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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# EXTENSIVE READING- A TECHNIQUE TO ENHANCE/DEVELOP BETTER COGNITION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

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### ABSTRACT

English has become a part and parcel of our day to day life. Proper understanding of the language and lack of communication skills ceases our contact with the outside world and career prospects. English has become an indispensable tool to expose our career aspects, technological and scientific developments and seek jobs indigenously and in foreign countries. This paper presents students to adopt various techniques to build strategies to enhance vocabulary development, the importance of extensive reading to read independently, become fluent readers and to communicate like native speakers in English. The study was conducted on Engineering Graduates who opt English as a First Language and English as a second language. The students with English as a second language whose background was from the village level were comparatively slow in reading and lack communication skills and reading habits. The study was conducted on both levels of students and given a task. Therefore, this paper illuminates how to enhance vocabulary and strategies to develop and communicate the English Language Effectively.

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### INTRODUCTION

Today, English has a special status as global Language used in many contexts spoken all over the world. English language plays a vital role in Science, Technology, Government offices with a special emphasis as an official Language, semi-official language takes the pride as an international Language connecting different cultures, backgrounds in almost every nook and corner of the world."Crystal rightly assumes the power here includes the power of military, politic and economic." [01]. It has reached the privilege of global language because of political, military and the British imperialism and the rule of the British all over the world. "Crystal states that a language gains a status as a global language when it has special role that is recognized in every country in the world." [02]. Therefore, it does not relate that the language should be spoken as the first language, second or as foreign language. English is widely spoken as mother tongue language in the European countries, second Language in India, Singapore and other countries and a foreign Language in China, Russia, Egypt etc. Crystal states" there are various reasons for favouring English as the language to be learned ranging from need for business, trade and technological to political convenience". [01]. Due these reasons English has become an indispensable language to have contact with the other world linking as a common link language. To develop

proficiency in English language, extensive reading has a special status to improve reading skills where students develop vocabulary and build their career in the international market. This study mainly focuses on the reading skills, extensive reading and their benefits

#### Reading

Reading has a great influence to make progress in effective writing, speaking and exposes the students to have effective communication skills to build up their career and to seek employment opportunities indigenously and also to seek suitable career prospects at international level. Students should be encouraged to read books, magazines etc to build up the English vocabulary and communication skills.

Extensive Reading is the main focal point to attain vocabulary building, sentence formation and to enhance the language of English provided they are given ample time to read out of pleasure, choose books of their choice, easy to comprehend with a minimum of two to three difficult words in a page. Extensive reading encourages the students to read a number of texts, variety of selected topics, story books, magazines which suit their personal taste, time and to read individually. (Bamford and Day 1997) stated "Extensive Reading is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting

an overall understanding of the material". [03]. Students read the material in large volumes to have the general understanding of the printed material, get the main idea without the help of the teacher. In Intensive reading students read under the supervision of the teacher, takes notes, detailed understanding of every grammatical sentence in the text. In contrast intensive reading compensates them and makes them to comprehend the texts besides extensive reading motivates the students to read books of their choice, pleasure in reading and develop strategies to understand the texts The students for whom the English is the second language encounter some problems in reading and to understand the written Texts. Reading is the communication between the reader and the writer. Most of the Authentic books written by the authors have difficult vocabulary, complicated sentences which makes the students difficult to read individually. Therefore the students depend upon teachers to understand the texts.

In order to gain reading benefits students must read extensively out of pleasure, so that they can enjoy more in reading understand the paragraphs decode the sounds words and sentences and form new ideas. Burns (2003) states that "In addition to decoding sounds, words and sentences, reading requires upper-level thinking skills and social awareness".[03]. So, the readers form the new ideas, background knowledge and their experience to construct new ideas linking with the already known information and their cognitive skills and their previous schemata to understand the written information. The students become independent readers, build up confidence and read various printed material which is available in the library and use the language effectively in communicating with others, share books and build up their vocabulary. The teachers should encourage them to read independently and not to teach them but to help them to give independence in selecting books of their choice. Students should create social awareness to exchange books help each other and complete the given tasks.

As already stated vocabulary forms a significant role of second language learning. (Elley,1991) states "The most striking examples of the positive effects of extensive reading come from the "Book Flood" studies."[04]. The students should be given an opportunity to spend large amount of time in extensive reading programme so that they can select books of their choice and enrich their reading skills and vocabulary Most of the research has proved that the students lack lexical knowledge which involves vocabulary size and vocabulary depth or quality. Generally, lexical knowledge is defined as a combination of vocabulary breadth (size) and vocabulary depth (quality) (Shen, 2008; Qian, 1998) [05]. The main problem which arises in second language learning is that most courses in English concentrate mainly on teaching traditional methods of reading the same old methods of intensive teaching under the supervision of teacher not beyond the subject and given tasks to read and take notes and complete the tasks decided by the teacher. No doubt it mainly emphasis the reading comprehension and retention of vocabulary and there is no room for the student to choose the material of their choice, enhance their vocabulary and think independently. Extensive reading encourages to think independently, select books of their choice and gives ample scope to use their already stored knowledge to comprehend the printed material and become independent readers. The main aim is not to discourage the

intensive reading but to make them fluent readers, give them the chance to use their cognitive skills and read at their own reading speed and develop fast eye movements at a glance and understand the overall interaction and the idea of the writer.

