DEVELOPMENT OF READING WITH COMPREHENSION SKILL IN ENGLISH

Prof. B. J. Mundhe, Ph.D.

M.A. (Eng.), M.Ed. SET (Edn.), Ph.D. (Education).

Assistant Professor in Education (Selection Grade) Janata Shikshan Mandal's, Sane Guruji Vidyaprabodhini, Comprehensive College of Education, Khiroda. Dist.Jalgaon

E-mail: drbjmundhe@gmail.com

Abstract

In the teaching-learning process, the act of reading has to be given adequate importance. It is through reading; a student has the chance of improving one's vocabulary and comes across the style of presentation. Students read more widely and think more deeply as they grow. The new thoughts call for words they have never used before, and more complex and more subtle arrangements, of words, phrases and sentences, and so there is a need for refining and extending the reading skills, as teacher educators, the author has found that the more one reads, these aspects get registered in the mind and is spontaneously reflected in their speech and writing. A good reader is often seen as a good writer as well as a good speaker. How well we teach a second language will depend on how well we teach reading English.

Keywords: Reading, Comprehension, Reading with comprehension

1.1 Introduction: Reading in the words of Francis Bacon 'maketh the full man.' The ability to read is the foundation of success and growth. The earliest basic skill of the school program for students is learning to read. It is so fundamental and so universally practiced, from the first year in the school to the end that we hardly think of it as a basic skill, which needs the most careful attention. If a child fails to master that elementary skill, the rest of the child's education is either a flat failure or only a limping success. While students try to learn many other things in order to accumulate knowledge, it is necessary to master the simple tools of learning, the most important of which is reading. In a language like English, when used as a second language, the ability to read as well as to comprehend the information poses a problem to the students. When you read a word, it should convey some meaning. Here, reading serves as a torch that lights the mind. In the teaching-learning process, the act of reading has to be given adequate importance. It is through reading; a student has the chance of improving one's vocabulary and comes across the style of presentation. Students read more widely and think more deeply as they grow. The new thoughts call for words they have never used before, and more complex and more subtle arrangements, of words, phrases and sentences, and so there is a need for refining and extending the reading skills, as teacher educators, the author has found that the more one reads, these aspects get registered in the mind and is spontaneously reflected in their speech and writing. A good reader is often seen

as a good writer as well as a good speaker. How well we teach a second language will depend on how well we teach reading English.

1.2 Concept and Nature of Reading with Comprehension Skill

a) Meaning of Reading:-

Reading is an interpretation of graphic symbols as it involves an interaction between the writer and reader. Reading is a mental process requiring accurate word recognition, ability to recall to minding particular meaning, and ability to shift or reassociate meanings until the constructs and concepts presented are clearly grasped, critically evaluated, accepted and applied or rejected.

-Stauffer (1967)

Reading according to high school teachers engaged in teaching languages is:

1. Reading is the ability of the vocal cords to pronounce correctly the written materials.
2. Reading is an expression of sentences in correct forms.
3. Reading is the media of expressing words and sentences in correct intonation.
4. Reading means silent and loud reading.
5. Reading is a fine art of speech.

-Abuja and Pramila Abuja (1987:5)

b) Comprehension as a Process and Skill

Reading is a process. In fact, it is processing some of the essential skills a reader needs to read. The development of the reading process is a lifelong progress with a conceptual fusion of the component skills and finally reading is seen as a single skill. The process of comprehension which is the ultimate aim of reading is also seen as a process. It is a facility of word recognition combined with one's width of experience for the purpose of understanding symbols of language. Comprehension thus is a complex function of the human mind to determine the validity and the reliability of what is read.

c) What is Reading with Comprehension?

Reading with comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows….An individual's ability to comprehend text is influenced by their skills and their ability to process information.

1.3 Objectives of the Reading with Comprehension Skill

To enable the reader to –

- Skim for main idea(s)
- Scan for details
- Use graphic organizers to better understand a text
- Develop reading speed
- Build academic vocabulary
- Make use of contextual clues to infer meanings of unfamiliar words from content
- Summarize and paraphrase information in a text
- Distinguish main ideas from specific details

-       Distinguish facts from opinions
-       Make inferences and predictions based on comprehension of a text
-       Identify author's purpose and tones
-       Discuss and respond to content of text orally and in writing
-       Utilize digital literacy tools to develop reading and vocabulary skills
-       Reflect on and evaluate learning and performance and set goals for progress
-       Demonstrate behaviour and attitudes appropriate to a university environment (work collaboratively, manage time, are prepared, comply with academic integrity rules).

