

A Systematic Study on Strategically Reading to Enhance Practical Thinking for Second Language Learners

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Abstract: *Language has a significant role to transform our ideas and thoughts in a clear expressive way to interact and communicate with different parts of the world. English is a major language spoken in many countries to exchange their thoughts and ideas through scientific inventions, discoveries, science, medicine, Technology as a link language with broad applicability accepted all over the world. The rapid growth of modern technology with the steady rise of computer assisted Language learning (CALL) has given much scope to extract the information through practical methods. The students have to be trained to utilize their skills and strategies to deal with the texts such as decoding, evaluating, analyzing, previewing and linking their schematic knowledge to extract the information. Reading is an activity to understand the written language through mind mapping, graphic signs and to decode the features of the language like skimming and scanning the relevant information through strategically methods. The finding of the study was conducted on various aspects of learning to test their proficiency levels in different Engineering colleges of B.Tech level in Moinabad. The workshop was conducted for a week and the students were examined in relevant areas like grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. They were given a task to read variety of books on Fiction, Non-Fiction, Biographies, comics etc. graded to their level of understanding. This paper tries to focus on the reading habits and to motivate the students to employ the relevant skills and strategies to form constructive ideas and thoughts to engage them in reading activity. Reading has the power to transform the attitude of self retrospection, produce meaningful essays, letters, and short stories to extend their knowledge through automatic learning of vocabulary. The research on Extensive reading has proved that the students acquire the relevant comprehensive input of vocabulary and subject understanding in a tension free relaxed atmosphere. The main study of this paper will enlighten the student's exposure to books on variety of topics outside the classroom activity or to browse through internet to become self reliant independent readers. This will automatically implant the relevant skills and strategies such as skimming, scanning, evaluating and analyzing the texts to extract the information.*

Keywords: CALL, Schemata, Skimming, Scanning

1. Introduction

The modern technology plays a vital role to impart quality based education to improve their latent skills and strategies in all the relevant fields such as pronunciation, spellings, grammar and vocabulary. English has special features in pronunciation, grammar and retention of vocabulary to produce effective writing, express ideas and thoughts in a clear meaningful way. Teachers play a significant role to motivate the students to build effective language, encourage their inner talents to read a variety of books suited to their cognitive levels of understanding. The research has proved that the students have a tendency to develop their independent self learning strategies with longer concentrated periods of silent reading. Extensive reading facilitates the readers to read selected books specially designed for the students of English as a second language to cultivate their reading habits.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), Extensive Reading means reading in quantity in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. [01] The main objective is to improve their reading habits, train them to enjoy reading without the support of the teachers to gain automatic retention of vocabulary to guess the words, decode the information, semantic mapping etc., in a slow and systematic process. The more the student reads, the more fluency takes place and the reader tries to recognize the words through practice as the words are repeated in

different contexts. The present generations of students have to be trained to critically analyse, apply the relevant knowledge and to acclimatize with the latest innovative ideas, logical thinking and independent decisions to comprehend the printed materials. Therefore, the teachers play a vital role to mould the students to employ their Cognitive and Meta-Cognitive skills to restore their inner capabilities in a tension free reading environment. The new innovative techniques of practical methods to grasp the information, design their goals of reading, linking the textual knowledge with the latest technology especially outside the classroom activity supports the reader to take active participation in a more relaxed learning environment.

2. Reading

Reading is an interactive process to directly link with the related information from the texts to enjoy the situations, emotion of the writer's opinion in written language. The reader tries to grasp the information through different techniques such as to guess the meaning, skimming and scanning the information, previewing of cover page, diagrams, symbols etc., Researchers stated that selective reading involves schematic knowledge, automatic recognition of words decode the information in a systematic manner. A fluent reader employs these strategies to quickly browse, extract and construct the relevant idea of the printed materials.

