

# INTRODUCING READING PHENOMENA FOR COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS - THE STUDY

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## Abstract :

*English Language occupied a distinguished position as an international and link language to unravel the scientific, academic, business and economical pursuits of intellectual knowledge. Technology has created an easy access of learning the innovative and creative methods of wide usage of latest techniques in variant fields of Medicine, science and Technology, Business, space exploration etc., to update our knowledge with global market competition. The incorporation of Multimedia technology such as CALL (Computer assisted Language Learning) combining pictures, videos and audio files etc., has become the latest trend of teaching communicative language teaching to suit the learner needs with more advanced technology. The mastery of English has become an essential element of global market especially in the spheres of spellings, grammar, lexical and syntactical structures of word formation etc., for a clear and expressive manner.*

*Extensive reading which is mostly done in and out of the classroom hours enrich the students to read a wide variety of books to scan as many books as possible with lots of pictures, animated Short stories, Magazines, Comics, Biographies etc., graded at their level of learning. Reading is defined as an interactive process of individual activity to assess the length of the materials and the capability to utilize relevant skills and strategies. It is a process where the reader constructs the meaningful insight of learning the unconscious language input with active participation of free voluntary reading in a tension free environment. Reading facilitates the readers to activate their Cognitive and Meta-Cognitive skills such as fast reading, Skimming, Scanning and to decode the features of the language through graphic signs and symbols, tables, pictures etc., The more the student reads, the more process of learning takes place to fix their attention on the specific areas of pronunciation, Spellings, Morphological and syntactic structures of word usage through visual and mental processing of higher frequency words to deal more advanced texts with deep understanding.*

*This paper tries to focus on the students reading habits to activate their self learning techniques and adopt suitable skills and strategies to their pace of learning. The main objective is to create a positive attitude of reading culture. The findings of the study was conducted on Engineering Graduates at B. Tech level on various aspects of practical teaching through Multimedia ie., CALL (Computer assisted Language Learning) combining the audio and Video files, paper presentations and give them the tasks of reading graded materials with simplified vocabulary with interesting characters, lively dialogues, plots etc., to motivate their background knowledge. The sample consists both the levels of students who opt English as Second Language and the students with English as the First language as medium of instruction. The research study clearly stated that the students with English as Second Language tried to focus on simplified texts with easy vocabulary with lots of pictures, animated Short stories etc., On the other hand the students with English as the First Language tried to comprehend the texts to pick out the usage of words, collocations and grammar with a reasonable sense of learning the target language. The readers realize that reading facilitates to explore the essence of intellectual literary excellence through incidental learning of various shades of words in different contexts in Short stories, Magazines, Biographies etc., The study on Extensive reading gives an ample scope for the students to build their self confidence, purpose of reading, set goals and implement the relevant skills and strategies such as to predict the content of the story, title or chapter headings through quick visual insight of words, phrases and syntactical structures etc., to become self-reliant and life-time readers and writers.*

**Key Words :** CALL, Cognitive, Meta-Cognitive, Schematic, Semantic Mapping etc.,

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### **1. Introduction:**

English has a special status of international reputation of wide applicability and efficacy to express our feelings, thoughts and ideas in various spheres of research, Medicine, Science and Technology, Business etc., The beginning of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) with internet web generated pages on a wide variety of topics of print rich materials will engage in active participation of reading culture to develop automaticity and self-learning strategies with less teacher support. The element of learning Grammar, vocabulary, lexical patterns of word usage through careful analysis of detailed meaning, refer dictionary and answer the teacher selected comprehension passages has become outdated. The latest innovative methods of Teaching through communicative language teaching has gained much impetus to engage their learning process through practical methods combining Multimedia technology with internet generated web pages, to leaf through a variety of graded materials with easy vocabulary and to select texts suitable to their level of learning. This will automatically build their reading fluency, fast eye-movements, visual perception of words, phrases and usage of language with controlled vocabulary especially in the areas of Pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, collocations and syntactical structures as the reader experiences the usage of words are not constant and vary according to the context. Therefore, the readers have to be flooded with a variety of genre on different topics such as Short stories, Magazines, Biographies, Comics etc., where the reader experiences the beauty of language engrossed into the world of exciting plots, characters, animated dialogues with deep understanding of the printed words. The text acts as a tool to direct the readers to pick up the collocations, phrases, grammar and idiomatic expressions through incidental visual and graphic display of situations or events in chronological order of writer's opinion or thoughts in a story or paragraph. The real aspect of reading depends on the readers' Schemata or background knowledge to get familiar with the content or topic of the text or paragraph to utilize their skills to decode the features of the language through semantic or mental process of mind mapping to analyse the information, emotion, knowledge and literature of the written language.

