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EFFECTIVE WAYS OF DEVELOPING READING SKILL IN EFL LEARNERS

Abstract: This article discusses the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in English lessons and how to find an implement effective solution to them.

Key words: reading skill, reading test, motivation, background knowledge, readability, exploitability, content, reading comprehension.

Language: English

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Introduction

Reading comprehension is a critical learning skill for all students¹, as it is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language"². Understanding words' meaning, analyze the authors points of view and aim for writing and gaining knowledge of new words are all very important reading skills that support reading comprehension. Students need reading comprehension skills to successfully accomplish the educational goals and expectations, which are required in the classroom settings. For example, having the ability to understand textual information play a critical role in helping learners to quickly locate information that is pertinent to the text, exclude information that is irrelevant to the text, and identify the important information to focus on. Academic success also requires students to be able to understand,

analyze, and apply information they gathered through their reading³. The importance of being able to understand written materials increases significantly in all academic areas as students move from one grade to another. In contrast, not being able to successfully comprehend can prevent students from learning, retaining information that they read, and graduating from school, which will negatively impact different aspects of their lives later on⁴. Reading difficulties negatively impact different aspects of students, including their educational progress, self-esteem, attitudes about reading and learning, motivation to read, career choices, social-economic status and expectation for future reading success⁵. Not only is reading comprehension a valuable skill for learning in school, but in order to successfully interact in everyday life, individuals need reading skills to read and understand labels, directions, job application forms, and newspapers. Also, individuals need

¹ Clarke, Truelove, Hulme & Snowling, 2013; Wong, 2011

² the Rand Reading Study Group, 2002, p. 11

³ Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, & Snowling, 2013

⁴ Hoeh, 2015; Mason, 2004

⁵ Sloat, Beswick, and Willms, 2007; Woolley, 2011

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reading skills in order to be able to have and maintain a job and successfully engage in different daily activities⁶ and live independently. The need for reading comprehension becomes very critical when thinking about the negative consequences of not being able to read in critical situations. For instance, not being to read and comprehend dosage directions on a bottle of medicine or caution on a container of dangerous chemicals may put the individuals in a very dangerous situation that threaten their safety and lives (Marshall, n.d.). Moreover, The Input Hypothesis provides the answer for second language are acquired "by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input'⁷

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The goal of this research was to find out the best ways or techniques of developing reading skills in ESL class. This kind of statistical study can be conducted at any time, at any interval and might be focus on either group or individual behavior or phenomena. The author has tried to prove some effective ways of maintaining students' reading abilities in ESL classroom. She attempted to investigate some ways in order to maintain learners' abilities. The author aimed to know about the learners' problems, difficulties during the reading activities. The author wanted to know in what circumstances the learners might have successful readers; or when they are motivated in the texts or in which situation they are obsessed with the reading passages. She found out that evaluating the text should be the main essential part of the teacher in a class. The author found out that there are three main criteria influence the choice of texts: suitability of content, exploitability, readability. The author assumed that while choosing the passages the teacher must be selective and she or he should take into consideration the content, structure and vocabulary of the texts. She pointed out that the topics which the teacher might bring to the class must be 'familiar' to the learners. The learners are to have background knowledge about the topic. If they do not have the teacher is supposed to have pre-reading activities which are related to the learners' background knowledge. The author set the following objectives to gain the practical goal of the paper results:

- To show learners' weaknesses and lack points, problems, difficulties that may occur with ESL learners in reading activities
- To identify the reasons of the problems: why do the learners have the problems?
- To prove effectiveness and necessity of reading abilities.
- To find out effective ways or strategies in order to maintain students' reading comprehension in the class.

- To teach learners through effective ways of developing their reading skills

Surround yourself with various kinds of books.

- Learn to underline the key parts/words/concepts for further references.

· Transfer the material from text book to note book so that the best part of the material is with you. By this, you can separate chaff from the grain.

- Create your own short hand stuff from the material.

· While reading, new ideas and concepts will flash in the mind and the same may be added on the margin side of book. Failure will lead to missing beautiful ideas.