1.4 Strategies to Improve Reading with comprehension Skill

According to Gunning (1996) a strategy is an individual's approach to a task. There are four main types of comprehension strategies, which include Preoperational, Organizational, Elaboration and Monitoring. These strategies could be used by the learnersto improve the text or reading comprehension.

1.4.1 Preoperational

Preoperational strategies are those that activate prior knowledge about a particular topic. This method is used to get learners thinking about the topic they are about to work on. It is much easier to retain knowledge about a subject when the learner is familiar with the content. Gunning identifies predicting as a type of preoperational Strategy to preview the parts of the text to be read. The portions of text, which are helpful in previewing, can either be pictures, titles, or the cover of the book. Using the prior can either be pictures, titles, or the cover of the book. Using the prior knowledge of the subject the learners can think or guess the events to be followed.

1.4.2 Organizational

Organizational strategies are those that help in selecting important details, and building relationships from them. These strategies include: identifying the main idea and topic sentences, classifying information, deciding which information is relevant, sequencing and summarizing. Each of these strategies is complex, and methods for improving them need to be taught starting from the basic ideas, and gradually getting on to more difficult ones. Summarizing, in particular, has been identified as a difficult skill to develop.

1.4.3 Elaboration

Elaboration is an additional processing of the text, used by the reader to increase one's comprehension. It involves forming connections between the text and the reader's background knowledge of the subject. Making inferences, picturing images, and asking questions are a few examples of elaboration strategies. Huffman (1998) identifies 'K-W-L' as an elaboration strategy, which connects background knowledge of the topic to be addressed. 'K-W-L'is an acronym for the three steps of the procedure: describing what one knows, what to know, and what one Learned. The reader uses the first two steps before reading the text, to assess background information, and the third step is used later to make the connections.

1.4.4 Monitoring

Monitoring enables the reader to be aware of one's own mental process while reading. It is an advanced technique that involves a great deal of independent thinking. contemporary approaches to word-recognition instruction also include a monitoring approach, with readers taught to pay attention to whether the decoding makes sense and to try decoding again when the word as decoded is not in synchrony with other ideas in the word as decoded is not in synchrony with other ideas in the text and pictures. It occurs when reader is aware of the inability to understand what was just read. Hence, the act of monitoring allows the reader to go back, and find a way to gain understanding of the topic. Monitoring is also an awareness to use the three other types of reading comprehension strategies.The four types of strategies discussed so far can be seen as rather independent of each other. Readers will be able to apply the most complex strategy only when they have knowledge of the comparatively simple strategies. While viewing the different strategies, Preoperational strategies occur before the actual reading takes place, and are incorporated in the Schema Theory, whereas the Organizational strategy take place during and after the text is read. In fact these strategies are based on both the Mental Model Theory and the Proposition Theory. As for the Elaboration strategies, it can take place before, during and after reading, and therefore, are dependent on all three major comprehension theories. Finally, Monitoring strategies are the most complex, where all nodes of the network have to be connected to each other leading to a situational representation. These strategies take place as the reading is in process.

1.5 Components of the Reading with Comprehension Skill

Nanda, K. and Eddie. C Kennedy (1989) has grouped the skills involving comprehension under five components as

- Understanding word meaning
- Locating facts and information
- Retaining and relating facts and information
- Understanding and interpreting concepts
- Organizing and expressing ideas

1.5.1   Understanding the Word Meaning

Knowledge of the meaning of words is basic to comprehending any material. There is a direct relation between familiarity with oral language and comprehension of printed matter. So, students who do not have adequate background in using oral language are at a loss to understand the printed matter. Hence, remediation has to begin with vocabulary development.

1.5.2 Locating Facts and Information

By merely verbalizing the written symbol, a reader will not necessarily be able to locate and recognize the idea or the information contained. Facts and information lying within a printed page have to be understood before any development of subsequent comprehension skill is thought about.

1.5.3 Retaining and Relating Facts and Information

Finding facts and information is one thing and retaining them is another. Many students who are able to find facts and information in a printed page cannot retain them long enough to utilize them for cogent, cognitive purpose. Information experience in order to mean a gain in terms of increased knowledge or extended ability to thin rationally. Retention of information is necessary to be able to relate it to knowledge already possessed, to evaluate it with reference to an immediate, specific relevance and to use it for resolving personal needs.

1.5.4 Understanding and interpreting Concepts

In the ability to utilize one understands for practical purpose lies the success of any mental growth. Students may be able to understand the words locate the facts and retain and recall ideas expressed and yet not be able to see their real underlying importance. In the comprehension process seeing the true meaning and possible application of information for achievement is very crucial.