According to Carrell (1981) the text must activate, in the reader, all of the appropriate cognitive schemata in order to be comprehended [02]. Extensive reading gives an ample capacity for the readers to flood with different varieties of simplified versions of graded materials to have a wider scope of extracting, analysing the content of the subject in a systematic way. Therefore, the materials selected for reading should activate the reader's attention to use their inherent skills to extract the information.. The present study throws light on students reading habits, employ relevant strategies to extract, evaluate and analyse the information through constructive and logical way of understanding the selected reading materials.

3. Significance of the Study

The study gives an elaborate aspect of students active participation of reading, motivate their inner talents to select and read texts suited to their level of understanding in a anxiety free environment. This will automatically build their reading habits, vocabulary development and to engross into the world of knowledge stored in the books. Extensive reading provides the learners with overall understanding of the outside world, active participation of intellectual learning to become independent readers. The research findings revealed that the students with longer periods of silent uninterrupted reading will automatically develop vocabulary, confidence and motivation to become life-long readers.

4. Innovative Methods of Language Teaching

English language teaching has become a great challenge to impart quality based teaching methods. The conventional methods of teaching the students to translate the sentences, read the text under strict supervision of the teacher, reproduce the passages, check the meaning with the help of the dictionary is more teacher centered and there is no scope for the students to utilize their inherent skills. The level of reading is same for all the students whether they like it or not and the same text may be boring and lack interest to read. Extensive reading helps students to utilize their skills to read a variety of books for overall understanding of the context rather than the language.

The grammar translation method where students have to translate the sentences, memorize the grammatical rules etc., has been replaced with latest methods of technological aspect of learning. The new innovative methods of teaching such as computer assisted language learning (CALL), computer software programs combined with graphics, sound, animation has dominated the language teaching in more sophisticated methods of teaching.

A wealth of research (e.g. Jonassen et al, 1999) stress the great benefits CALL has in increasing students' interaction (in the target language) in the form of exchanging, discussing and negotiating utterances and information to construct their knowledge about the target language.[03] Computer assisted language learning (CALL) has become

an effective tool to facilitate the students to access the information, meet the individual needs and improve their reading ability through e-books to gain language proficiency.

5. Findings

The finding of the study to inculcate reading habits and a positive attitude of developing the relevant strategies and skills has become the most effective method of teaching the students with value based education,. The study was conducted on 200 students randomly selected from three different Engineering colleges of Azad College of Engineering and Technology, Sagar Institute of Technology and SV college of Engineering and Technology in Moinabad area. The study comprised of students who opt English as a second or third language whose background was from the village level and the students who opt English as the First Language. The Students with English as a second Language lack proper reading habits and mainly depend on the ready materials to pass out the Examinations. The workshop was conducted on both the levels of students to test their knowledge in utilizing their skills to understand the texts. The students were given a task to read books on Fiction, Biographies, Novels, Comics, Journals etc., graded to their level of understanding. The students selected their own independent reading materials flipping through as many texts and magazines which suit their level of interest. As a Pre-reading activity the students were trained to learn Pre-fixes and Suffixes to judge whether the language and vocabulary suited to their level of understanding. The materials chosen for the task were simplified versions of the original texts with more animated pictures, lively conversations. The students were tested in grammar and sentence patterns to use the language in a correct scientific methods of learning.

Activity [No.1] The students were given a task of reading a lesson from "Advances in Science and Technology" on Digital-jewellery components from the Ist year "Skills Annexe" [PNO.28-30] about 250 words. As a Pre-reading activity the students were asked to evaluate, analyze, activates their background knowledge, asking questions and relate the topic in real life situations. After reading the lesson the students were asked to visualize the scenes, pictures, paragraphs to predict the blurb of the page, graphs, tables etc., and to discuss on the relevant content of the text. This helped them to establish interest in the minds of the readers to tackle the texts with real life situation and apply knowledge through discussions, asking questions to implant strategical methods of reading the texts. Even the glossary of unknown words at the end of the chapter helped them to capture the reader's attention. They were given a task to pick out the verbs, articles, prepositions etc., to test their grammar to produce meaningful sentences. The students were trained to identify the usage of the same word as a verb, adjective and noun in different context which add richness to the language. For Example "**Abuse**" can be used as Noun and "**Abusive**" as an Adjective gives an ample scope for the students to form constructive thinking to establish practical methods of grasping the words through repeated exposure to the print. The innovative methods of practical

orientation to deal texts will automatically build vocabulary and effective communicative abilities.

