

READING COMPREHENSION AS AN EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE IN ESL TEACHING – A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract

English as a second Language in Indian classrooms, most of the secondary school students have low ability in their reading process. Reading is an effective technique in Indian classroom system. This article attempts in giving the definitions of Reading, Reading Comprehension, etc. It also presents introduction, types of reading, comprehension, skills of reading and a pilot study on reading comprehension at secondary school students (IX Class) of ZP High School, Palamaner in Chittoor district, Kuppam. The study is conducted for forty students co-education (Boys and Girls) class of students and taught reading passages of twenty for twenty days. The result of reading comprehension is clearly discussed in this article.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Comprehension, Pilot Study, Co-education, Skimming, Scanning.

Introduction

Reading Comprehension is one of the pillars of the act of reading. When a person reads a text, he engages himself in a complex array of cognitive process. A person uses his awareness to understand phonemes, phonics and stability to comprehend or built a particular meaning from the text. This lost the component of the act of reading comprehension. It cannot happened independent of the other two basic elements of the process. By the way, it is the most different, difficult and also important of the three.

There are two elements that make the process of reading comprehension.

- Knowledge of Vocabulary
- Textual comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a skill. It is a basic skill to obtain further academic acquisition of success. To get best knowledge for future, students are needed to have critical and difficult in comprehending academic texts in seeking more academic information through different types of reading tools such as journals, textbooks, reports or electronic messages; However pupils are not good at comprehending the text being read.

Reading Comprehension is nothing but the level of understanding the text or message. It needs to be developed at every stage of the school level in order to find out their interests and not that reading comprehension and potentiality of writers to give appropriate and satisfactory material. It is highly essential. The use of reading comprehension has to be monitored based on its use and effectiveness. In the sense, it can be argued that the reading comprehension is not an easy task. Many factors like the needs of the students and their interest have to be taken into consideration. But the role of the reading comprehension is based on the understanding of passages. There is an implication that the quality of the

reading comprehension and how students use them has a direct relationship with the passage effectiveness and students understanding. It is steadily suggested that the quality of reading comprehension should not be neglected and students should have the skills and responsibility to seek the reading comprehension.

Discussion

Reading Comprehension is the comprehension that allows one to understand the basic elements of a text especially, grammar. The student engages himself to understand the text in a proper manner. The reading comprehension of each person depends on themselves; it is actually an ongoing cognitive process that occurs in our mind while reading. The ability to analyze the text is not only the matter of concern but it has to be integrated in such a way with the skills of the person. There are two levels of processing in Reading Comprehension that includes, 'Shallow' (low level) and 'Deep' (high level) processing. When we try to encode the actual meaning of a word and try to relate it to certain synonyms, there happens a semantic processing in the text and this is what is 'Deep processing' and 'Shallow processing', which is related to structural and phonemic recognition, for example, sentences and word structure.

Sub-Skills of Reading

The four main types of sub skills of Reading Skills are as follows:-

1. Skimming
2. Scanning
3. Intensive Reading
4. Extensive Reading

Skimming

Skimming is reading out a text in a quick glance to get a general idea of the meaning of the text. For example, Skimming, when we take in the classroom context seem to be a kind of specific reading skill which is very common, such as, it can be reading newspaper and messages. This process of reading is actually a time tasked one and it does not need any kind of patient reading since it is at a quick glance view.

Scanning

Scanning is nothing but a kind of reading to find out proper figures or names. People might most likely simply scan the guide book to peer which webpage we might need to browse. Scanning entails in getting our eyes to quickly scuttle throughout sentences and is used to get just an easy piece of record. Studies have concluded that off computer screen sincerely inhibits the pathways to best scanning and for that reason, paper reading is a better option. Students now and again do now give importance to illustrations. These should be added on your scanning. Special interests to the creation and the trust should do also be paid.

Intensive Reading

Learners who read in-order to gain certain specified aims or goals can be considered to be as 'intensive readers'. The reader should have clear goals in his mind, when he undertakes, 'Intensive Reading'. Intensive reading activities in a classroom context includes, activities such as a text for specific purpose to skim and to find out proper answers, it can be for filling gaps, can be used for scanning texts that matches to the headings and paragraphs, and also, reading the text carefully and order the sentences into correct form from the jumbled ones.

Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading always involves texts that are only for pleasure and to develop general skills of reading that students will take up for reading a text they like. Mostly, this type of reading is compared with intensive reading, which is only for specific task learning. A teacher reads a short story without asking them to set any task but only to read and listen seem to be 'Extensive Reading'.

