



CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

The study tries to find out the complexity of reading which remains undeveloped among intermediate learners. Outside of the home, teachers constitute the most proximal environmental contexts for young learners' academic and motivational development. This study reports on minor interference that observed the effective strategies for reading comprehension, in the framework of teaching methods. For this study students are divided into two groups (i.e) control group and experimental group based on their pre-test levels. Rather, the use of this test format aims to elucidate the ability of ordinary learners. The subjects were private college students at intermediate proficiency levels. The results show that this skill can be remarkably developed. There is no much difference in the performance of students, before, they are split into groups. Our research on using teaching reading comprehension with some interesting assignments and tasks to the short texts that can be useful for the students who are on the way of improving English language learning. So, this study proves that training to silent read, read aloud and thinking, applying and analyzing on reading revealed important implications about the development of reading through reading comprehension.

KEYWORDS : Intermediate learners, Academic and motivational development, Effective strategies, control group , experimental group

1. Introduction

Reading is defined as an interactive cognitive process in which readers interact with text and author's perspectives related to Adams(2007), Wagner & Tannenbaum(2007), Alderson & Urquhart(2004), Baker & Brown(2004), Grabe(2009). Readers' awareness, monitoring and regulating of these strategies while reading are called as metacognitive according to Flavell(1976) metacognition is a child's knowledge about and control over his or her own thinking process learning activities such as: reading. English learners expect to speak the language like a native speaker. Still, they come across many factors to gain their aspiration. Some of the common factors that they find difficult are reading issues and learning to read is harder than learning to speak due to the influence of mother tongue. Studies on metacognition and reading comprehension reveal the strong relation between the uses of strategies, awareness and reading comprehension as Brown (1980), Paris&Oka (1986).

According to Miccoli, language is not only the words that are spoken, but incorporates how native speakers interact with one another, shake hands, hold their bodies, etc, states (Mekala.T & Divya.C,2017)

The purpose is to find the way out of existent problems in teaching reading by suggesting model strategies. Moreover to achieve the purpose, we set the following objectives: to improve the reading skills by practice & to work out a model of teaching reading.

1.1. Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to determine how learners perceive the reading comprehension strategies focusing on the students' improvement through practices with the help of lesson plan prepared for this study. This study not only helps to master grammar, Vocabulary and being able to read and communicate in the second language, but also to improve comprehend the reading passage deeper and understand the writing skill of different writers.

1.2. Problem statement

There are lot many issues in reading, from letter, word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase & sentence and paragraph level. At the level of beginner they may skip ahead due to inaccurate decoding. This is one of the reasons of poor comprehension and it results not been encouraging to read a text that is at too high level. Students need to identify gist, main ideas, and specific details and

even make inferences about what they are reading. The more one reads, the more he/she can meet unfamiliar terms. Once students expand vocabulary they are familiar with more words by sight and reading speeds up. If students still are not able to speed up, there may have core problem such as slow processing. Since reading is a cognitively demanding task which holds so much of the information in the mind when continuing this process will exhaust slow processing. Students who have the issue of slow processing will have to be given extra time to complete tasks that require extensive reading.

1.3. Impact of the Problem:

One of the key goals of english teaching is developing strong reading skills. Vast reading would help the students expand their knowledge. The success of the attainment level of spelling and writing happens only through reading. A student's self-esteem and motivation to learn will get affected , if he/she has problems with literacy skills. At this stage educators and parents play a major role to sort this problem and to provide whether appropriate strategies to ensure they continue to progress and achieve reading milestones.

2. Understanding of Students' trouble with reading

English is used as the working language on large extent. In order to co-ordinate with the colleagues, engineers have to speak fluent English. So, English communication plays a dominant role in the academic life and career of students. (Banuramalakshmi.T & Divya.C)

College education in our country has always been subjected to severe criticism due to its conspicuous inability to cope with the growing academic requirements of the country. (Divya.C & Banuramalakshmi.T, 2016). At every walk of life and career English becomes an obstacle in their way of career. (Banuramalakshmi.T & Divya.C 2017). In the educational program developing reading skills is the key goal. The people are aware of the value of English in the international arena and have developed a craze for English medium education.(Divya.C & Mekala.T, 2016). The students of higher level are acquainted with classical and newly released plays and novels which have been filmed. (Padmapriya & Divya.C, 2017). Through reading, students develop their language efficiency. Some students are brought up in the classrooms undiagnosed and slow processing. All students may not achieve reading skills equally. Reading begins with mastering pre-literacy skills, including enhancing phonemic awareness. There are lot many issues in

reading, from letter, word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase & sentence and paragraph level. At the level of beginner they may skip ahead due to inaccurate decoding. This is one of the reasons of poor comprehension and it results not been encouraging to read a text that is at too high level. Students need to identify gist, main ideas, and specific details and even make inferences about what they are reading. The more one reads, the more he/she can meet unfamiliar terms. Once students expand vocabulary they are familiar with more words by sight and reading speeds up. If students still are not able to speed up, there may have core problem such as slow processing. Since reading is a cognitively demanding task which holds so much of the information in the mind when continuing this process will exhaust slow processing. Students who have the issue of slow processing will have to be given extra time to complete tasks that require extensive reading.

