DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION LEVELS AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Communication plays a significant role in our daily lives. As a result, efficient workplace operations depend on excellent communication. Strong communication abilities can improve anyone's adaptability and competitiveness at work, according to a wealth of studies. Each of us has the ability to communicate our messages, thoughts, feelings, thinking, imagination, and ideas. Each and every one of us is born with the capacity to communicate verbally. Every learner, therefore, undoubtedly requires great communication skills. As a result, educational institutions are under growing pressure to meet these needs. One of the most important matters that needs to be addressed is what efforts should be done to prepare the students for the workforce. This point of view contends that teachers have a vital role to play in helping pupils develop their communication abilities. Given the diversity in the classroom, it is becoming more and more important to use innovative methods and strategies, such developing high-quality instructional resources to help students develop their various communication sub-skills. This paper contributes to the current discussion regarding

communication skills in shifting contexts in an effort to better prepare our students for the challenges of the future. In order to provide readers a competitive edge in the job market, the article gives recommendations for enhancing the four key communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Keywords: Education, Classroom Practices, and Communication Skills

INTRODUCTION

Comprehension is defined as the act of "simultaneously extracting and producing meaning" in reading theory (Sweet & Snow, 2003). According to Blau (2003, 2003), conceptions of literacy have evolved along with historical and educational circumstances. The most recent literacy strategy, known as "critical literacy," encourages students to become strategic readers who can independently control, monitor, and change their reading habits. Reading comprehension abilities that enable readers to select the texts they will read, to think more critically when reading, and to move beyond simple summarising or retelling to construction and critical reflection on a text. To achieve this goal, teachers should expose students to a variety of written materials and provide teaching in effective reading comprehension strategies (Kirmizi 2009, Billmeyer, 2006)."Learning better reading techniques appears to be necessary to dispel the illusion of comprehension in readers who are content with low standards of comprehension; They need to acquire and implement techniques to facilitate deeper levels of comprehension," the author emphasises the importance of reading comprehension. As a result, language teachers main goal has been to help their pupils' reading comprehension by teaching them effective reading techniques.

Because of the complex and challenging factors involved in reading comprehension in general and EFL reading in particular, i.e., linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural variables, it has frequently been argued in reading literature that, despite the fact that reading strategies are helpful, "the engagement in reading is not the product of strategies alone but a fusion of strategies with mental dispositions." These mental tendencies or habits are frequently referred to as "Habits of Mind" (HoM). Academics have offered many comprehensive definitions of HoM. At least 16 Habits of Mind (HoM) can be utilised to identify intelligent problem solvers, according to Costa and Kallick (2008). These HoM include perseverance, regulating impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly, and thinking about thinking. According to Costa and Kallick (2008) claim that these HoM are performed in groups as opposed to solo HoM are adaptive, according to Billmeyer (2004); pupils can learn to enquire, take into account, and think critically. Moore and Hall claim that when utilised with purpose, HoM can help students actively interact with texts to enhance their reading comprehension. In order to help students create and practise these HoM in their reading practises and eventually evolve into an interdependent unit, Billmeyer (2004) emphasises that one of the primary goals of reading teaching must be to do so. Burgess and Jones claim that among the 16 mental habits listed by Costa and Kallick (2008), the following are specifically linked to enhancing reading comprehension: perseverance, controlling impulsivity, applying prior knowledge to new situations, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly,

communicating clearly and precisely, striving for accuracy, and taking calculated risks.

Four Components of Reading			
systematic phonics instruction	**phonemic awareness**	**fluency**	**reading comprehension**
knowing ABC's connecting sounds with letters learning letter sounds in order from easy to hard	connecting sounds to form words interpreting letter sounds accurately in particular words	grouping words in phrases inflection speed accuracy	understanding vocabulary recognizing context clues engaging actively gaining meaning making connections predicting

Figure-1

Additionally, with an emphasis on group reading practises, practitioners now favour reading tactics that emphasise conversation, such as literature circles, book clubs, reading apprenticeships, and Question the Author. Shared inquiry was first proposed in The Junior Great Books Foundations (2014) as a discussion-based reading technique that promotes difficult interpretive debate of complicated texts (Whitfield, 2013). It is based on the idea that people may understand a text more fully when they work together and are prompted by a leader's deft questioning. According to research on the motivational components of reading, higher student accomplishment in reading comprehension is found to be highly and positively connected with reading engagement, which keeps students interested and motivated for extended periods of time (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015).