Krashen (1982) argues that students can acquire language on their own provided that a) they receive enough exposure to comprehensible language and b) it is done in a relaxed, stress-free atmosphere. [ 01] The research study has proved that the students with regular exposure of print rich materials engaged in stress free environment acquire

the required skills and strategies to incidental learning of various aspects of lexical depth of knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, syntactical structures, spellings with profound learning to review the length of texts with cover page, guess the content or topic of the story or paragraph, title, headings, sub-headings etc., suitable to their pace of learning. This paper gives an elaborate discussion of Extensive reading to include simplified texts in the curriculum with lots of pictures, animated Short stories, Magazines, Biographies etc., to engage them for longer duration of silent un-interrupted reading in a tension free environment.

## **2. Silent Reading :**

Reading involves as a process of interaction to analyse the incidental visual graphic display of the printed words through active participation of word recognition to attain automaticity and language fluency. Reading is an excellent way of transmitting our ideas and thoughts, visualize the written language in the form of graphic signs or symbols, judge the degree of complexity of texts to focus on the usage of words, syntax, grammar and vocabulary through practical experience and exposure to the printed materials. The research has proved that the students who engage for longer duration of concentrated hours of silent reading will automatically develop certain skills and strategies such as to skip the unknown words, guess the content of the story or paragraph to browse through a few pages to identify the tables. Graphs, pictures etc., which stirs up the readers background knowledge or experience of the subject.

Silent reading is an excellent way of learning the different shades of meanings as the reader realizes the words are not constant and differ according to the context. The selected materials should activate their background knowledge where students employ their practical knowledge to pick out the words, phrases, idiomatic expressions, collocations through bottom up process. Top- down approach involves the readers to link the textual knowledge and schematic knowledge through Skimming, Scanning the relevant information such as the content of the story, title, headings, sub-headings tables, graphs etc., to grasp the central idea of the subject knowledge. The main objective is to engage them in free voluntary reading with simplified texts with lots of interesting animated Short stories, Magazines, comics etc., to extract the textual information through semantic and mental processing of mind in a systematic manner. Psychologists and Researchers have proved that the students with print rich exposure will automatically develop certain skills and strategies as the readers encounter words 1-17 times in different contexts that stirs up their confidence and interest to become self-reliant and life-long readers.

## **3. Significance of the study :**

This paper tries to focus on the importance of Extensive reading where students are provided with enormous variety of simplified texts to motivate their inherent skills and strategies to gain overall understanding rather than the language. This will automatically activate the students relevant schemata to extract and analyse the textual information such as to identify the index, headings, sub-headings, title or chapter headings to focus on the readers interest and confidence to achieve aesthetic beauty of reading.

## **4. Methodology:**

The research findings were conducted on 300 students from three different Engineering Colleges at B.Tech level at Shaaz college of Engineering & Technology, Sagar Institute of Technology and SV College of Engineering & Technology, Moinabad to examine their proficiency levels. The research sample consists of students who are from the village level with English as second language or third language as a medium of instruction. In fact they have poor reading habits and mostly depend on ready made materials to pass out the Examinations with minimum knowledge to apply skills and strategies to tackle the texts at their level of understanding. Besides, the other sample consists of Students with English as First Language with some basic knowledge of Pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to read the texts that match their level of understanding. The workshop was conducted for a week to test their proficiency level of reading simplified graded materials with lots of pictures, animated Short stories, Magazines, Comics etc., to inculcate the habit of regular exposure of printed materials. As a Pre-Reading Activity, the students were tested to read simplified texts of different variety of topics specially designed in the curriculum

activity. The students were asked to maintain a reading log to note down the complexity of the texts in the spheres of vocabulary, Spellings, grammar, syntax etc., to carefully leaf through a few pages before reading. The students were advised to skip through the unknown words for fluency and to ignore the texts which cannot motivate their interest to read further. As a initial reading the students were taught to refer Pre-fixes and Suffixes, review the length of the materials and to judge whether the language and vocabulary is acceptable to follow the ideas and thoughts of the written language.