Kinds of Reading

1. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud means to read aloud the text in-order to develop the reading potential within an individual. It is a time-honored tradition that has been followed from

centuries in many households. The benefits of reading aloud are that, it enhances or develops a person's early literacy skills and also helps to develop the language.

2. Silent Reading

Actually, oral reading is very vital in the start up for any individual who starts to learn reading but after some time one must try to read silently too. This ability of reading silently must be developed for high school students and into college. Students must be given time to practice this kind of reading in the classrooms. Students can make use of novels, short stories, or articles and for this type of reading the length of the text is not at all a problem and what matters is only time on task.

Reading Comprehension as a technique in ESL classroom

Reading Comprehension skills that can be taught to children are:-

1. Lexical comprehension
2. Literal Comprehension
3. Interpretive Comprehension
4. Applied Comprehension
5. Affective Comprehension

Lexical Comprehension: It refers identifying the vocabulary of key in the text before reading the texts or storing preview is needed. For example, what does enhancement?

Literal Comprehension: It refers answer who, when and where what questions in the text, the students can be identified the answers in the story. For example, who was the boy? What missed the textbook?

Interpreting Comprehension: It refers answers what if why and how like this. Understand reality in the story. Examples are needed to understand full meaning of the passage. For example, How did the coconut turn into a brave?

Applied Comprehension: It mainly refers to the meaning of a story. It may be about an existing knowledge or general opinion. It is not for asking questions that can be pointed out to which is wrong and which is right. For example, Do you think, that boy is going to play without gloves.

Affective Comprehension: It is for understand emotional and social aspects. Character development and connect motive to plot these are essential aspects here. For example what did you do when you're disappointed because student can't do fun?

Experimental Study

The present study intends to examine the understanding and not understanding of the reading comprehension which is being used in high schools. The study is by and large has adopted a qualitative approach which is in descriptive passages in general.

According to this study is limited to the reading comprehension of high school students with reference to development of silent reading of learners. This study has nothing to say about the other aspects of developing silent reading and faster reading of English such as students, factors, learner's background and standardization of schools. It's only a developing of reading comprehension.

The investigator conducted a try-out with twenty reading cards of English in one school, namely H.P. High School Palamaner, Chittoor District. The Students were happy towards the end of the try-out. They requested me to take some more classes on reading comprehension to enrich their vocabulary power at the end of twenty reading passages. They want some more reading passages. They seemed to need the meaning of the particular words in their mother tongue. But the influence of the mother tongue is very high among the students. They were addicted to grammar translation method used by their regular English teacher. The investigator noted that they learnt a lot about silent reading in practice.

The investigator has chosen English subject IX standard of Telugu medium class of ZP High School, Palamaner. The selected materials for teaching reading comprehension consists of twenty passages on different aspects related to history, games and sports, advertisements, stories etc. The investigator conducted Pre-Test (Test-1), Mid-Test (Test-2), Final-Test (Test-3). Test one conducted passage one without teaching. Test two conducted on passage ten with Teaching. Test three conducted on a twentieth passage without Teaching.

Result of Reading Comprehension

The following table clearly explains the rate of reading comprehension among the students of Z.P. High Schools Palamaner, English class IX of the try-out in the school.

Name of the student	Percentage of reading comprehension with reference to English		
	Test-1 Pre-Test	Test-2 Mid-Test	Test-3 Final-Test
S. Lakshmi pathi	60%	62%	65%
K. Mahesh	30%	34%	65%
Y. Naveen	33%	49%	86%
V. Roja	60%	61%	100%
S. Sravani	66%	72%	93%
R. Supriya	26%	51%	93%

Tirumala Ravi	33%	48%	86%
S. Kaveri	27%	28%	63%
P. Sukumar	29%	32%	72%
M. Anil	72%	80%	93%
J. Ajay	61%	71%	89%
Y. Anitha	51%	53%	54%

A successful increase has been seen in most of the student's comprehension between the beginning, middle and the final stage of teaching Reading (Test 1,2and 3). It clearly explains the following points. Out of forty students twelve students developed their comprehending ability being more than sixty percent, the remaining pupils increased their comprehension due to these methods of twenty reading passages on their own pacing. So, the individual's increased their comprehension skills, learner's autonomy and individualized learning.

Conclusion

Some of the students increased their reading comprehension during speed along with comprehension. The students increased their reading speed compared to the beginning and for all twenty reading passages. So, the ability of comprehension does not seem to depend up on the time factor. Below average students also increased their vocabulary power at the end of twenty reading cards. Reading requires a rich background and also some ability to comprehend the texts. In this approach, readers put together letters to form words, clues, sentences and paragraphs to catch the meaning. This is by doing the reading activity should be conducted by using the prescribed text book of English.

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