

EFFECTIVE WAYS OF APPROACHING READING STRATEGIES AND SURVEY THE HIGHER LEVEL STUDENTS IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract	<i>This research report focuses on the ways to develop the reading skill of the B.E students at the Technological University (OhBo), Mandalay. This research report presents the purpose of teaching reading and theory of reading skill that can develop the reading ability among the students. The purpose of this report is to improve the students' attitudes, abilities and skills needed for obtaining information by reading activities. This report is to get the students how to approach and consider the various kinds of reading texts and different strategies of reading skill in order to become independent and efficient reader. This report has suggested four classroom activities designed to help the students become more rapid and fluent readers. The result of this report indicates that the students' reading ability can benefit more from the former.</i>
Keywords	<i>Reading, Skill, Activities, Ability, Benefit, Reader, Learner</i>

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research paper is to provide guidelines to develop the reading skill of the B.E students at the Technological University (OhBo), Mandalay.

English is a dominant language of the world. Therefore, English has been taught as a compulsory subject for all the engineering students from AGTI to ME course at the Technological University. This purpose is to improve the four language skills of the students and to overcome the difficulties of their learning English and their major subjects that are written in English.

Most of them, the reading skill is an essential skill for all the students in order to be able to read their texts and reference books for an improving knowledge of engineering science and technology. Although, the students have been studying to develop the reading skill, they still face the difficulties of reading in technical English and need to read and understand their texts. Moreover, they also need to know the reading skills and strategies for improving their reading skill and practice to be proficient in reading through activities.

The goal of teaching reading is to help students' development as strategic readers. Different types of reading strategies can be taught to students, and when taught, strategies help improve student performance on texts of comprehension and recall. So some useful skills and strategies are presented in this research for the students to read independently and effectively to learn significant portions of a course of study.

Another way to encourage reading for general understanding is to remind students that they are reading for pleasure and for benefits such as improving in their reading rate and increasing their confidence in their reading. The more students read the better readers they become. Therefore, this paper is mainly emphasized on the students to become the fluent readers.

This report presents the important of reading theory and then examines some research findings, and theories related to reading techniques and uses. Finally, this report provides some examples of classroom activities in teaching reading.

The aim of this research report encourages the students to be active and brings their own contribution to the reading activities, builds confidence. Once they have

Developed enough confidence, they can begin to read and understand various kinds of texts successfully.

LITERATURE Review

Reading is essentially a cognitive process during which the reader not only understands the ideas presented but also interpret and evaluates them. Therefore, the reader must possess not only adequate vocabulary and structural knowledge of the language, but also an adequate level of cognitive development and intelligence in order to deal with the ideas presented.

Reading texts also provide opportunities to study vocabulary grammar, punctuation, and the ways of construction sentences, paragraphs and texts. Good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulated discussions and excite imaginative responses. Different purposes for reading determine different strategies in approaching texts and also different rate of reading. To be an efficient reader, the students must regard the reading strategies and need to analyse the survey data collections for themselves. For a teacher have to prepare for him and try to examine his student's needs. Reading strategies vary, according to the reader's purposes in reading. Reading skills and strategies help the students to develop the reading skill and to understand their reading process and to tackle various kinds of texts. These general effective strategies are; four kinds of reading strategies and four kinds of reading rate activities. Then, "Sample Questionnaires for Student's Form and Data Collections" are useful for all the teachers and the student's skill examines in reading skill.

FOUR KINDS OF READING STRATEGIES

Reading strategies can be defined as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (Duffy, 1993). More proficient readers use different types of strategies, and they use them in different ways (Block, 1986). Strategies help to improve reading comprehension as well as efficiency in reading. By using the reading strategies, the students will be reading in that expert reader do. Strategies help readers to process the text actively, to monitor their comprehension, and to connect what they are reading to their own knowledge and to other parts of the text.