1.5.5 Organizing and Expressing Ideas

If one is not able to organize thoughts and express them in one's own words, one has still to make up the flexibility in the comprehension process. It is this skill that determines the quality of comprehension of an individual and also limits the pupil's achievement in a subject which requires thinking and fluency of expression.

1.6 Styles of Reading with Comprehension

Efficient readers do not always aspire for maximum comprehension in all the reading materials they read. The different styles of reading are: Skimming, Scanning and Browsing.

1.6.1 Skimming: - Skimming is a reading skill which demands topmost speed. It is a method to look quickly over a text in order to get a general idea of the content or gather information from the printed page. E.g. when we go to a bookshop/library to buy/select a book we look at the title of the book, go through the contents page, go through the short write up in the book, go through the contents page, go through the short write up in the blurb and so on. In short, we want to find out what the book is about before buying it. Therefore, skimming is an active process guided by a definite purpose.

1.6.2 Scanning: - Scanning involves looking quickly through the text, searching for specific piece of information. In scanning, the reader runs one's eyes down the page with the purpose of finding an answer to a specific question. E.g. we use this technique when we look up a dictionary to find out the meaning of a particular word. Three steps are involved in the process of scanning.

- The student should fix in mind exactly what is needed.
- The student should glance swiftly down the page or column expecting the information to be distinct from the rest of the page.
- The student should verify if he sought out information is found by reading carefully. The speed in scanning can be increased by looking at the chapter titles, headings of chapter divisions, these searches could suggest whether the sections viewed can give the needed information. By noting the author's signals the students can often bypass whole sections or chapters. Use of the index is another shortcut in scanning.

1.6.3 Browsing: - Browsing is looking leisurely through the text, sometimes for pleasure and sometimes for information. E.g. we have browsing in the Internet, where we browse through casually for information.

1.7 Merits of Skimming and Scanning

- If student can skim rapidly, s/he can improve the average reading speed and study reading speed too.
- It is a great time and labour saver.
- Sometimes when a student is asked to do supplementary reading for a course, the student can skim the supplementary materials available and be pleased to know the amount of materials available and be pleased to know the amount of materials he can comprehend at fast skimming rates.
- Skimming is very much useful for getting plenty of reference information.
- Since it gives more output in a very less time, readers prefer to use this skill at several occasions.
- Professional people such as lawyers, engineers, professors, doctors etc need to do a large amount of reading daily; they can them abreast of the new development in their respective fields.
- When school children are trained in this technique, they can use it for increasing their fund of knowledge in different content areas.
- These techniques help in book selection, as the reader skims through the pages of a book and decides whether the book is according to the reader's taste so as to choose or discard the material.
- Once the reader acquires complete mastery over this skill, the reader is at a very advantageous position.
- Skimming serves as a consolidation technique for revising reading materials just before appearing in an examination.

Abuja and Parimala Abuja (1987: 79).

1.8 Characteristics of Good and Poor Readers

According to Ahuja, C.C. and Ahuja, p. (1987:63-64) some of the characteristics which differentiate between good and poor readers are:

Sr. No	Good Reader	Poor Reader
1	Rich vocabulary	Poor vocabulary
2	Reads in larger thought units or phrases.	Reads word by word
3	Makes only needed fixations as the material demands	Makes more fixations
4	Wider span of recognition	Narrow span of recognition
5	Takes very little time for each fixation	Duration of fixation is long

6	Rhythmic return sweeps	Return sweeps are irregular
7	Total or near total absence of vocalization	Excessive vocalization
8	Always makes use of greater contextual constraints	Does not take help from contextual clues.
9	Perfect eye-mind co-ordination	Eye-mind co-ordination is Sometimes lacking
10	Reads with confidence	Lacks of confidence
11	Reads with a definite purpose	Reads without a clear purpose
12	Can read even beyond the lines	Cannot reach the critical level of reading
13	Smooth and effective reading	Reading speed is hindered by re-reading and re-focusing
14	Positive and lively attitude	Neutral or negative attitude towards reading
15	A wide variety of reading interest	Reading interest is very limited
16	Alert while reading	Daydreams very freely
17	No retention problems	Has poor retention
18	Uses several speeds	Has only one speed
19	Has the experience of wide, extensive reading	Has a very poor reading background
20	Has a pragmatic outlook about the difficulty level of the material	Overestimates the difficulty of Overestimates the difficulty of
21	A very strong stamina	No stamina for reading
22	Possesses a high level of Motivation	Lacks motivation
23	Has no concentration problems	Poor concentration
24	Changes one's speed and reading extra technique according to the nature of the reading materials	Reads all types of materials with care as if it were a legal with care as if it were a legal document
25	Reading is always a spontaneous, light and pleasant activity. One can find something satisfying and enjoyable in every kind of reading.	Takes reading as a tiresome activity