Anderson and Pearson maintain that "a reader's schemata or knowledge already stored in memory, function in the process of interpreting new information and allowing it to enter and become a part of the knowledge store (p.255)" [06]. Schema theory plays a vital role where the students combine their previous background knowledge and link it with the unknown words and the text and employs his skills to understand the overall information of the selected topic of his choice. Students skill to digest the printed texts, mainly depends on schema formation before reading. Lack of schema formation in the mind drives the students to comprehend and understand the texts with great difficulty.

The students must be keen in selecting the topics of their choice. Teachers should advise the students to select and read the material of students choice.

In turn, reading activities can promote interpretation of the text through the interaction between the reader and the text [C.Wallace] and thus play a vital role in schema activation in order to comprehend and interpret the text better [W. Grabe, and L.F. Stoller].[06].

### **Schema Activation**

Finally, [I.H. Erten, and M. Karakas] reported that some activities (e.g., a combination of previewing, providing keywords, scanning, skimming ,clarifying, asking and answering questions, and drawing conclusions) contributed to the literal comprehension, while others (e.g., a combination of brainstorming, surveying ,reciprocal teaching, evaluation, inferring, re-reading, thinking aloud, and discussion), contributed better to the evaluative comprehension of short stories.[06].

All the above techniques serve as the background knowledge of the student to assess and interpret the written material. Students use the background knowledge of previewing the text to understand the overall content of the writer's idea to access fluent reading. The importance of background knowledge or students already stored Schemata serves as a tool to understand the text. Lack of proper Schemata cannot motivate the readers to read and create interest in the selected topic. Therefore, the reader must possess both linguistic structure like vocabulary building, sentence formation and the subject knowledge or content in which he has selected for reading.

P.L. Carrell ,and J.C. Eisterhold ,and E.Williams defined " The selected reading materials must activate students relevant schemata which will then lead to a better understanding of what is being read".[06].

The research proved that the background knowledge of the students has several advantages if properly utilized during reading. The Teachers should be keen in supervision that the reader fails to utilize background knowledge, sufficient reading to understand the text will not take place. The teachers should

know their students development through asking questions, progress in reading, understanding the text, solving the students problem, activating the cognitive strategies to comprehend the texts especially the background knowledge of the students to mould them into efficient and fluent readers.

E.WILLIAMS gives” Three phases-which he calls the pre-reading phase, the reading phase and the post-reading phase- - for teaching reading comprehension”.[06].

In pre reading phase the teachers can motivate the students to use pictures, movies, games, slides and some tasks like dialogue writing, using internet to listen speeches of great people, storytelling, listen new schannels and discuss views on the selected topics. The reading phase comprises to read extensively, understand the written matter and to use their own background knowledge without the support of the teachers. The research has proved the more the reading on the same subject continues the more retention of the subject goes in the mind and more understanding of the subject takes place. In addition automatic retention of vocabulary takes place without difficulty. In post-reading phase student automatically develop an inherent skill of linking the textual knowledge and the background knowledge.

In the latest teaching methodology ,excess drilling of the subject and a competitive spirit to gain ranks and overburden of lengthy topics and assignments these prereading activities are often neglected which has a drastic effect on their reading habits. Teachers often neglect due to strenuous work schedule in the class and there is no time left to concentrate on these pre-reading activities to motivate and encourage the strategies and inherent skills of the students and teach the text directly without knowing the background knowledge of the students.

Extensive Reading plays a vital role to enhance and revitalize the students inherent knowledge, activate their background knowledge, enhance the reading skills and vocabulary development. The main intension of extensive reading programme is to mould students to read extensively use the above strategies and understand the subject matter independently without the support of the teachers. The teachers have to give proper guidance to select books independently and read out of pleasure and cultivate reading habits to become fluent readers.

In general extensive reading gives a wide scope to understand the textual context, know the linguistic structures, sentence formation and to effectively use schematic or background knowledge.