3. Individualized teacher support and students’ academic development:

Besides providing activities for the whole class, teachers also support students individually. Some studies have found a positive effect of adapting reading instruction to students’ literacy skills(Connor et al., 2013) whereas others have failed to find these effects(e.g kikas silinskas & soodla,2015 ; Nurmi et al., 2012; Torgesen, 2000). Several factors were found to evoke the frequency and the type of individualized support. For instance, some studies (Hughes, Luo Kwok & loyd 2008; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) have shown that teachers provide more support for students who are more engaged in learning (i.e., put more effort into learning activities) while other studies (e.g., sarrazin, Tessier, Pelletier, Troulout & Chanal, 2006) have found that more support is given to students whose level of motivation (conceptualized as a student’s effort and autonomous work) was expected to be low. From one side, it might be more enjoyable and easier for a teacher to support a child who is interested in reading. From another side, the teacher may be cognizant that higher support can increase motivation and consequently provide more support for students with lower interest(Deci&Ryan 2000). One of the important components of learning motivation is an interest, which plays a role in literacy development as early as in the first grade(Ecalte, Magnan & Gibert, 2006). However, a study that evaluated the role of interest in evaluating higher teacher support did not find any effect (Kikas et al., 2015).

Attitude of teaching profession is an important study because in this trend many of younger generations need to get jobs in the field of Information and Technology sector.(Divya.C,2014)

Teachers with different teaching styles may differ in the emphasis and ways of providing individualized support. Teachers with child-centered style are sensitive to students’ individual needs and provide multifaceted emotional and instructional support with encouragement and personal feedback.(McCombs,2010; Stipek & Byler, 2004; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2011). Teachers with teacher-directed style pay attention to students’ skill level, praise children for correct answers and give specific instructions on how to solve a task , but rarely provide emotional support(Gettinger & Kohler, 2011; Stipek & Byler, 2004; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2011). Individualized support is not emphasized in the child-dominated style, but teachers may respond individually to each child’s question(Lerikkanen, kikas et al., 2012); Lerikkanen et al 2013; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2011). Thus, it is possible that teachers with different teaching styles, both react differently to students’ low skills and interest and varying levels of individualized support. So far, no studies have compared the effects of individualized support in classrooms with teachers who employ different teaching styles.

4. Participants and Method

The study took place at SNS Engineering college in two groups. The total number of students participated in this study was 50 and two facilitators taught them basic reading and interpretation. The Participants were the 1st year students with intermediate level and basic level of English language acquisition. We divided the students

into two groups A and B as control group(A) and experimental group(B). The experiment started a month earlier(16/3/17 to 8/4/17). Facilitators gave well constructed comprehension passages. The exercise system was chosen according to the standards and includes various tasks like pre-assessment, while-assessment and post assessment. The reading comprehension passage was chosen in a way that students should construct an answer in a proper way. Students had educated enough to understand our speech and communicate with each other. Students were active and cooperated well and they can easily catch the idea and information for the first time itself.

4.1. Data collection

In order to obtain the data we use different instruments like:

1. Pretest- the 50 students were divided into two groups
2. Implementation tasks- to imply the model of reading strategies.
3. Post test- Checking the effectiveness of improvement in reading comprehension.

The methodology to collect data was flexible. At the beginning students were asked to write tests to understand comprehensive level. This purpose is to examine the levels of students in reading comprehension. Few questions were selected to learn about the participants’ knowledge of attainment level in English language. We also intended to get a glimpse of what they had experienced earlier, which could have shaped their language learning perceptions, behaviors and attitudes. The exam included 3 parts of reading passages that have structured as multiple choices and Q&A patterns. The time duration of the exam was 1 hour. The test was used to discover the students’ comprehension skill in English language. This exam was given to students before the pilot study to divide students into two groups so each group had to contain the students with a similar level as the other group. The two groups experimental group and control group. After giving a short introduction to our study, students were asked to write the exam and then students’ comprehension levels according to their answers.

For evaluation, ten-mark system is used.