Therefore, the students must learn the reading strategies. And the teacher may need to explain the value of reading strategies; the students are soon able to relate their own views on strategies and strategy use. So, the students gain a deeper understanding of their reading behavior, and they come to realize that they use strategies in reading. All of them, four kinds of reading strategies are: skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading.

1. **Skimming = Roughly going through the text to pick up the general point**
2. **Scanning = Specify going through the text to pick up the detail point**
3. **Intensive Reading = Obtain detailed meaning from the text**
4. **Extensive Reading = Obtain general understanding from the text**

According to the reading strategies, learner needs to know these four kinds of reading strategies for a good reader. And then, the learner doesn't avoid these reading skills to be effective reader. So, the teachers can explain the learners these four strategies which are main point of reading skill. In generally, these for strategies are the similar with the

- **Skimming = Extensive Reading**
- **Scanning = Intensive Reading**

I notice that skimming and scanning are well known and the main using method in teaching reading skill. But, for a good reader have to know these strategies. The important quality of this reading strategies are:

1. **Skimming:** To know where to find the main ideas of different paragraphs and to be able to synthesize them into an organic whole by way of generalization.
2. **Scanning:** To decide exactly what kind of information we are looking for and where to find it.

3. **Intensive Reading:** To help students to obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading skill such as identifying the main ideas and recognizing text connectors and to enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge.
4. **Extensive Reading:** To develop positive attitudes toward reading in English and increased motivation to study it.

Studies show that when students focus these four activities, they not only improve their reading fluency, but they also build new vocabulary knowledge and expand their understanding of words they knew before. Additionally, these reading skills can help students writing better, as well as improving their listening and speaking abilities. And perhaps the best result is that students develop positive attitudes toward reading in English and increased motivation to study it. Teachers have an important role to play in helping their students get the most out of reading activities. Moreover, teachers can control their students this four methods to be a skillful readers.

FOUR KINDS OF READING RATE ACTIVITIES

The four kinds of reading-rate activities can be used in the second language reading class to increase student reading rates. These activities are based on reading-rate development theories and practices in first and second language reading (Anderson, 1983; Fry, 1975). These activities do not require specially developed texts or equipment and therefore can be implemented by classroom teachers using class texts or materials. Furthermore, the activities are short and can fill small units of time.

1. **Rate-buildup Reading** = to read again from the beginning of the text
2. **Repeated Reading** = to read a short passage over and over again
3. **Class-paced Reading** = to set a goal for a minimal reading rate in a classroom
4. **Self-paced Reading** = to determine own reading-rate goals in oneself

All of activities are effective for all the learners to practice the reading skill and rates. I recommend that this four activities to be all teachers and learners to be a skillful reader.

1. **Rate-buildup Reading** = To reread 'old' material quickly, gliding into the 'new'
2. **Repeated Reading** = To do repeated reading exercises, they come to realize how this activity can improve their reading comprehension
3. **Class-paced Reading**= To keep up at the designated page, continued reading-rate practice is recommended
4. **Self-paced Reading** = To move beyond reading at the word level and to gain greater fluency in reading

Doing activity, students participate in this rate building activity; they learn that indeed they increase their reading rates. The teacher should carefully the students reading goal. If all activities are not suitable for his students, adjustments may be necessary to allow students to meet their challenge. This reading activity encourages and supports learners as they work together at improving their reading rates. The reading activity develops reading rates, criterion levels of reading speed and comprehension. As learners do repeated reading exercises, they come to realize how this activity can improve their reading comprehension. This activity helps to improve the second language readers and strengthens their metacognitive awareness of the merit of faster reading rates.

Building these activities, an existing reading class can increase the reading rates of learners. This will allow readers to read more with greater understanding, thereby leading to increased proficiency.

DATA ANALYSIS

To find out the students' understanding of the reading skill, the questionnaires are given to the

45 B.E students who are attending the Technological University (OhBo) Mandalay in the academic year of (2009-2010). The questions are the most notable aspect of the annotations. Questions would reflect students' lack of knowledge as these questions would identify information that is needed. The questionnaire is focused on the students' opinion in order to get their reading skill needs.

