



## A Study on Undergraduate Students' Co-Operative Learning of Reading Comprehension Performance in the Classroom

### KEYWORDS

Motivate co-operative learning skills, Reading Skills, Synonyms and Antonyms, Grammar and Syntax

**Dr. Kesavan Vadakalur Elumalai**

Assistant Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, College of Arts, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**ABSTRACT** *One of the biggest challenges for teachers face today is how to improve an enhance the reading comprehension skills. Reading is an essential skill because most new knowledge is transferred either via printed or digital text. In addition to this, Reading comprehension is crucial for undergraduate students for their academic and professional success. They need excellent reading skills because they may be required to read different reading materials. Basic knowledge that, knows how to decode words, read text aloud, write neatly and spell accurately is simply not enough. In addition to these skills, students must have an adequate knowledge base, vocabulary, numerous meta-cognitive skills and abilities. The present work tries to study language skills of the student's Co-operative learning of Reading comprehension who are studying in undergraduate, which experimented with strategically and effective reading skills. The experiment resulted in motivation students to read text outside the syllabus.*

### COVERAGE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present work tries to study Reading comprehension skills of the students who are studying in undergraduate B.A degree program at college of Arts, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension refers to constructing the meaning of the oral or written messages. Comprehension is a two-fold process; it requires understanding of what is presented and reproducing it as comprehended.

There is large demand on this skill in practical life. Reading is a complex process in which the reader interacts with the text in a particular setting or context. During the reading process, readers construct a meaningful representation of a text through interaction of their conceptual and linguistic knowledge with textual cues. The reading goal is to read meaning; reading involves comprehension. When readers do not comprehend, they are not reading. Some readers use bottom-up approaches where they focus on letters, syllabus, words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Reading with this approach begins by focusing on smaller parts of the text. Often they do not get the whole meaning of the text. Some readers who use top-down approaches rather than focusing on individual words or analyzing how each word is structured, readers emphasize the whole text passage and look for key information by activation prior knowledge compensating for meaning of unknown vocabulary.

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The field experts on reading have defined reading in different ways. Betts (1966) has defined reading as a thinking process. No doubt thinking is an important aspect of reading process but not the whole of it. According to Goodman (1970) "the purpose of reading is the reconstruction of meaning. Meaning is not in print, but it is the meaning that the author begins with when he writes. Somehow, the reader strives to reconstruct this meaning as he reads". Reading is hence taken to include all the comprehension process necessary to arrive at the reconstruction of authors' meaning.

Jenkinson (1973) adds a new dimension to this definition when he writes about reading. "Reading has been defined as an act of responding to printed symbols so that meaning is created. It has long since been recognized, however, that getting meaning from the printed page is too limited as a definition of reading. Bringing meaning to the printed page indicates more accurately the reciprocal process between the printer symbols and the mind of the reader". Constructing meaning is also a form of thinking. Problem solving or reasoning involves analysis and discriminating, judging, evaluating and synthesizing. All these mental processes are found in the past experience, so that in the context of reading, the material must be scrutinized in the light of the reader's own experience.

Widdowson (1979) says that "reading is the process of getting linguistic information 'via-print' through reading; the information conveyed by the writer through the print medium is retrieved by the reader". Needless to say that the amount of information retrieved from the printed matter may differ from reader to reader. Here, the definition also needs some specification about the amount of information a receiver gets from the text. Written text not only provides linguistic meaning but also contextual meaning. Linguistic meaning involves represented information and this is called literal. Contextual includes the socio-cultural and intentional meaning incorporated in the text. A literal meaning of a text is accessible to the ordinary reader whereas to obtain the pragmatic meaning of the encoded matter, one must have rich exposure to the ethnolinguistic aspect of the reading materials. The efficient reader can only retrieve both his literal and pragmatic meanings from a text.

### TYPES OF READING

Reading may be classified as oral and silent reading, informational and recreational reading, and observational, assimilative, reflective and creative readings. Yoakem (1955) has classified reading according to the form, purpose and the psychological process involved.

On the basis of 'form', reading is categorized as silent and oral reading. The reader either reads to himself or to oth-

ers.

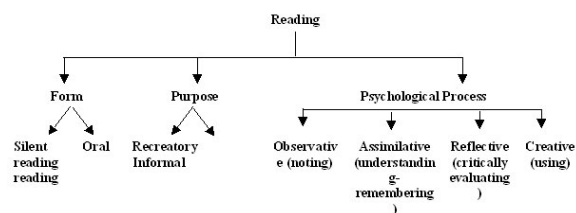
On the basis of the factor 'purpose' reading may be classified as recreatory or leisure reading and informational or educational or professional reading. Further, on the basis of psychological process, reading can be classified into four types. (1. Observational reading, 2. Assimilative reading, 3. Reflective reading, 4. Creative reading

The first one is observational reading, where the reader makes note of what the writer intends to write but makes no special efforts to analyse it or to remember the words or ideas.

