

An Anatomy of Extensive Reading in the Present World of Globalization

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Abstract: *English Language has become an effective tool to communicate, interact and connect with different parts of the world. It is an international language to carry on trade, business, tourism, science and technology with strident steps to explore the facts and to seek promising jobs overseas. To master and realize the flavour of the language a certain degree of learning the basic structures like grammar, vocabulary and usage of words in different contexts adds a tremendous change in the personality of the students and develop their communication skills. The study tries to illuminate the importance of reading habits and to develop love towards reading especially for the students of E.S.L and E.F.L students. The study throws light on the present changes in the teaching patterns in contrast to the old traditional methods of teaching and creates a scope for the students to use the latest technology of multimedia based teaching through animations, pictures etc., in addition to practical way of reading self selected materials to enhance their language development.*

Keywords: glossary, lexical, syntactic structures, E.S.L and E.F.L, Cognitive, Meta-cognitive

1. Introduction

English has reached the culmination point in every part of the world linking different cultures, trade, business, scientific discoveries, new innovations in the computer technology, medicine etc., It has become a link language to carry international trade, industrial development etc. To master the foreign language considerable amount of strategies are required and comprehend the language. Most of the students especially in India and elsewhere in Asia has to acquaint with the basic structures of the language like word formation, forming the sentences and to pronounce the words like the native speakers in English. Teachers play a vital role in moulding the students to communicate effective and correct grammatical language to build up their career and to adapt them to the English speaking world. Therefore, students should be exposed to read a number of books.

The present study focus on the reading skills and the strategies required to ameliorate the present trends of teaching in contrast to old traditional methods of teaching where students were over burdened and spend longer duration of time to master the foreign language. The study mainly sheds light on the students who opt English as a second language where the input of required knowledge is limited and to introduce the extensive reading programme to enhance their reading abilities.

2. Reading

The four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing, reading ranks a preponderant position to improve vocabulary and communication skills. The present research stresses mostly on the reading skills and is recognized all over the world. Reading has become a way of life to read different kinds of books, Magazines, Newspapers, comics etc out of pleasure, to pass time and know the information of day to day life. While reading we understand the written material and the writers

communication. The background knowledge of the reader is very important to understand and comprehend the written matter.

Widdowson shares the same opinion with Goodman and defines the Reading act as "...not a reaction to a text, but an interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text". (Widdowson, 1980: 174). [01].

3. Intensive and Extensive Reading Skills

Intensive Reading is defined where students are exposed to read the text under the strict vigilance of the teacher and it is teacher centred. The students have to read the prescribed teacher selected text and syllabus prescribed in the curriculum and to read the text thoroughly, refer the dictionary for difficult words, translate the text and to work out the given task. They have to take assignments and read the text throughout the year.

4. Extensive Reading

Day and Bamford (1998) credited Harold Palmer as the first to use the term "Extensive in referring to a large amount of reading with a focus on the meaning of the text." [02] Extensive Reading in the sense where students read the texts for information, guess the words and skip the difficult words beyond their knowledge and stop reading the texts if it is not informative, and lacks interest in reading. The main aim of extensive reading is to create an awareness among the readers to read extensively, to enjoy and discard the texts if it is boring, too much of difficult vocabulary and does not create an interest to motivate and read further. The teachers can ask the students not to read and to immediately stop reading such texts which cannot encourage the students to read.

Blevins (2005) noted "that a fluent reader is one who can read rapidly, recognize words automatically, and interpret phrases correctly (P.13)". [02] The readers decode and

recognize the words automatically, at a glance and when these words occur frequently in their mind the vocabulary development will develop easily without difficulty. Motivation and application of proper skills and strategies is an added advantage in the extensive reading programme. Elley's (1991) survey of "Book Flood" studies "the essential element of such studies is increasing the availability of books to the students showed that L2 learners tended to benefit more from an increase in volume of reading than do L1 learners because they encountered unfamiliar words at a greater rate than L1 learners".[03] The above definition clearly states the more the reading process of students take place the readers will be exposed into the new world of reading a number of easy books, comics, Magazines etc, and to develop their regular reading habits. Though to refer a good dictionary is an effective tool to develop the word meanings.

Al-saghayer clearly states "this technologically advanced tool offers different modalities of gloss, i.e pictures, animations, and videos sound etc., which cause immediate access, reader control and absence of interruption in reading." [03]

The main features of Extensive reading clearly illustrates to read extensively to understand, develop vocabulary and main focal point is to enjoy reading a lot and to develop an habit of reading on their own, active participation to read and get fascinated into the different world of opulent wealth of knowledge provided by the texts.

Bamford and Day (2004) suggest that, although specific targets will vary, goals such as "a book a week or 50 pages a week are realistic".[04] Therefore, the Extensive reading creates an atmosphere to read easy books which may interest the reader and discard the texts if is boring, too much of complicated vocabulary.

5. Extensive Reading Programme

Extensive Reading Programme has been widely accepted and introduced in many countries especially to train different aspects of students to pursue their career, encourage and train the students of second language learning to build up their communicative and language proficiency like native speakers of English. This will inculcate the students to read with confidence, develop strategies to become fluent speakers in English.