According to V. Vaish (2016) and Wigfield et al., the phrase "engagement" as a goal of teaching reading is congruent with a multi-dimensional approach in that it covers behavioural, emotional/motivational, and cognitive dimensions (2008). As a result, it is assumed that the engaged reader is one who reads regularly, is cognitively active, and has a strong internal motivation to read (uses strategies in reading). According to the current study, reading engagement is "a meta-construct subsuming all aspects of reading: not simply motivation but a balance of interests, attitudes, motivation, self-regulation, and the ability to use cognition while reading to become fully engaged with a book."

Klauda and Guthrie (2015) studied how these factors interacted in struggling and advanced readers to look at how motivation, engagement, and achievement in reading changed in early adolescence. The findings showed that compared to advanced readers, struggling readers had worse motivational and engage mental links with performance. However, motivation predicted concurrent engagement and growth in engagement in the same way for both struggling and skilled readers. The idea that reading challenges limit struggling readers' motivation and engagement in learning activities was supported by these data. This overview

of the literature demonstrates the numerous research that demonstrate the importance of reading comprehension education and reading engagement. However, there is a paucity of expertise in the field of the application of solutions that blend cognitive and collaborative elements in the EFL context of teaching reading comprehension. The objective of the current study is to make a link between reading comprehension and research findings, in this case, the effectiveness of a suggested method based on shared inquiry and Habits of Mind in promoting reading engagement and comprehension in EFL students. This essay adopts a developmental perspective on reading comprehension to explore the question of whether a method based on habits of mind and shared inquiry can enhance the reading comprehension skills and reading engagement of EFL learners over a short period of time.

The capacity to take the necessary information from a written text and effectively understand it is known as reading comprehension (Grape & Stoller, 2002:17; Grellet, 1981). In other words, reading comprehension relates to how well readers comprehend and apply what they have read. The process of developing a precise interpretation of the text, according to Davies and Pearse (2002:90), begins with setting some expectations based on the type of text to be read (for example, a newspaper), then determining the topic and structure of the text. By triggering the reader's prior knowledge of the subject and causing an interaction between that knowledge and the text, this process aids the reader in making predictions about what might happen.

In addition, Grellet (1981:3–4) asserts that three elements—the type of material to be read, the goal of reading, the manner of reading, and the tactics the reader employs—affect understanding.

TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS AS A CONCEPT

Learning is the process by which a person, either independently or in response to a set of instructions, modifies their behaviour in a way that is useful to society. Teachers frequently design a certain setting in order to facilitate a specific learning. To intentionally influence a person's environment in order to facilitate their learning and produce a desired learning outcomes is to teach. Teaching encompasses helping and comprehending pupils both individually and collectively in a broader way. Giving students the educational opportunities they need will enable them to develop gradually and steadily into the roles they will play in the future workforce. Teachers can promote a positive socio-psychological environment where students can feel comfortable and learn more quickly by acting as instructional agents. The teacher manipulates and manages the content in ways that support learning in order to attain the intended learning outcome. A general definition of teaching communication skills is: A lively discussion between the teacher and the student while the communication skills curriculum is being covered. The dynamism results from the interaction between the teacher's behaviour and that of the students. This contact produces a special environment that serves a purpose. The design of this ecosystem is guided by some norms or guidelines. Students can increase the effectiveness of their learning by utilising the environment that has been built. The

effectiveness of the students' learning process is reflected in the qualitative improvement of their communication skills.

