in certain conditions like exposure to language, interesting material and a relaxed and tension-free learning environment. Vocabulary teaching through direct method is very tedious and possibly eludes learners' memory. They have opportunity to learn the vocabulary themselves by reading because the situations they encounter in the text give them ability to guess their meanings. This kind of learning has lasting impression on their minds. reading and practice. Thornbury stipulates that the reader will

“acquire critical mass of words both for understanding and producing

The language remember words over time, be able to recall them readily.

develop strategies to cope with gaps, coping with unknown words,

or unfamiliar uses of known words .have to take responsibility themselves for vocabulary expansion” (Thornbury,2002,p31)

Kembo (1993) stipulates that extensive reading develops confidence and ability in facing the longer texts.



Keeping in view of manifold benefits of extensive reading and allow students to be ever grateful to the institutions and teachers to enjoy reading as a permanent source of pleasure, it is essential to implement extensive reading programmes in educational institutions with special focus on it.

7. TYPES OF READING

The reading teacher should introduce different types of reading by selecting different types of texts. It is true that same type of reading cannot be used all the time. This type of reading different types of texts will increase the reading efficiency of students. The teacher should help the students follow needful technique to comprehend the reading text. The sub-skills of reading are;

Skim reading	(glance through the book quickly and pick up the main points)
Search reading	(look for a single piece of information)
Selective reading	(read the section , take its section and leave the rest one)
Detailed reading	(read to understand the content)
Close reading	(examine each word and interpret the passage)
Rapid reading	(read to find out what happens next)

8. CONCLUSION

Teachers must believe that language teaching should aim at developing skills among students. They must provide opportunities to students through which they learn how to acquire knowledge by exposing them to different reading materials in the classroom. They can help students become good English readers and develop confidence in them that they can read and understand English language.



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