- Low (1-2 marks)
- Satisfactory (3-4 marks)
- Average (5-6 marks)
- Sufficient(7-8marks)
- Excellent (1-2 marks)

Pre – investigation test results of reading comprehension are shown below correspondingly in below Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 – The result of control group while assessing reading comprehension

Levels	% of students
Excellent	08%
Sufficient	19%
Average	18%
Satisfactory	55%

Table 2 – The result of experimental group while assessing reading comprehension

Levels	% of students
Excellent	10%
Sufficient	19%
Average	18%
Satisfactory	53%

The main idea focused on the model of few strategies

- Encouraging self observation
- leaving more space to come out by thinking aloud.

The consecutive laying –out consists of the following exercises.

- Language prompts to use during think-aloud.
- Paragraph topic headings.

- Comprehension

Two trainers constantly support the experimental group with the material which was really helpful for the students to perform the tasks on the theme. Undoubtedly, it contains the interesting and informative material which enhances the acquiring of both the theoretical knowledge and formation of practical skills and habits in the students reading studies. In addition, student collaboration of peer editing of narrative text reveals moments of engagement, leadership and students taking control. Moreover reading with using informative strategies provides a meaning assessment. The practical tasks focused on model strategies. They are

- To identify how learners can think decisively and cognitively.
- To attempt students learning English reading.
- To familiarize the areas to be taught in the future and to correct it.

After pre- investigation of control and experimental group, we started with the first implementation task. Duration was 30 minutes and we gave a short passage named "The Best Vacation Ever" to both the groups. The language was appropriate to both groups. The comprehension contains two passages and the language was easy enough for the intermediate level of the students' English language acquisition. Firstly, in order to check students' level of learning we asked same questions given below to both groups, control and experimental, but they vary in approach to teaching reading comprehension that concluded that experimental group were taught according to the model of few strategies, but the control group continued reading and answering the questions in a traditional way.

In fact the questions were asked to the both groups:

1. Based on the context, what type of climate is considered tropical
2. What do you think the word tradition means?
3. The phrase - *A whole different animal is an informal way of saying what?*
4. Why do you think Scott was surprised that his parents wanted to try surfing?
5. Based on the context, what do you think the word extravagant means?
6. Why would Scott have wanted to apologize to his parents?

Secondly the control group after reading the text answered these questions and analysed the passage. The experimental group continued working in another way. Here we demonstrated a sample lesson plan for teaching comprehension. The comprehension consisted of 2 passage and this plan was implemented only for Experimental group as pilot study part

4.2. Contribution of Research Wok
Sample lesson plan:

Part 1: control of cognitive processes

- a) Discussion was conducted on following ideas:
- Have you read or admired a book and found staring yourself into the space while reading?
 - Whether you knew or not, you may wonder about what you have read?
 - While reading a story, you would have given a pause to think about a character in the story or an amazing fact about a topic.
 - You might have reorganized or reconstructed your thought and asking yourself what they mean. Explain about it?

Responses:

While I am reading the book, I used to pause and think whether I have read a book like this and imagine myself in those characters of book. Then I ll put my own ideas in the characters projected by the author.

b) Next we proposed to read the passage aloud. It definitely practiced their pronunciation and confidence in public speaking. We expect ideas and words in the text appropriate places to pause. We interpret and asked them to stop to mention what the author suggested.

Part 2: Students learn the approach of other text.

Students started reading the passages and they were asked to think critically about the topic as they had read. After the reading process over they were asked to express their ideas or emotions that they had about what the author was trying to say. Once they finish reading, we propose them to share their responses to discuss why these ideas were important.

Part 3: Students learn to approach the strategy to other text.

The goal of any reading is to apply what they have learnt to future reading.

Students were listened keenly and they prepared their own story as a part of the comprehension.

Students were asked to think about what the trainer reading, so that they can share ideas with their friend in the class. Students are asked to record atleast one major idea and then share their responses in a small group or with a partner and some questions were asked by students, the trainer encouraged partner to suggest answer.

Then they had been doing ordinary activities like cloze test, fill in the blanks, puzzles etc. This kind of activities was appropriate for students because they not only learn language but they are mostly in the process of learning. As we all know reading is the most effective way in language acquisition. The proposed approach is a module of metacognitive strategies that helps students to understand the text deeper and improve their thinking skills. At the time of their experimental teaching we observed students in both groups and after we tested students. According to their answer the following results of the control group was recorded.