Figure-2
TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS
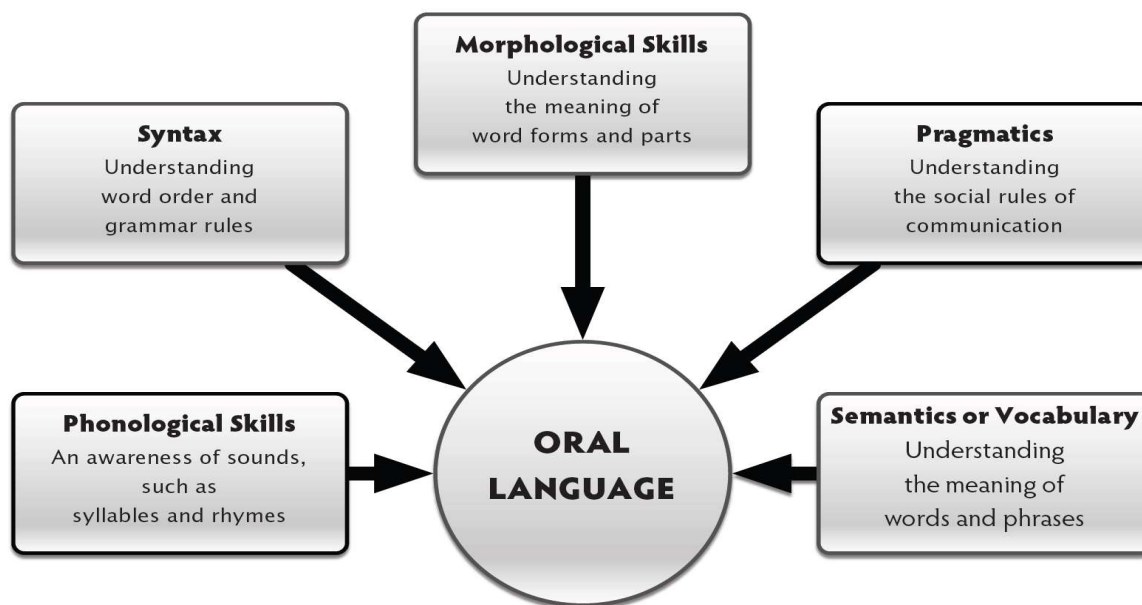
It is thought that teaching provides pupils with opportunities to learn. It involves interaction as well as planned activity. Teaching methods are the overarching principles, pedagogy, and management strategies used during classroom education. The choice of teaching methods is influenced by the educational philosophy of the instructor, the classroom population, the subjects being covered, and the mission statement of the organisation. These two groupings or paradigms are where the teacher-centered and student-centered teaching theories can be generally classified.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

By calling students' attention to the communication skills and outcomes they are developing as part of their study, we can recognise and make explicit what we already do in our courses. This means:

i. educating people about how communication skills are developed in the curriculum.

ii. explicitly connecting communication and learning outcomes.

iii. increasing students' awareness of the importance of learning outside of their immediate field of study

iv. giving students a language to speak with employers more effectively about their abilities, knowledge, and potential careers.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS TEACHING

The calculation of effectiveness takes into account the learning goals. Delivering knowledge on communication skills in a gorgeously presented lecture may be regarded as

successful. Even a well delivered lecture that doesn't inspire pupils to advance their skills may be worthless. "It is better to educate clearly and challenge the students to think by directing their attention to certain concerns than it is to be purposely confused," say Brown and Atkins (1999). To teach Communication Abilities effectively, one must recognise that effective teaching is a difficult, mentally taxing, and socially demanding work, and (ii) effective teaching is made up of a set of skills that can be learned, developed, and extended. A good teacher must be educated about both their subject and the learning process for students. So, how do you instruct? The abilities described below are necessary for all teachers to possess in order to engage with pupils in an appropriate manner and teach communication skills.