· Don't focus on filler words in the sentences. The words like it's and there's can be avoided while reading as these take longer time and not of much significance .

· Try to recall the contents repeatedly which are in your mind and summarize the same and write down either on the margin of the text book. If you are able to generate a few examples from the text book in a given context it will help you to enhance retentively. Also link the contents of the material with real life events.

·By using different colored pencils the importance level of the contents will be realized for further readings. You can keep your style based the degree of significance and priority levels. You can create own methodology, style and coding.

· If you find it boring to read, keep the book upside down and read you will be able to apply more pressure to read with this

·There is no fixed formula for reading and the methodology changes when you read text books, newspapers, journals and more so when you surf online content.

·Average readers read about 200 to 250 words per minute. The speed can be enhanced without affecting the quality with fasteye ball movement and with breaks .

·You can make sense of sentence by omitting articles, conjunctions, prepositions etc... By this you can focus more on the contents and also you can save time.

·Try to convert the written information into pictorial format while reading for effective comprehension of contents.

·If the meaning of a key word is not clear then try to look at it from different dimensions of the origin of the word to get the closer or accurate meanings. Also if possible look at the prefix or the suffix of the key word for earlier and faster understanding.

- Train your eyes to take in words in larger gulps.

- Avoid confusing material and don't get stuck.

Such contents can be referred later on. Learn to skip

⁶Hoeh, 2015; Mahdavi, & Tensfeldt, 2013

⁷"Krashen" (1985,p 2).

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unwanted and unproductive stuff. In this context, William James aptly quoted, "The art of becoming wise is the art of knowing what to overlook". Effective language instructors show students how they can adjust their reading behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and reading purposes. They help students develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading situation. Strategies that can help students read more quickly and effectively include:

- Previewing: reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection ~ Predicting: using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension; using knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; using knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary.

- Skimming and scanning: using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions

- Guessing from context: using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up

- Paraphrasing: stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text

Relevant Studies on how to Choose Reading Materials.

By modeling the strategies aloud is talking through the processes of previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, and paraphrasing. This shows students how the strategies work and how much they can know about a text before they begin to read word by word. By allowing time in class for group and individual previewing and predicting activities as preparation for in-class or out-of-class reading. Most of the researchers mentioned that in reading class materials should be assessed by teachers. Christine Nuttall in the book "Teaching Reading skills in a foreign language" gives criteria for evaluating texts for reading development. The author notes that there are three main criteria influence the choice of texts: suitability, exploitability, readability.

Possible Difficulties and Solutions

There will be a few limitations that may well have affected the outcome of this study. First, is the duration of this study. I will start the implementation of the effective reading strategies in the second academic semester year, so this study should have been longer than three months in order to effectively collect more interactions, observe the students' comprehension, and gather more data. The second limitation is the number of the participants. In this study, I will select 20 students who are from the same educational background. I think that if I have a larger sample size, the study results will be more meaningful. Also, having more students would provide a better range of variety for my data. The third limitation is the attendance of the participants. While doing project some students will miss class. Missing of classes has negative impact on the students' achievement.

However, this study has a lot of information that can help to improve the students' comprehension in general. I will try to provide evidence to teachers and educators of the importance of the reading strategy and the relationship with the students' comprehension. In addition, I will attempt to indicate how much student understanding and achievement are positively affected by using the effective ways of reading. The research objective of this study is to undertake the implementation of effective ways of reading in order to determine its effectiveness in producing positive outcomes on reading comprehension. The reading comprehension is a significant strategy to encourage students' participation with daily lessons. Teachers should use reading strategies and new techniques to teach the students during reading classes, and also try to change themes of the textbook to engage students in reading. Therefore, the text selections are a significant aspect for encouraging reactions among students. Moreover, the teachers should support the foundational knowledge and use of research based educational practices and teaching methods, and also the rubrics and assessments which best fit students in order to encourage improvement in the literate environment.

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