### **Findings**

The sample of this study was conducted from 180 students at three different Engineering colleges of Bhaskar Engineering College, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology and Vidya Jyothi Institute of Technology in Moinabad. Out of the 180 students some students are from the village level whose background is Telugu Medium and opt English as a second language. They were given different tasks to read a biography of swami vivekananda, story of Akbar and Birbal and a

magazine on Sachin Tendulkar. The students selected different books of their choice and were asked to reproduce the main outline of the selected material.

The students were given a task for Reading a lesson on Leela’s Friend by R.K. Narayan a short story from Ist Year B.Tech Epitome of Wisdom (P.52,53) about 300 words. The glossary of difficult words were given at the end of the chapter to have an easy access to read without difficulty. The students tried to understand the text using their background knowledge and to frame sentences using the same word as a Noun, verb and Adjective etc., For Example the word “Careful” can be used as an Adjective and “Carefully” as an Adverb. This way of practical method of teaching to grasp the different usage of words through pleasure reading gave an ample scope to comprehend the texts.

Students were tested to fill in the blanks using clues of grammatical structures such as articles, verbs, prepositions etc.

### **Example**

1. She jumped ----- (into, in) the well (Suitable Preposition)
2. I have ----- (a, an) bicycle (Suitable Article)
3. Varsha ----- (Speak, Speaks) very fluently.(Suitable Verb)
4. I want to learn C++ during summer ----- (vacation, Vocation)n[Suitable word]

The students were asked to note down the adjectives, noun forms and adverbs in the printed material. The task was also given to find out the grammatical errors, prepositions note down the articles etc, Later, the students were given a task on debate and group discussion on the selected topics and found that they lack communication skills, errors in sentence formation, verb structures and tense formation and also faced difficulties in pronunciation of words. The workshop was conducted for a week and later found that the students fair well whose back ground was English Medium .The findings revealed that the students who had learnt English as the first language committed less mistakes and mostly the students who opt English as the second language tend to find difficulties in understanding the material and to reproduce the overall gist of the material. It was also found that the students who opt English as a second language tend to have less reading habits compared to the students with English as a First Language.

### **Suggestions**

In the latest trend of teaching English as a foreign language or Second Language attention must be paid to encourage students reading habits, to provide extra time and conduct classes to read and understand the printed material eg storybooks, magazines and general books under the supervision of the teacher to provide the material which is easy to understand. Even the syllabus in the academic curriculum be set aside to freely interact with the teacher and questions be framed according to their cognitive abilities. The glossary of difficult words be given at the end of the each chapter. Though to refer a good Dictionary like Cambridge or oxford Dictionary can be

suggested to get the exact meaning. Students be trained to know the prefixes and suffixes of the words to get the meaning of the words which can enhance their fluent reading. Dictionaries can be used as a tool but not as a reading material so that the students be engrossed in Dictionary Reading. Finally the main conclusion is to encourage them to read extensively and become fluent readers. The more you read the more you grasp and can know the latest trends in English Literature, sentence formation and avoid grammatical errors. The more the reading habits can enhance the reading abilities, the more retention of vocabulary words and accentuates the thinking or cognitive abilities and communicate like native speakers of English. The teachers who teach the students at the Middle or high schools can make a drastic change in the students English language development who encourage them to read the books Extensively especially outside the Class Syllabus like reading story books, Magazines and Newspapers and to make them clear by asking questions about their progress and to rectify their doubts.

### **Limitations**

This study throws light on the Students from rural and semi urban areas. The research on Extensive Reading has a great influence on the students learning strategies instead of old traditional methods.

Even the Grammar Translation Method is beneficial to some extent at the intensive level. The main aim is to make students understand and enjoy the material and not at the cost of indulging them to pain and to make them by heart the words like Machines.

This study can accerlate the reading habits, strategy to think on their own and retain the maximum number of words to become fluent readers and to enhance communication skills.

The role of teachers in the extensive reading programme is to encourage the students to read, utilize the schematic or background knowledge allot time to spend reading books extensively to become fluent readers.

Teachers should create a healthy environment to sustained uninterrupted silent reading programme to use the background knowledge of the students, encourage students to borrow books, discuss on the subject and pre-reading activities etc.

The research and findings revealed extensive reading should be encouraged in every part of the world and it should be included

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in the text syllabus to encourage and make students read extensively and enhance their reading and communication abilities. Extensive reading in the modern trend of computer technology paves way to expose to the outside world, exchange views of present trends of Reading strategies and to replace the old traditional way of teaching.

### **CONCLUSION**

Students mainly tend to make errors in the grammar and lack vocabulary development. If given proper training in teaching methods and to encourage students to read extensively the students can enhance their reading abilities. They can become efficient readers and improve fast eye movements and grasp the reading material at a glance. An extensive reading programme should be conducted especially an extra time be allotted after the class hours. A supplementary class library be provided where students be encouraged to choose books of their choice, borrow books from their friends and teachers should provide and encourage them to read independently.

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