IMPORTANT BODY LANGUAGE

This is the most crucial communication skill a teacher should possess. An important aspect of excellent presentation skills is a powerful body language that is supported by vocal abilities. As a result, the students might develop a lasting impression. The lectures will inevitably become more interesting for the students as a result. A teacher must also maintain control over the volume, tone, and rhythm of their voice when lecturing. Sensibility to humour This element's importance is usually underestimated. When the teacher is amusing, the students stay attentive and interested in the lesson. A serious, unfunny educator does not benefit the pupils' general well-being. Recognizing the Students Teachers should encourage pupils to communicate freely with one another. It is preferable to build a dialogue rather than a monologue. Therefore, it is always advisable to seek the advice of students while resolving any issues that may arise with them.

To practise various communication skills tasks, you can use this strategy to break the class into small groups and have them work on projects or solve difficulties. This practise will improve interaction between the students and the instructor as well as between the students themselves. using innovative teaching methods to assist students in developing excellent communication skills

Both the teacher's function and their in-depth knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching are essential for the development of students' communication abilities. The importance of communication skills in routine education is something that all teachers need to be aware of. They must comprehend that each student has different degrees of talents and weaknesses. A teacher can only provide pupils with novel, practical solutions to their challenges if they have great communication abilities. As a result, a teacher can enhance the way in which communication skills are taught.

A classroom's communication dynamics have a significant impact on it. If the instructor makes an effort to support the students' communication abilities, the learning atmosphere in the classroom will improve. Effective communicators are more likely to contribute more to group projects, participate in class discussions, and ultimately learn more from their classroom

experiences.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN READING ACTIVITIES

As a reaction to the traditional comprehension and multiple-choice exercises, Davies and Green (1984) and Davies (1995) developed the Directed Activities Related to Text (DART) model of tasks (Nunan, 1999). Davies (1995:144) claims that the traditional comprehension and multiple-choice exercises, which may be used as the main measurement tool for comprehension, are "seen to have very limited potential as learning activities." As an alternative, Davies (1995) suggests the "active reading task," the most significant features of which are:

a) The types of texts to be used are typically "authentic and challenging"

b) Texts should give students a rhetorical or relevant framework so that they are able to analyse them easily.

c) Regularly, the tasks require an oral reading by the teacher or a student followed by silent reading of the text.

d) Tasks should give students an opportunity to interact with the text and with each other.

e) Engagement of students should be achieved through direct analysis of the text rather than by answering indirect questions.

Furthermore, Davies (1995:144) claims that, by considering these features, the active reading tasks may change the way students interact with the given text as follows:

a) Students' hypotheses about texts will be more explicit

b) Students will share their ideas and evaluate each other's hypotheses by referring to the text.

c) There will be discussions about different interpretations

d) Students will have the opportunity to ask about what they do not know, rather than having to answer questions that may appear inappropriate or that they already know the answers

e) Students learn how to give a critique of the reading text.

STRATEGIES FOR READING COMPREHENSION

There are a variety of comprehensive strategies that could be considered when teaching reading to second/foreign language learners, including:

a) Giving a purpose for reading
b) Previewing the text
c) Predicting
d) Skimming
e) Scanning
f) Clustering
g) Guessing
h) Analyzing unknown words

i) Differentiating between literal and implied meanings
(Brown, 2001:292; Grape & Stoller, 2002:16; Nunan, 1999:265)

CONCLUSION

The report discussed numerous effective teaching techniques and state-of-the-art technological tools for teaching and acquiring communication skills. The strategies selected depend on the session's learning goals. Active learning ought to be promoted in the classroom. The goal of using effective teaching techniques and media is to engage students in the learning process while raising their level of communication abilities. It is hoped that currently employed teachers will consider all of the recommendations in the paper in light of their individual teaching approaches and personalities and make an effort to implement some of them in the course they are currently teaching, and then possibly some more in the course after that. Though it will be difficult to anticipate to what extent the strategies will be successful in reaching the learning objectives, we can declare with high confidence that their implementation will increase the quality of learning that occurs in the classrooms.

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