S.NO	SIMPLIFIED TEXTS	COMPLEXITY LEVEL	EXCELLENT	GOOD/AVERAGE	REMARKS
01	MAGAZINES				
02	COMICS				
03	SHORT STORIES				
04	E-BOOKS (ELECTRONIC BOOKS)				
05	NOVELS				
06	FICTION/NON-FICTION				

#### Activity [No.01]

The workshop was conducted for a week to engage students in regular reading habits and to employ suitable skills and strategies to guess the content of the story, skim and scan the table of contents, title, headings, Sub-headings cover page through accurate perception of words, phrases, fast eye-movements and to guess the sequence of characters, plots, pictures etc., to form constructive ideas and thoughts through semantic and mental processing of mind. The students were given a task on the lesson “The Cyber Age” an internet article on Polymer Banknotes- the latest innovation in the age of computers from the 1st Year “Skills Annexe” [PNO.97-100] about 300 words. As a Pre-Reading Activity the students were asked to focus on the main concept of the topic through brief discussions, visualize the scenes, to express their valid opinions and suggestions on the given topic. After reading the given lesson the students were asked to note down the key sentences, words phrases and skip the unknown words to summarize the sequence of events to activate their background knowledge. The practical method of logical thinking and to judge their materials on their own will automatically build their inner capabilities and confidence to pick up the word usage, collocations, spellings and pronunciation etc. through incidental process of language learning. Graded materials are the ideal source of learning where students can enrich their language input especially the glossary of unknown words mentioned at the end of each lesson to awaken their interest to learn different shades of meanings such as the formation of words from Nouns to Adjectives as “Modesty as a Noun and “Modest as an Adjective will automatically enhance their subject knowledge through incidental learning process.

#### Activity [ No.02]

Students were given a task in the areas of Grammar, vocabulary, lexical structures of words to examine their proficiency of learning to gain command and control over the language. The students were provided with clues that best fits the given blanks to make a meaningful sentence in different areas of grammar, Spellings and vocabulary knowledge to make them realize the formation of words in different contexts.

#### Example

1. A computer's memory is measured in ----- [ Bite, Bytes] (Suitable word)
2. It is a good book ---- [in, on] Psychology (Suitable Preposition)
3. I have ----- [a, an] unit test tomorrow (Suitable Article)
4. I ----- [ am smelling, smell] roses and jasmine in the room ( Suitable Tense/verb)

The study focus on the students reading various graded materials with lots of pictures, animated Short stories, Magazines etc. to guess the content of the story, title, Chapter, headings and sub-headings and to carefully analyse the length and complexity of texts. This way of practical method of teaching will automatically stir up their background knowledge or experience with the subject to pick up the usage of words, collocations, lexical and grammatical construction of words to produce meaningful paragraphs, reports, essays etc., to become effective readers and writers. The research study was conducted on both the levels of students to make them aware that reading simplified texts on various topics provide learners the directions to activate their background knowledge to focus on all the relevant areas of Spellings, pronunciation, grammar, syntax etc., The findings of the study revealed that the students with English as a Second Language tried to comprehend the selected materials with some errors in the areas of Grammar, Pronunciation and usage of words with poor reading abilities. On the other hand the students with English as First Language has shown remarkable capabilities in the areas of pronunciation, Spellings and usage of words with few exemptions in grammar and pronunciation of unknown words. At the end of the Programme the study indicated that the students showed better response to read different graded materials on a variety of topics with lots of interesting characters, plots, animated Short stories, Magazines, Comics etc., which suit their cognitive levels of understanding in a tension free Environment.

### 5. Literature Review :

Hitosugi and Day (2004) define it in following way: In an ER approach, students read large quantities of books and other material that are well within their linguistic competence. [ 02]. This clearly states that the students are to be provided with a wide range of graded materials such as Biographies, Magazines, Comics, Fiction etc., which match their level of understanding to acquire incidental process of learning, try to guess the subject content, skip the unknown words such as to predict the title, headings, sub-headings, graphs with a keen sense of accurate visual perception of the word recognition for language proficiency. The students with more exposure to the print media will automatically develop their individual self learning process to pick out the depth of knowledge especially in the areas of Pronunciation, Spellings, Syntax such as to decode the features of the language through Semantic mapping, graphic display of fast eye-movements necessary to tackle more advanced texts in a systematic manner. The research study has proved that the readers who engage in free voluntary reading use different shades of self learning such as Bottom-up process for learning the words, phrases and spellings and top down process refers to connect and relate his background knowledge of the printed texts.

[P.L. Carrell, and J.C. Eisterhold ] formalize the role of background knowledge in language comprehension as schema theory, and claim that any text either spoken or written does not itself carry meaning. [ 03]. Therefore, the texts supply the readers to focus their direction on the subject matter or topic in the spheres of grammar, spellings, pronunciation etc., in the form of graphic presentation of tables, figures as the readers have to employ their relevant schematic knowledge to bring information, emotion culture to the written language. Simplified graded materials with lots of pictures, Magazines, comics, animated Short- stories etc., have to be carefully designed in the curriculum activity for the students of English as Second Language to browse through a variety of topics to facilitate the readers engross into the world of literary excellence. Reading refers to selective process of active participation of interaction of the written language where the readers get exposed to interesting characters, plots, literature and lively dialogues etc., of graphic display of words, phrases, collocations through incidental process of learning. Psychologists and Researchers claim that the students who were provided self selected materials will automatically develop their Cognitive and Meta-Cognitive skills and strategies to judge the complexity of texts, word recognition and mastery of the language learning suited to their level of understanding.