Activity [02]

Students were given a task to test their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary from the reading text to assess their level of understanding, motivate their background or schematic knowledge to have effective approach to comprehend their learning capacity.

Example

1. This T.V set is made in Japan [**Identify the Parts of speech**]
2. It ----- (rain) since yesterday (**Suitable Verb/Tense**)
3. I have received ----- (a, an) email from Prof. Desai. (**Suitable Article**)
4. My ----- (Aggregate, Aggravate) marks were impressive (**Suitable Word**)

The findings of the study has clearly stated that the students tried to apply their relevant skills and strategies to browse through the materials, share their ideas and thoughts, identify the blurb on the cover pages and to enjoy reading texts with more animated pictures, lively dialogues etc. The students enjoyed reading the simple texts which creates exhilarating scenes, characters and dialogues which promotes their constructive ideas and thoughts dealing with different flavour of words, grammar etc., Reading is an excellent activity to extract the information from a variety of books, scan through the pages to check whether the vocabulary is suitable to their level of understanding. A fluent reader applies these strategies and skills to guess the content of the text, title or chapter headings etc., Therefore, the analysis of the study showed that the students with English as a second Language tried to grasp the relevant information from the selected texts with a few errors in grammar, sentence formation and vocabulary. Besides, the students with English as the first Language have shown remarkable improvement in the areas of spellings, pronunciation of words, vocabulary with few errors in grammar. At the end of the programme the study revealed that the students have a tendency to learn new innovative methods of practical methods of teaching in comparison to old methods of Grammar Translation Methods to translate the sentences and teacher centred techniques of instructive teaching.

6. Literature Review

And according to Carrell and Carson (1997), extensive reading generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of materials or longer reading (e.g. whole books) for general understanding with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read than on the language.[04] The main objective of Extensive reading is to flood the learners with a variety of simplified versions of the texts such as Comics, Newspapers, Biographies, etc., to facilitate the reader to utilize their inherent skills for general understanding rather than the language. A fluent reader enjoys reading a lot at his own pace of learning to attain automatic retention of unknown words, collocations,

idioms etc., The readers make a steady progress of language learning dealing different kinds of reading materials transcend into the world of exciting plots, dialogues, animated short stories etc., Extensive reading has a wide scope to motivate the students to activate their schematic knowledge, automaticity of word recognition, guess the context by looking at the title, chapter headings, pictures etc., The strategies in reading involves text-related such as to understand the text, the writer's opinion and the chronology of events or situations occur in different contexts. The next aspect is the learner related, where the readers employs his inbuilt constructive ideas to extract the information. decode the information to predict the gist of the text. Therefore, the students with longer duration of silent uninterrupted reading proved better results in all the aspects of language development, build vocabulary, employ strategies to improve confidence and motivation to become life-long readers.

Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) indicated that voluntarily-pleasurable reading has empirically proved to bring about positive impacts on developing writing skill. [05] The students should be provided with enormous variety of simple reading materials systematically assessed with lots of pictures, graphics, and lively dialogues to interact with textual information. The practical methods of strategical reading will tremendously activate their cognitive and Meta-cognitive skills to produce meaningful essays, paragraphs, letters, short stories etc., The students face difficulty in the preliminary stages to focus more on unknown words or structures rather than the overall content due to their limited background knowledge and reading habits. Therefore, the texts have to be graded and the glossary of difficult words have to be mentioned at the end of each lesson to facilitate the readers to read individually without the support of dictionary. The essence of pleasure reading will automatically helps the students to realize that the meaning of words vary with the context as the reader gets acquainted with words repeated in short stories, magazines etc., The main goal of Extensive reading is to motivate the students confidence level to inculcate regular reading habits. Psychologists and researchers claimed that an individual encounters new words atleast 1-17 times based on the context in print exposure of different reading materials.

