



Teaching-Learning and Reading Comprehension: A Tool for Language Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

Reading holds the key to the development of real communicative competence in English for Indian learners. Moreover, the vast majority of our students will ultimately have to use English as a library language. Therefore, reading or the ability to understand the written language will be the most useful skill for them. In this age of explosion of knowledge, the skill of reading plays the pivotal role in the life of every educated man. Even though, the popularity of T. V. and other media of oral communication like telephone, radio and cinema, the written language never loses its importance. On the contrary, people's interest in the printed word is increasing day by day, as is evident from the popularity of the public libraries and the increasing volume of the book trade all over the world. This paper focuses on the importance of Reading Comprehension and the ways to promote Reading Comprehension ability among the Students.

KEY WORDS

Comprehension, Language Skill, Reading, Trading.

INTRODUCTION

As official language for communication, English is to be taught in our schools primarily as a language of comprehension. It is now taught for a limited period of three to six years, since most of the students will ultimately require to gather knowledge, from books and journals written in English, setting up a single objective, i.e. Development of Reading comprehension. But it is also obvious that Reading comprehension, as a language skill cannot be developed. The psychology of language learning also tells us that the four basic

skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, reinforce each other. Even for the development of a single skill, some amount of emphasis on all the four skills is required.

In speaking, the speaker associates that appropriate form with the meaning that he has in mind and in understanding he associates the meaning with the form he has heard. Habits are acquired tendencies as distinct from the in-born tendencies or instincts. The number of possible sentences in a language is infinite. But the systems that control various language forms are finite, in order that many may learn them within a reasonable period of time. These few patterns are used over and over again in what is known as “recursive patterning” to form larger construction and a child completely master these patterns of his mother tongue at a fairly early age.

Knowing a language not only implies the ability to produce the sounds and a structure of language as a matter of automatic habit but also the ability demands a “Memory Span”. the ability to notice the errors in one’s own utterances and this is called “monitor function” Reading is necessary for special adjustments. It affects pupil’s personality. The world of people and events on the print page affect the pupil’s attitude toward, his fellow, parents, school and life in general. Reading is an important means of introducing a child to the surrounding world. It is not a general ability but it is a composite of many specific abilities. The child’s knowledge is the distillation of his/her impressions gained from four skills of language namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Of these skills Reading is a very important receptive skill like listening. When a child reads a book or even an advertisement on the wall, he gains impressions. These impressions keep growing and changing, as the visual contact expands. “Reading makes a full man” (Bacon). It is a good source of self education. Because by Reading, a person keeps himself informed with all the news and knowledge of literary science of the world. Like other language skills, Reading is also a complex skill involving a number of simultaneous operations. An analysis of the skill of Reading is beyond to the largely speculative in nature. Some of the obvious aspects of this complex Reading skill are as follows.

A person who comprehends written english can read a passage at normal speed, understand the lexical and structural meanings of the words, phrases and sentences take in complete phrases or group of words at one and when reading aloud use appropriate sounds, juncture add stress and intonation patterns, guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context, consult a dictionary to find out the moanin. As official language for communication, English is to be taught in our schools primarily as a language of comprehension. It is now taught for a limited period of three to six years, since most of the students will ultimately require to gather knowledge, from books and journals written in English, setting up a single objective, Le..Development of Reading comprehension. But it is also obvious that Reading comprehension, as a language skill cannot be developed Rinos. The psychology of language learning also tells us” that the four basic skills namely Listening. Speaking, Reading, Writing, reinforce each other. Even for the development of a singleskill, some amount of emphasis on all the four skills is required.

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Thus, the process of Reading comprises three stages namely, recognition stage, structuring stage and interpretation stage. In recognition stage, the learner simply recognizes the graphic counterparts of the phonological items. In the case of Indian learners, whose mothertongue orthography is marked by one-to-one correspondence between the sounds and the letters, they will try to adopt their mother tongue, reading strategy of 'spelling pronunciation' in reading English and consequently they find it hard as English is an unphonetic language.