Day and Bamford (1998) note that it is only through the actual reading experience that L2 or FL readers can acquire the complex linguistic, world, and topical knowledge needed to improve their reading skills. [04] This clearly states

that Extensive reading which is mostly done outside the classroom hours play a vital role to build confidence and interest to read self selected materials on a wide range of topics which awakens the students background knowledge or experience of the subject knowledge as the readers realize the words are not constant and vary according to the situation and context. Therefore, the readers guess the content of the story or comprehension passages for central idea to learn different shades of meanings to express their thoughts and ideas in a clear expressive manner.

As Spencer and Hay (1998) put it: Word recognition is an essential component in the mastery of reading ....and considerable evidence suggests that the major difficulty confronting the Beginning reader is the development of rapid, automatic word recognition skills..... [05] The main objective of Extensive reading is to provide an ample scope to capture the readers' attention to select their own materials for self direction and motivation to leaf through a few pages, review the length and complexity of the texts to match their pace of learning. The more process of learning on the same subject or topic awakens the students background knowledge or experience of incidental lexical depth of visual perception of words, phrases, collocations, syntax etc., to gain control and command over the language. The research findings have revealed that the students who engage for longer duration of concentrated free voluntary reading will naturally develop automaticity of word recognition, accurate fast eye-movements which include spellings, vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation as the learners come across new words 1-17 times in different contexts of printed or internet generated web pages.

ER is "the reading of large quantities of material for information or pleasure" with "the immediate focus on the content being read, rather than on language skills" (Lituanas, Jacobs, and Renandya, 1999, p. 4).[ 06]

Therefore, the teachers have to design the curriculum based on the students reading habits, simplified texts with lots of pictures, graphics etc., utilize their learning techniques and strategies which create greater knowledge of reading materials with the proper guidance of teachers to focus on the main ideas of the comprehension or story instead of reading line by line. Graded materials are the simplified versions of original texts where students employ certain steps, techniques and strategies unconsciously to spot out the graphic presentation of words, phrases, collocations, spellings etc., to become self-reliant and independent readers and writers.

The process of self learning techniques refers to the students schematic knowledge and a positive attitude of reading culture to engage them for longer periods of Silent reading to develop automaticity of reading fluency. Teachers play a vital role to assist students to give them the practical methods of teaching such as Pre-Reading, While-reading and Post-Reading activities to inculcate their regular reading habits in a tension free Environment. These activities will naturally build their self confidence and motivation to acquire general awareness of the subject, identify their weakness in the relevant areas and adopt the relevant skills and strategies to become better readers and writers.

In Pre-Reading phase, the teacher engage the students to activate their background knowledge through brief discussions, visualize the chronology of events, summarize and to guess the content or context of the topic, title, headings and sub-headings etc., with the visual presentation of slides, pictures, audio and videos to express their valuable opinions and suggestions. In the second Phase ie., the While-Reading Phase the students read the story or paragraph and try to employ their relevant skills and strategies to tackle the textual information through discussion, asking questions and note down the points to express their valid suggestions and opinions. In the third Phase the Post-Reading Phase the students try to connect the textual information with their self-learning techniques or Schematic knowledge through matching exercises, cloze tests and to respond to the cut up sentences in the story or comprehension passages. These activities are often neglected by the teachers due to busy schedule and time constraints which is a remarkable component of practical methods of self-learning techniques to gain command and control over the language. Therefore, the right approach of practical methods of teaching graded materials with controlled vocabulary will facilitate the readers to active participation of engaged reading, learning the incidental vocabulary and language.