“Sample Questionnaires for Student’s Form and Data Collections”

Table 1: Sample questionnaires for student’s form and data collections for 45 B.E students at Technological University (OhHo), Mandalay, Myanmar

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENT

These questionnaires are aimed to assess your opinion on Reading Skill Learning and to survey out your interest and your Reading Skill Needs. Thanks a lot for your co-operation.

Name :

Age :

Specialties Subject :

Academic year :

University :

Please mark (Tick) in your choice.

Basic Statement Question (BSQ)				
No.	BSQ- Have you been familiarised with the prescribed reading text at the university?	Yes	No	Neither Yes or No
1	Reading is a student of a certain subject.	68%	32%	-
2	There is no any support of facilities to read the text in class.	49%	31%	20%
3	I take a lot of time to read in all subjects.	40%	30%	30%
4	The textbooks are not interesting and so complex.	66%	34%	-
5	The reading passage and reading test are difficult.	59%	23%	12%
6	I think to improve my reading skill by studying the textbook.	60%	30%	10%
7	I pick up all detail points in teaching reading.	45%	40%	25%
8	I satisfy with your teacher’s teaching of English textbooks / handouts.	40%	30%	30%
Conceptual Statement Question (CSQ)				
No.	CSQ- Describe your opinion of the about reading skill.	Yes	No	Neither Yes or No
1	Reading is so boring activity.	50%	40%	10%
2	Reading makes me to get the critical thinking.	43%	37%	20%
3	Doing reading exercises to pass the exam.	45%	40%	15%
4	There is no any benefit for me.	45%	45%	10%
5	Create a good habit for the future work.	40%	50%	10%
Emotional Statement Question (ESQ)				
No.	ESQ- What kind of feeling do you have about reading?	Yes	No	Neither Yes or No
1	I feel very disappointment to face with the unfamiliar words but it is useful skill for me.	60%	30%	10%
2	I want to be an active reader but not practice.	30%	30%	40%
3	I’m so boring the reading text although I try to study it.	50%	24%	26%
4	I never read the text after teaching because I read again and again each course.	30%	30%	40%
5	I think reading skill without applying to be language proficiency.	30%	45%	25%
Habitual Statement Question (HSQ)				
No.	HSQ- How do you do your reading activity?	Yes	No	Neither Yes or No
1	I always like to read the text.	30%	35%	35%
2	Practice the reading text every day.	37%	23%	40%
3	Sometime do reading exercise.	50%	20%	30%
4	Read only the text when teaching in class.	42%	30%	28%
5	Study the reading exercises to pass the exam.	65%	20%	15%
6	I always use the dictionary at the time of reading passage.	40%	30%	30%
Teaching Statement Question (TSQ)				

No.	TSQ- How does your teacher teach you in reading text?	Yes	No	Neither Yes or No
1	Read only no explains detail and no give the instructions how to read it.	45%	40%	15%
2	Ask the student to read the text then say the answer only.	54%	30%	16%
3	Control the student when teaching to guideline what is reading.	50%	20%	30%
4	Use the bilingual method to understand and be effective teaching.	56%	30%	14%
5	Explain with the only translation of English for practicing language and getting other skills.	46%	23%	31%
6	Teach the text with the traditional method without sample explanation of update information.	55%	31%	14%
7	Create the appropriate techniques to receive the students' attention.	45%	43%	12%

If you want to discuss more, please express your suggestions.

FINDINGS

According to the collective data of the students' questionnaires, the reading is one of the important skills which are needed for the students at the universities of engineering studies .However, the students have been studying these skills, and they still face with the difficulties in reading. If the students are weak in the target language hey will find it very difficult to understand a text written in that language. Moreover, the students have the problems of the reading text which include the scientific terms, usages, unfamiliar words, complex sentences structures and so on.