The second one is assimilative reading, where the reader tries to understand fully and remember what he reads.

The third one is reflective reading, where the reader reads with a critical attitude. The last one is called creative reading, where the reader tries to discover ideas so that he can use them subsequently in oral written expression.

### CLASSIFICATION OF READING (YOAKEM)



In another way, reading is classified as Skimming, Scanning, Extensive and Intensive Reading.

**Skimming** involves quickly running one's eye over at text to get the risk of it.

**Scanning** involves quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information.

**Extensive reading** is nothing but reading longer text usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluent activity, mainly involving global understanding.

**Intensive reading** involves reading shorter texts to extract specific information. This kind of reading is otherwise known as reading for details.

Now a day's teachers and students are dissatisfied with textbooks, magazine and newspapers currently available. However, it is essential for student as well as teaches to choose a suitable textbook or text materials to the ESL classroom which is truly communicative and that meets the needs of your students.

The building blocks of English language are not form and functions of English grammar. The most important thing is that students need to learn vocabulary; without vocabulary they have no words to form syntax and sentence analysis. The reading comprehension creates students to become vocabulary hungry as well as help to maintain constant pronunciation

It is the opinion of many ESL experts that Reading comprehension is the most important skill to teach students in the ESL classroom. While reading in the classroom each

one watching the text eventually the teacher will improve their overall reading ability, this can be no substitute for reading to authentic English. As much as possible, students are exposed to authentic English in a variety of situations.

Introducing a variety of interesting topics and activities on reading in the ESL classroom, students will be more gained, motivated and interested, and they are likely to practice more. With more on-task time they will improve more rapidly to analyze syntax and semantic. However, the reading is allowing time for extensive pleasure among the students.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study adopts certain modern methods and approaches available in the field of language in general and applied language in particular.

#### STEP-1

Twenty students were selected at random out of thirty, four passages consisting of one Behavioral psychology, one scientific passage and two general passages. The assessment and analysis were based on the three aspects namely-Lexis.

Under the heading Lexis-Synonyms, Antonyms, one word substitution, idiom, word formation with affixes were given.

In the second part Tense identification and their usage and differences in the structure were assigned.

In the third part text oriented questions were given to examine their ability to infer the meaning, guessing and understanding the passage based on contextual clues.

#### STEP-2

#### READING AT LEAST ONE PARAGRAPH IN EVERY LECTURE.

On the first day students were asked to find Arabic meaning of nearly 30 words form the English to Arabic dictionary. Some found 20 words with meaning, later were asked to guess the meanings of words by reading complete paragraph, it worked well and 15 students could satisfactorily. At this stage one remarkable thing came to notice. Students knew some of the words they had asked for but they were unfamiliar with their spellings. When it was pointed out to them they were surprised. At the sentence level students had less difficulties in comparison to word level. They could easily translate the sense of the sentence into Arabic. Later at the content level they could easily summaries it in Arabic. It took nearly 20 minutes time to complete the first para of Pragmatics by George yule's "the Study of Language". It was observed that students were quite satisfied with this exercise.

In the second phase the strategy was changed a bit. They were given the Arabic translations of paragraphs and asked to identify the text. In the classroom 10 students were identified it correctly. Then they were asked to move into the Lexis in the process of identifying Synonyms, Antonyms, one word substitution. They were asked the meaning for very few words. Then they were asked to read the lesson again. They completed four paragraphs within 20 minutes. Earlier they took the same time to read one paragraph and noticed the drastic improvement on getting new words. Further, they were asked comprehension questions on it for which they were ready with answers. At this stage they started answering in English with many

mistakes, but it was a voluntary response. It really boosted their confidence and they were ready to read the next lesson. In all lessons were completed through reading.

After the reading was over students were given questions and asked to find the answer for them in the text. They found it very interesting and responded quite well. The performance of 20 students was satisfactory.

### Conclusion

Based on the above study, teachers can specially focus on improving the students' Lexical efficiency. There is a greater dependence on extrinsic and instrumental motivation to the students to learn the language in the classroom. Special importance should be given to the teaching of sentence structures, Grammar and Syntax, Discourse markers or Connectives. English Language teaching through the practical analysis of Syntax and Semantics techniques which will enrich the students' knowledge to comprehend any passage. This test is an attempt for the undergraduate students need to explore co-operative learning with motivation to comprehend passages and to gain knowledge on Grammar, Spelling and Pronunciation.

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