Table 3 – The result of control group during evaluation

Levels	% of students
Excellent	13%
Sufficient	20%
Average	30%
Satisfactory	37%

The table 3 shows that there were only 13% of students had got excellent comprehensive skill, 20% of sufficient category, Average-30% and satisfactory -37% in the control group. It exemplifies that most students used few strategies unconsciously or even did not use them. The result is witnessed as the trainer have implemented the given lesson plan with few strategies with the Experimental group (TABLE 4).

Table 4 – The result of experimental group after evaluation

Levels	% of students
Excellent	20%
Sufficient	14 %
Average	46%
Satisfactory	20%

Table 4- shows the results of the Experimental group were higher 20% of students had got excellent comprehensive skill, 14% of sufficient category, Average-46% and satisfactory -20%.

Based on the analysis of results in the Table 3 & 4, it is concluded that habit of reading could not be developed without training. First curiosity among students should be developed only by motivating them for training. Students may improve their superficial reading comprehension that means, they may relate words, phrases and sentences written in the text, but deeper understanding of the text needs a helping hand of a teacher who can lead the students to the

big thinking while implementing teaching strategies in language acquisition. In addition, student collaboration of reading production or peer editing revealed moments of engagement, leadership and students' taking control.

4.3. Post – Test results

Many short passages are given for home reading and asked similar questions that lead students to think wider. Both groups read the same stories during the investigation, but few techniques were used only for the experimental group. 'Nature Vs Nurture', 'Bring up children', 'Film making', 'Men and women', 'Educating students'. The language of the passage was appropriate for the intermediate level. These passages were given for home reading. Students are willing to read the passages with excitement. After two or three days, during the time of discussion, questions were asked and students were ready to answer actively. In comparison with the first passage, there is improvement in reading comprehension mastery in the experimental group.

The last task was given to both groups to find out the effectiveness of the few strategies while the other group – control group hadn't used the planned strategies. At the end of the practical performance, we tried to study the results of both groups in comparison to identify their differences in experimental teaching. Group A - control group and Group B- experimental group. We are able to see the difference here first group with a few percentage increase of improvement (i.e) from 52% to 58%. But the experimental group increases its level from 52% to 90%.

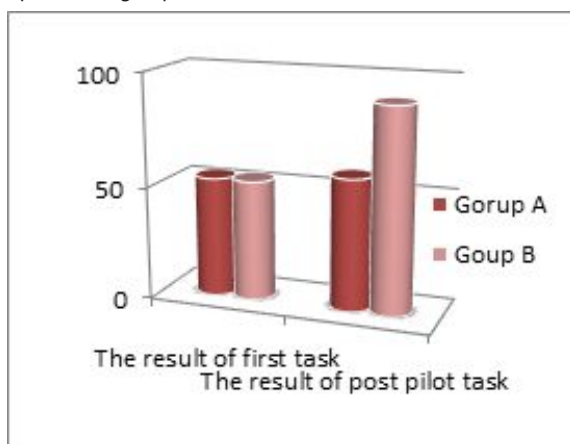


Figure 1. Post-investigation results

The conducted experiment is to help the students to improve reading skills as a immense support to help their thinking skills.

The results of this study have shown that, with very few drawbacks, the participants perceived the use of analytical strategies. Their perceptions revealed important implication about the development of reading comprehension through few reading passages. Therefore, these results should be taken into account to aid both teachers and students in the language acquisition process. 5.Recommendation for further study There are many ways of expanding this study. But, future research may address the limits of the present study and explore the strength of finding by bringing large number of samples from different colleges. To have atleast two groups control and experimental is essential. Also longer involvement would allow studying the maintenance effect and ascertain that the teaching reading comprehension strategies are not original. This study employed objective measures of reading strategy use and reading comprehension. But other studies which rely on one instrument and so, it may not possible to evaluate how rigorous their findings are and whether their results depend on the way in which attainment level was measured. This study brought the reading of control and experimental group, futher study may investigate the usefulness of teaching reading comprehension by teachers of other subject areas. There is also scope to investigate

differences in reading performance among district or states.

6. Conclusion

Better understanding of the intricacies in learning to read in second language is needed by primary, secondary-school and intermediate level teachers, especially regarding the special challenges of learning to read. Students who struggles to mänge with the readability skill is more essential and they have to be taken instant care. This should be addressed by allowing students ample time to master the basics of English reading. To master the basics of English reading (i.e. through systematic phonics training), students should be allowed plenty of time to err and to rectify. It is not able to claim for the actual status of the students and teachers too haven't collected such analysis. Generally, students with very limited exposure are likely have delayed reading competence, in addition to poor decoding skills.

In future research, recruiters may have an idea to test and understand more about the candidates attainment level of school education and personal learning histories which would influence the growth of their reading skill.

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