1.9 Advantageous of a Good reader

The benefits of a good reader are incalculable. An efficient reader is always a flexible reader. As people's interest in the printed word increases day by day, the benefits of a good reader becomes more obvious. According to T. C. Baruah (1984) a person who comprehends the written English has following features:

a) Read a passage at normal speed
b) Understand the lexical and structural meanings of the words, phrases, and sentences
c) Take in complete phrases or groups of words from the context
d) Consult a dictionary to find out the meaning of an unfamiliar word
e) Skip over unnecessary passages while skimming for information
f) Read silently without moving the lips
g) Distinguish between the writer's opinion and statement of facts
h) Locate the topic sentence of a paragraph
i) Make a summary of the important points of the passage
j) Infer the mind of the writer, e.g., serious, jocular, sarcastic etc.
k) Recognize the meaning of various graphic signals, e.g., punctuation mark, paragraph identification, capitalization etc.

Young and less skilled readers, in contrast, exhibit a lack of such activity. Reading researchers have developed approaches to stimulating active reading by teaching readers to use comprehension strategies.

1.10 Strategies to Improve Reading comprehension Skill

According to Gunning (1996) a strategy is an individual's approach to a task. There are four main types of comprehension strategies, which include Preoperational, Organizational, Elaboration and Monitoring. These strategies could be used by the learners to improve the text or reading comprehension.

1.10.1 Preoperational

Preoperational strategies are those that activate prior knowledge about a particular topic. This method is used to get learners thinking about the topic they are about to work on. It is much easier to retain knowledge about a subject when the learner is familiar with the content. Gunning identifies predicting as a type of preoperational Strategy to preview the parts of the text to be read. The portions of text, which are helpful in previewing, can either be pictures, titles, or the cover of the book. Using the prior can either be pictures, titles, or the cover of the book. Using the prior knowledge of the subject the learners can think or guess the events to be followed.

1.10.2 Organizational

Organizational strategies are those that help in selecting important details, and building relationships from them. These strategies include: identifying the main idea and topic sentences, classifying information, deciding which information is relevant, sequencing and summarizing. Each of these strategies is complex, and methods for improving them need to be taught starting from the basic ideas, and gradually getting on to more difficult ones. Summarizing, in particular, has been identified as a difficult skill to develop.

1.10.3 Elaboration

Elaboration is an additional processing of the text, used by the reader to increase one's comprehension. It involves forming connections between the text and the reader's background knowledge of the subject. Making inferences, picturing images, and asking questions are a few examples of elaboration strategies. Huffman (1998) identifies 'K-W-L' as an elaboration strategy, which connects background knowledge of the topic to be addressed.

'K-W-L'is an acronym for the three steps of the procedure: describing what one knows, what to know, and what one Learned. The reader uses the first   two steps before reading the text, to assess background information, and   the third step is used later to make the connections.

1.10.4 Monitoring

Monitoring enables the reader to be aware of one's own mental process while reading.   It is an advanced technique that involves a great deal of independent thinking. contemporary approaches to word-recognition instruction also include a monitoring approach, with readers taught to pay attention to whether the decoding makes sense and to try decoding again when the word as decoded is not in synchrony with other ideas in the word as decoded is not in synchrony with other ideas in the text and   pictures. It occurs when reader is aware of the inability to understand what was just read. Hence, the act of monitoring allows the reader to go back, and find a way to gain understanding of the topic. Monitoring is also an awareness to use the three other types of reading comprehension strategies. The four types of strategies discussed so far can be seen as rather independent of each other. Readers will be able to apply the most complex strategy only when they   have knowledge of the comparatively simple strategies.

1.11 Conclusion

In the teaching-learning process, the act of reading has to be given adequate importance. It is through reading; a student has the chance of improving one's vocabulary and comes across the style of presentation. In simple terms reading comprehension is the ability to read, understand process   and recall what was just read. Having excellent reading comprehension skill is crucial. It increases the enjoyment and effectiveness of reading and helps not only academically, but professionally and in a person's personal life.

References:

Philomena De Condappa, P.Sivakumar and S.Sudalaimuthu, (2012), Enhancing   Reading   Skills through Multimedia, New Delhi: Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd

Ahuja, C.C.and Ahuja P. (1987), How to Increase Reading Speed. New Delhi: Sterling   Publishers private Limited.(pg 63-64)

https://www.education.vic.gov.au

http:// schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/eli/pages/goals

http:// en.m.wikipedia.org/Reading comprehension