The prescribed reading text at the university in **Basic Statement Question (BSQ)**, some students are made effort to become the proficient in their English language abilities and to improve in their respective fields. Although in this statements, three are average Yes-40%, No-30% and Neither Yes or No- over 13%. The certain factors of these statements are Yes- 60% (over), No-30% and Neither Yes or No- 10%. So, their purposes of learning a foreign language are not only to overcome in their examinations but also to be effective in their professional life. Although most of the students are not interested in English language developments and in their specialized subjects, they only try to pass in their examinations that are their aims of studying a foreign language. Therefore, all of the students are not the same in their goals of teaching a language. In the reading skill of **Conceptual Statement Question (CSQ)**, they know that it is an essential skill helps them to tackle various kinds of texts. But, they are very weak in their reading skill. In this situation, Yes- average over 40%, No- over 30% and Neither Yes or No-10%. It is clear that they do not enjoy reading, do not read much, and do not understand well texts written in English.

Emotional Statement Question (ESQ) in opinion of the about reading skill, Average Yes- over 30%, No- over 24 and Neither Yes or No- over 25%. So, the reading problems of these low-proficiency students are mostly associated with little-developed vocabularies, the unfamiliar words and phrases, poor reading habits in the native language and lack of linguistic ability.

Habitual Statement Question (HSQ) in reading activity, their % are according to the students interesting activity and habit so these statements % are not the same in this six statements. Average Yes- over 30%, No- over 20 and Neither Yes or No- over 15%. Moreover, they need to study the different style of reading strategies and the methods to improve the reading skill. Many of students want to read the very easy texts and the authentic technical texts. So, they meet the difficult text or new words, they do not read the text and skip the passage or words. As a result, their development of the reading skill is gradually decreased in their learning subjects. Therefore, the teachers training should emphasis the building of positive attitudes towards each individual student.

Teaching Statement Question (TSQ) teacher for teaching in reading text are Yes- over 45%, No- over 23 and Neither Yes or No- over 12%. The aim should be success for the students in the reading skill. The teachers should be prepared to guide the learners towards this success by being aware of their weakness and strengths, and should have enough knowledge about the skill. Moreover, a teacher of reading must distinguish between intensive and extensive reading.

While the former is generally slow, the latter is faster and aims at gaining a global understanding of the text being read. The teacher should guide their students how to use the reading strategies concerning with the texts. To improve the reading skill, the teacher should help and encourage them to become an efficient reader.

Reading in a second language is a skill that each language teacher has to strive to help their students improve so that they will be better able to benefit from their respective fields and beyond.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research believes that that reading skill and various strategies are currently to be achieved for the students: they need to read and understand their texts, and to become independent and fluent readers. Reading is an activity with various purposes and teacher's job is to help students master the strategies best suited to achieving different purposes. In other words, reading lesson should be used to develop students' reading proficiency rather than linguistic competence.

Therefore, the teachers need to train the students to read with understanding and to meet their needs in their future; and to train them to read correctly, with confidence and without error. In order to develop the reading skills of the students the recommended approaches followed by the techniques would be of great help to both language teachers and their students. On the part of the students, it takes a great deal of practice to be proficient through activities.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research report is to highlight the important of the reading skills of the B.E students at the Technological University (OhBo), Mandalay. The reading is the important skill for all the students in order to improve their reading fluency and increase their vocabulary knowledge.

Another way to encourage reading for general understanding is to remind students that they are reading for general understanding is to remind students that they are reading for pleasure and for benefits such as improving in their reading rate, increasing their confidence in their reading and consolidating grammar knowledge and soon. The more students read the better readers they become. Therefore, this paper is mainly emphasized on the students to improve their reading skill.

Moreover, the teachers are not only helping their students improve many aspects of their overall reading and language ability; they also might be opening a door to the variety of worlds that reading can present.

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