In addition, Nation (2009) also stated that graded readers are effective sources for language students to improve their reading speed because they no longer find it difficult to read, and they can focus on reading for meaning and content (p. 64).[05].

Therefore, Extensive reading makes the learner perfect in grammar usage, check the spellings, vocabulary development and makes him totally independent in effective reading strategies. Even the authentic materials can be downloaded from the internet sources to have an exposure to various interesting articles, newspapers, story books and especially online teaching related to reading techniques such as fast eye movements, reading fluency and to read the latest printed materials of their choice.

Thanks to the latest development in computer technology where students as well as teachers can benefit through online learning and teaching of vast and voluminous stored material. This way of online learning and gaining knowledge motivates them and participate in active learning.

6. Automatic Learning

Students no longer have to depend on teachers to be guided and acquire the relevant skills to understand the authentic texts or other printed materials. They have the total freedom to choose from a large variety of reading materials because the students choice plays a pivotal role to select and read on their own.

Extensive Reading (ER) is thus central for students' improved reading skills because it is believed to enable them to read meaningfully and strategically (Nuttal, 1996; Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Day and Bamford, 2002; Grabe, 2009). [06].

Therefore, the students should develop a passion for reading with a keen sense of devotion and create love to read extensively in their comfort zone of learning.

7. Data Collection

The sample for this study was collected from 200 students at three different Engineering colleges of J.B. Institute of Engineering and Technology, K.G. Reddy college of Engineering and Technology and Vidya Jyothi Institute of Technology located at Moinabad.

The samples of the students were mainly from the rural background and the students who opt English as a second language and their background with minimum or no foundation in English. But most of the students opt English as second language upto intermediate level and mainly depended on the readymade guides to pass the Examinations. Exceptionally some of the students have a good regular foundation and exposure to the language with good communication skills mostly from C.B.S.E and I.C.S.E schools. The workshop was conducted for a week and the students were selected randomly and given the tasks for the Extensive Reading Programme.

The students were given a task to read a Lesson from Ist Year B.tech Skills Annexe on "Human Values and Professional Ethics" by Arnold Tonybee on (Page No 66, 67, 68) in about 300 words with a glossary of difficult words mentioned below. The students tried to figure out the grammatical aspects related to articles, prepositions, verbs, adjectives, nouns etc., and to use the words in different contexts to understand the texts. For Example a word "Suggest" is used as a verb and "Suggestion" as a noun. This method of pleasure reading gave a wide scope for the students to use their cognitive and constructive ideas to comprehend the overall meaning of the printed materials.

Students were also asked to fill in the blanks using clues in various aspects of grammar to have a clear understanding of articles, verbs, prepositions etc.

Example:

1. The glass ----- (Break, Brake) into pieces (Suitable verb)
2. Our house is ----- (Beside, Besides) the park.(Suitable Preposition)
3. The train is late by ----- (a, an) hour.(Suitable Article)
4. I bought a house ----- (Site, Sight) in Hyderabad.

The students enjoyed reading their self selected material and assured that it is not a part of their Examination to score marks. Finally they were asked to write down what they read. They were also given the tasks to find out the prefixes and suffixes, adjectives, verbs prepositions and to identify the idiomatic expressions in the texts. The texts were simple, enjoyable and glossaries of difficult words were given at the end of the chapters and some texts with no mention of glossary at the end.

The students were also given a task to present paper presentation skills. Most of the students tried to apply their skills to understand and comprehend the texts. The Students were even asked to give oral presentations, debates and group discussions etc., The study revealed the students who opt English as a second language tend to make errors in grammatical part and to identify vocabulary words. Students faced some problems at the beginning but as they proceed to read a number of books the students adapted to the new environment and tend to make less mistakes. This way of practical orientation gives immense boost and morale to enhance the reading and communicative skills.

8. Limitations

The study mainly focuses on the different strategies the teachers should employ in making students read comfortably and not to over burden them employing their long hours of teaching in the class. The present syllabus which covers an elaborate way of teaching, enormous assignments, teachers busy and hectic schedules in classroom activity pay less attention to engage students to realize the importance of extensive reading activities. An effective teacher motivates and moulds the students to achieve and build their career and to promote extensive reading programme in their classroom activity. Teachers should create an atmosphere to allot time for students to read silently and to give complete freedom to choose books of their choice and read. The syllabus designed especially for the students of English as a second language or foreign language should focus on the practical orientation rather than old conventional methods of teaching.

The teachers should help the students to select books which are easy, interesting and enjoyable. The reading material should cover a wide range of storybooks, magazines, fiction, non-fiction, love stories, biographies etc; Students who opt English as a second language and their background knowledge is limited to pass the examinations and mainly depends on ready made available material.

9. Conclusion

The study revealed that the students should be exposed to reading habits and should create love towards reading to improve their language abilities. An extensive reading programme should be implemented in all the schools and colleges. Teachers should motivate the students to identify their weaknesses and try to rectify their doubts and encourage them to become fluent readers. Reading is a life-long process and it should not stop. The work shop conducted for a week helped the students to know the importance of extensive reading through oral presentations and exposure to the latest trends of teaching through internet, exposure to lively presentations and picture graphics through Multimedia and story reading.

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