In the structuring stage, the learner sees the syntactic relationships of terms and thereby understands the structural meaning of syntactic units In the third stage, namely the interpretation stage which is the highest level in the process of reading, the learner comprehends the significance of a word, a phrase or sentence in the overall context of the entire discourse. For instance, he comprehends the serious and jocular use of a word, distinguishes between a statement of fact and statement of opinion etc. Since this is the stage at which a person really reads for information or for pleasure, the two primary purposes of Reading.

The above three stages have some correspondence with the three levels of language namely, phonological, syntactic and semantic. But it should be remembered that neither in language nor in the process of reading are these stages rigidly separated. There is always overlapping and simultaneity of operation. For instance, a reader engaged in interpretation (Stage 3) may go right back to the recognition stage (Stage 1) when he comes across a familiar word. Therefore, these decisions are only artificial decisions made in order to facilitate our understanding of this complex process.

Since Reading is a sort of "guessing game" that requires the ability to guess following words or even sentences form what has already been read. Therefore to read with the help of word-pictures and reliable guessing, the words and the structures must be familiar, Hence, greater density of unfamiliar words and structure is an impediment to efficient reading. Unfamiliar subject-matter also Impedes guessing and checks the easy flow in reading. Therefore, for reading practice, the words and the structures as well as the subject-matters should be familiar to the public. So, the various methods of teaching can be broadly divided into two groups namely atomistic and holistic.

Importance of Reading

By reading good English we can develop insight into the working of the language that we can hope to surpass the native speakers. Reading holds the key to the development of real communicative competence in English for Indian learners. Moreover, the vast majority of our students will ultimately have to use English as library language. Therefore, reading or the ability to understand the written language will be the most useful skill for them. In this age of explosion of knowledge, the skill of reading plays the pivotal role in the life of every educated man. Even though, the popularity of T. V. and other media of oral communication like telephone, radio and cinema, the written language never loses its importance. On the contrary, people's interest in the printed word is increasing day by day, as is evident from the popularity of the public libraries and the increasing volume of the book trade all over the world.

Reading is a sort of "Guessing game" that requires the ability to guess the following words or even sentences from what has already been read. When we read with the help of word-pictures and reliable guessing, the words and structures become familiar. Moreover for easy flow in reading, the subject matter also should be familiar to pupils. Reading is an amalgamation of visual and non-visual behaviours. It is the image of stream of mind - blown mist. Reading comprehensions thus involves the decoding or deciphering the printed letters with understanding and interpreting. While Reading the thought of the author is being solidified, condensed, frozen, materialized, crystallized and cinematographed into words.

In our daily lives, we listen and read a great deal of language and it is possible to differentiate our purpose into two broad categories namely interest and usefulness. For example in reading a newspaper, we read politics for information and a stock broker reads the share market, youngsters read sport column. The category of interest includes only reading for enjoyment but also for intellectual stimulation. We also pay attention to a text because of its usefulness mainly. It gives optimum instruction for learning. Reading a text also develops the spontaneous application of vocabulary and sentence form which has greater practical value. Reading for comprehension is done, when the teacher gives an unseen comprehension passage exercise with questions. The students are asked to read and solve these questions in the exercise. When a passage is read and re-read, a number of times, they are able to locate the main idea of the passage and their reading rate is also increased in due course of time.

Reading is defined as the total understanding of a message in a text. It involves recognition of words and getting the thoughts of an author. It involves critical and creative thinking. The reader must relate what he reads to his, own experience. He must interpret and evaluate the material, exercise reason and imagination and fuse new ideas. with previous learning to gain power to think independently. Thus for acquiring this complex thought processes, he needs to know new ideas, to super impose with his previous knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Thus Reading Comprehension forms the basis of all learning and for a good grasp over this exercise a lot of practice is the important way of learning a language. Since language is the expression of ideas by means of which speech sounds are combined into sentences and combination of sentences given answer to ideas and thoughts. Learning a language is important to communicate our thoughts and ideas. As language is a result of cultural experience, it is essential for our survival and also for the development of humanism concept building and vocabulary development continue to be the two major factors in developing citizens who can read with understanding, make accurate interpretation and appreciate fine shadings in meanings of words that are used in literature. Since Reading is the gateway to learning, the pupils must acquire the ability to convert the cold print into logical content and expressive enough to make available, the beauty of words and their emotional significance.

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