The advent of Computer Language learning (**CALL**) has become an effective tool to make students realize the practical methods of teaching through internet combining animated pictures, video and audio files etc., for effective learning of language acquisition. Reading provides the learners with rich source of vocabulary as the learners come across words repeated in different contexts on a wide variety of topics available in web pages or printed texts. This will automatically develop their inherent skills and self learning techniques to choose the relevant materials, review the complexity and length of the materials suited to their pace of learning. Internet provides the learners to download

the speeches of fluent speakers, watch and download videos, News channels and discuss their creative thoughts and ideas through e-mails to gain better command and control over the language. Simple tasks such as Picture description, introduce characters, plots, writing short stories, reports, letters and recording the voices, role-plays debates etc., support the students to develop creative and innovative ideas and thoughts in a clear expressive manner. Therefore, the materials have to be carefully graded with lots of pictures, animated Short stories, comics, Biographies etc., for the students of English as Second language in a practical method of teaching with the mention of glossary of unknown words at the end of each lesson. This aspect of students practical approach of regular reading habits for longer concentrated periods of silent uninterrupted reading in a tension free environment will naturally develop automaticity of word recognition, accurate visual insight of words, fast eye-movements with minimum support of teachers to become effective readers and writers.

#### **6. Limitations :**

The research study was conducted in the rural areas of Moinabad where students lack proper reading habits and apply relevant strategies to grasp the central idea of visual presentation of written language. The work shop was conducted for a week to make students aware of their individual self learning techniques to select their own reading materials such as to review the length and complexity of texts suited to their level of understanding. The students were asked to read a variety of topics such as Magazines, comics, Biographies etc., with lots of animated Short stories, Magazines, comics etc., and to leaf through as many books and magazines graded to their cognitive levels of understanding. Teachers play a vital role to design the curriculum with interesting topics where the students focus on the relevant skills and strategies to spot out the usage of words, collocations, syntax etc., ability to judge their reading materials, browse through internet web pages, download and watch lively presentations of eloquent speakers on a wide range of topics, video games, grammar exercises, News channels etc., The main concept of Extensive reading is to create interest and make students realize their individual talents such as to skip the unknown words or difficult phrases for general understanding to create fluency in reading rather than the literary merit. The research findings have revealed that the students lack in certain areas of language learning ie., to judge their reading materials, recognize the title, headings, sub-headings etc., with a few exceptions in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of unknown words. The main objective of Extensive reading is to make students realize their individual talents to analyse and evaluate their own reading materials, browse through internet, skip the unknown words without the help of Dictionary, identify and solve their problems for effective command over the language. This will automatically develop greater awareness of the subject knowledge, engage in active learning activities to become self-reliant and life-long readers and writers.

#### **7. Suggestions :**

The findings of the study proved that the students who engage in active reading culture develop certain skills and strategies such as to identify their goals of reading, skip the unknown words to grasp the central idea of the topic through accurate visual perception of words, phrases which match their level of understanding. Extensive reading is a perfect way of learning the different shades of meanings and word recognitions as the readers realize that the structure of words are not constant and vary according to the context. The text is used as a tool to extract the information in the areas of syntax, collocations, grammar and lexical patterns of word order in the form of eye catching phrases or sentences through graphic display of diagrams, pictures, tables etc., but the readers bring the practical information, knowledge, emotion, and culture derived from the printed texts. The research findings on Extensive reading revealed that students who are exposed to regular print media develop outstanding performance in word recognition, incidental language acquisition and depth of knowledge which covers pronunciation, spellings, meanings, fast eye movements and quick visual and mental processing of language input to skip the unknown words to tackle more advanced texts to produce meaningful paragraphs, reports, essays etc., in a clear expressive manner. Psychologists and researchers have proved that the students have to encounter the words atleast 1-17 times in different contexts of word exposure to gain mastery and command over the language. The main objective of Extensive reading is to make students realize the importance of free voluntary reading of simplified texts with controlled vocabulary on various topics of interest with the mention of glossary at the end of each lesson to check their progress of learning in the areas of word usage, syntax, grammar and lexical patterns of sentences to become self dependent and life-long readers.

#### **8. Conclusion:**

The findings of the study conducted for a week on Extensive reading Programme have focused on the students reading habits and to implement graded materials with lots of animated short stories, comics, Magazines, Biographies etc., to match their pace of learning. Teachers have to carefully design the materials in the curriculum on a wide variety of topics with interesting characters, plots, lively dialogues etc., and introduce tasks such as Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-Reading activities to activate their background knowledge. The text acts as a tool to provide direction of linguistic knowledge such as idiomatic expressions, grammar, word usage through graphic display of written language and the reader constructs the meaning and sense of the subject knowledge. The research study on Extensive reading has proved that the students with regular exposure of print rich materials will automatically develop incidental language learning, ability to select their reading materials through discussions, self evaluation, identify the key sentences, words, phrases, fast eye-movements and to quickly scan the length and complexity of texts which match their pace of learning. Therefore, Extensive reading is the best method to engage students for longer duration of concentrated silent reading to develop automaticity and overall implementation of comprehensible language input in the areas of spellings, collocations, pronunciation and usage of words to become self-reliant and life-long readers and writers.

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