Hedge briefs the advantages of extensive use in the following lines:

“Learners can build their language competence, progress in their reading ability, become more independent in their studies, acquire cultural knowledge, and develop confidence and motivation to carry on learning. (*ibid*, p. 204-205)” [06]. The role of teachers to motivate the students engaged in reading builds immense knowledge such as semantic mapping to visualize and predict the context of the story, title etc., where the experience of the reader directs his cognitive capacity to relate the textual information in a systematic way to the given passage or text. Reading is a practical selective process of active participation of gathering information to understand the emotions, feelings based on the visual information of the text. The text is used as a tool to interpret the information as the reader brings the information, knowledge, emotion

to the printed words. In other words, the students have to develop the relevant schemata to deal with texts such as vocabulary, syntax and lexical patterns of the language for a better understanding of language proficiency. In this context, E. Williams “gives three phases – which he calls the pre-reading phase, the reading phase, and the post-reading phase - - for teaching reading comprehension” [07]. Teachers play a vital role to select reading materials which must activate the students background knowledge, heighten their regular reading habits of linguistic complexities of the texts in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, syntax promoting higher order levels of reading skills to become self-reliant and strategic readers. In Pre-reading phase teachers support the students to motivate their background knowledge screening pictures, slides, movies and games etc., the students try to comprehend the subject through visual presentation, write and discuss their views and thoughts to form constructive reading and writing abilities. In the second phase i.e., the Reading Phase, the students read the lesson and try to apply their relevant linguistic and schematic knowledge to tackle the texts in a practical method. This will automatically facilitate the student to read the same subject and unconscious retention of vocabulary and command of the subject improves in a steady pace. In Post reading Phase, the students enhance their learning proficiency through cloze tests, matching exercises and filling the blank spaces in the story with their learnt vocabulary to integrate their background knowledge with textual knowledge. This will implant their strategic reading to cope up with the texts with high performance on reading tasks in a free anxiety environment. Graded readers are the most ideal sources for the students of English as a second language to improve their fluency, vocabulary, spellings etc., to motivate their individual talents and comprehension capabilities. Extensive reading has to be included in the academic curriculum to make students realize the importance of reading habits and general understanding of the context rather than to compel students with boring topics to carry out the tasks such as to refer the dictionary, syntactical structures, vocabulary and translating sentences with the support of teachers on every phase of learning. . Research has proved that students who were given choice to read their selected material performed fluency in reading, writing and expression of thoughts and ideas in a clear expressive manner.

The introduction of Extensive reading Programme which is mostly done outside the classroom hours assists students to various activities such as engaged sustained uninterrupted silent reading to heighten their individual talents to browse through internet web pages, e-books (Electronic Books) on different topics of interest, more choice of practical online reading through print media. The choice of reading will automatically build their inner talents like quick scanning the materials, download the videos related on topics, watch News channels, animated short stories with moral endings to effectively utilize the knowledge of learnt words to construct meaningful essays, short stories to gain control over the language. The advent of Technology in English language teaching such as (CALL) Computer assisted Language learning has given a tremendous impetus for the readers to exchange ideas through discussion attention on individual needs to

enhance visual identification of vocabulary fluent reading and stimulate their constructive ideas. Teachers should engage students to carry out simple tasks such as picture explanation, predict the visual images and to construct the story, slide shows etc., and record their voices to correct their pronunciation to mould them as active readers. The main objective of Extensive reading is to design the curriculum according to the learner needs and encourage them to take responsibility of individual learning through selected books or internet web pages to build automatic incidental vocabulary learning engrossed into the world of printed materials. The readers should be encouraged to read books with simple vocabulary to build regular reading habits with lots of pictures, graphics, animations at the initial stages. Gradually, the students ability to choose books, learning environment will automatically enhance their lively interaction and interest to develop the necessary skills and strategies to read books beyond their actual level to create active learning through discussions, experience in reading and improvement in language proficiency. Therefore, the students should be provided with enormous availability of printed materials graded on varied topics such as biographies, moral stories, fiction, non-fiction etc., to activate their background knowledge or schemata to become life-long readers. Extensive reading facilitates the readers to think independently utilize their skills to comprehend the meaning provided by the text as the reader comes across unknown words repeated in different contexts through regular reading habits.

7. Limitations

The finding related to the research study was conducted in the rural areas of Moinabad where the students have no proper guidance to develop strategical methods of reading texts to enhance their reading culture. The workshop conducted for a week to make students realize the importance of Extensive reading to encourage positive attitudes towards reading to flood learners with enormous variety of graded materials specially designed to enjoy at their level of understanding. Students were examined in different aspects of learning in the spheres of spellings, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of words. The study showed that the students lack proper motivation and confidence to tackle the grammar, pronunciation and strategical reading aspects. Teachers play an active role to design the academic curriculum, grade the materials with interesting topics. The students should be trained to evaluate their own reading materials, free access to internet sources to download and watch lectures on varied topics, moral stories, puzzles, games etc., to adjust and adapt to their inherent strategies in a proper method. The practical methods of teaching will automatically capture the reader’s attention to select their own reading materials, identify the goals of reading, cloze reading etc., makes them realize their weakness and a process of self-retrospection and rational thinking will accelerate their initial start of effective learning. The main aim of Extensive reading requires planning, evaluation, extract and construct the meaning through visual information such as fluent reading, fast eye movements, predict the content of the story at the glance of the title or chapter headings, tables, graphs etc., through unconscious process of

learning to select strategies suitable to their level of understanding.

8. Suggestions

The research study on Extensive reading has a prominent role on the student's motivation to utilize their Cognitive and Meta-Cognitive skills to form constructive ideas and thoughts with minimum use of dictionaries to find out the meanings of unknown words as it would slow down the pace of learning. Extensive reading provides the learners to skip the unknown words and practice relevant strategies and skills to understand the overall meaning of the texts rather than the language. The analyses have clearly focused the learning goals to select the materials, analyse, decode the features of the syntactical and structural patterns of the textual knowledge with their schematic knowledge to enhance fast eye movements, precise visual awareness of words, phrases, idiomatic expressions in accurate manner. Therefore, the readers have to adopt the relevant strategies to select the suitable texts as the reader's active participation will decide motivation and confidence levels to grasp the related information and knowledge for overall understanding of the context. The text is used as a tool to predict the key words, scan the pictures, diagrams, tables and register the eye catching phrases or sentences through mental processing of the mind as the readers bring the actual information, knowledge, emotion and culture derived from the printed words. The study on diverse aspects has proved that the students with more engaged reading activities develop their inherent skills and strategies to acquire proficiency levels of language awareness become less dependent on teachers to comprehend the texts at their comfort zone of learning.

9. Conclusion

The findings of the study throws light on the students reading attitudes and to utilize their inner talents to evaluate, analyze the textual information on broad range of topics graded to their level of understanding. The students should be provided with the availability of wide range of topics carefully graded with easy vocabulary with lots of pictures, graphics, symbols, tables etc., to utilize their innate skills and strategies to construct meaningful paragraphs, short stories, reports etc., in a more logical way. Extensive reading gives a wide scope of overall performance in the areas of spellings, vocabulary, sentence formation etc., through exposure of printed materials or internet sources through automatic retention of vocabulary as the reader gets the opportunity to come across the words repeated in different contexts in short stories, comics, biographies etc. The research on Extensive reading has proved that the students with longer extent of silent uninterrupted reading develop the relevant strategies and skills to cope up with the texts and improves their language proficiency to become self-reliant and life-long readers.

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