EXPOSING STUDENTS TO PREDICTING, PREVIEWING AND PARAPHRASING USING AUTHENTIC AND CONTEXT-BASED TEXTS IN READING: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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Abstract: The paper attempts to expose the under graduate students of Govt. First Grade College, Jewargi Karnataka to reading strategies such as predicting, previewing and paraphrasing using authentic and context-based texts in developing reading skills in the context of ESL. The authentic and context-based tasks/activities have been chosen from the English newspapers widely circulated in India; the Times of India, The Hindu, and The Indian Express. The data was analyzed using certain language parameters (Excellent, Good, Average and Below average) for testing the pre test and post test scripts. The data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings evidently show that the students developed an inclination to read English newspapers and understand the content in addition to applying reading strategies like, predicting, previewing and paraphrasing while writing. They also learnt to apply 'think, pair and share' strategy while reading the texts. Thus significant improvement was seen in word recognition to identification of discourse indicators.

Keywords: Authentic Materials, Reading Strategies, TPS Strategy, Reading tasks, Classroom exercises/tasks.

INTRODUCTION

This paper exposes the students of undergraduate course to reading strategies that can be employed while reading and comprehending the texts in English. The main purpose of this paperis to help the students

1. Read English newspapers and understand the content
2. Learn grammar; from word recognition to discourse indicators
3. Distinguish between compare and contrast ways of presenting
4. Use of presentation styles of reporting in journalism.

The study is conducted in three different stages viz., pre-reading stage, while reading and post-reading stages and the data was analyzed conducting pre-test and post-tests using language parameters for measurement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section an attempt has been made to review various theoretical insights highlighting the importance of acquiring reading skills in an ESL Context. Research studies by Sharda Kaushik and Bindu Bajwa, (2009) state that the initial

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purpose of learning to read in a language is to have access to the literature in that language. Based on this premise, the language instruction materials were selected predominantly from literary texts in the history of language teaching for decades. But over a period of time, language teaching has moved towards development of skills.Principallycommunicative approach to language teaching created a greater impact in redefining the role of reading in the classroom. It also emphasized in restoring the type of texts to be used in developing reading skills. Use of authentic materials such as newspaper articles, advertisements, programme guides, travel brochures, train time tables, etc. have been instrumental in the development of communicative abilities.

As stated by Krashen (1989), reading significantly contributes to competence in a second language. 'Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning and the goal of reading is comprehension' (Nunan, 2003, p.68). 'The ability to read requires that the reader draw information from a text and combine it with information and expectations that the reader already has' (Grabe, Stoller, 2001, p.187).

Reading strategies are a part of reading process which can be defined as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning" (Duffy, 1993, p. 232). Reading strategies can be taught to students that help improve student performance on tests of comprehension and recall (Carrell, 1985; Carrell, Pharis, &Liberto, 1989; Pearson & Fielding, 1991).Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). Reading strategies refer to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text and make sense of what they read (Barnett, 1988).

In the same vein 'Reading comprehension is defined as a process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement in the written language. It is a process by which successful learners construct the meaning of texts'. (RAND Reading Study Group Report (2002) cited in Elizabeth B. Bernhardt, 2011, p. 7) Since reading for comprehension is the primary purpose for reading, raising awareness of main ideas of text to students and exploring the organization of a text. It becomes essential for language development.

Schema Theory

Schema Theory is based on the belief that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:73 in Nigel Stott: 1). Thus, readers develop a coherent interpretation of text through the interactive process of "combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text" (Grabe 1988:56 in Nigel Stott: 1). Readers' mental stores are termed

'schemata' (Cook 1997:86 in Nigel Stott: 1) and are divided into two main types: 'content schemata' (background knowledge of the world) and 'formal schemata' (background knowledge of rhetorical structure).

Schema theory emphasizes the importance of the reader's background knowledge in the reading process (Carrell, 1998, p. 4). According to this theory, so as to comprehend a text, readers make use of both the text and their background knowledge. Therefore, interaction of the background knowledge and the text is essential for efficient reading. The schema theory explains how the reader uses the existing knowledge to comprehend texts, both bridging the missing gap and elaborating the text meaning (Anderson, 1984).

METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted in two different stages viz., pre-reading, while reading and post-reading through reading activities/tasks followed by the data analysis of pre-test and post-test by introducing and exposing students to the newspaper articles. The data for these two stages has been collected from 50 students; 30 male students and 20 female students of an undergraduate college; Govt First Grade College Jewargi of Karnataka India, who are studying in B.A/B.Sc/B.Com/BBM courses. The learners chosen for the study have basic level of proficiency.

Description of the Reading Tasks/Activities

The reading tasks/activities for the present study have been drawn from the inaugural speech of the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi which was reported from three different English newspapers articles, the Times of India's 'PM Inaugurates 103rd Indian Science Congress', The Hindu's 'Oceans can usher in prosperity, says Modi' and The Indian Express's 'Focus on Five Es, PM TellsScientists'. The speech was delivered during the inaugural of 103rd Indian Science Congress, held in Mysuru on January 3 2016.

Pre-Reading Stage and While-Reading Stage

In this stage students before reading newspaper articles were given pre-reading questions without any instructions for which they have to ponder on before reading, such as

1. Do you read English newspapers every day?
2. Name the English newspaper that you read?
3. How many times do you read newspaper article to understand?
4. Do you understand easily when you read newspaper?
5. What type of article makes you interested in reading newspaper?
6. Do you have any difficulties in reading newspaper?

And once students finished reading the articles they were also asked to predict, understand the content and theme of the articles. Later, they were instructed to write down a summary of the articles based on their primary understanding. It was found that writing becomes inextricable to reading activity in which the students invariably apply the strategies of recall and predict the meaning and content of the text assigned to them.

Findings of Pre-Reading Stageand While-Reading Stage (Pre-Test)

In this study a qualitative analysis of students' written scripts that are a part of the pre-reading stage has been done using certain parameters (Excellent, Good, Average and Below average) with detailed statistical tools.It is also evident that while students attempt to work on language elements, they learnt to use prepositions, difficult words, phrasal verbs, prefixes-suffixes, one word substitutes, conjunctions etc. They also employed reading strategies such as predicting, previewing and paraphrasingthe text. Communication without vocabulary will break down. The parameters of pre-reading stage are presented in the following table followed by the description of student performances in pre -test presented graphically.

TABLE 1

Language Elements/	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Average	1 Below Average
Predicts the Meaning of Difficult Words	Students predicted the meaning of difficult words from article without referring to the article	Students predicted meaning of difficult words but used article for reference	The students predicted the closer (synonym) meanings of difficult words referring to the article	The students could not predict the meaning of difficult words
Relates to the use of appropriate Prepositions	The students picked up all the prepositions and related to the text without reference to the article given in context	The students picked up all the prepositions and relate to the text but used article for reference in context	The students partially picked up all the prepositions and related them to the text in context	The students could not relate prepositions to the text in context
Relates to the Meaning of Phrasal Verbs	The students picked up all the phrasal verbs and related them to the text without referencing to the text	The students picked up all the phrasal verbs and related to the text but used article for reference	The students partially related phrasal verbs to the text in context	The student could not relate phrasal verbs to the text in context

| Language Elements/	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Average	1 Below Average
Guesses the meaning of Prefixes and Suffixes	The students guessed the meaning of suffixes and prefixes in the text without referring to the text	The students guessed the meaning of suffixes and prefixes, but used article for reference	The students to some extent guessed the meaning of suffixes and prefixes in context	The students could not guess the meaning of suffixes and prefixes in context
Relates to the Meaning of Conjunctions	The students picked up all the conjunctions and related them to the text without referring to the text	The students picked up all conjunctions and related them to the text but used article for reference	The students to some extent related phrasal verbs to the text in context	The students could not relate conjunctions to the text in context
Predicts the meaning of One-word Substitution (Vocabulary)	Students predict meaning of one-word substitution of an article without referring to the article	Students predict meaning of one-word substitution but use article for reference	The students predict meaning of some one-word substitution words using an article	The students could not predict the meaning of one-word substitution
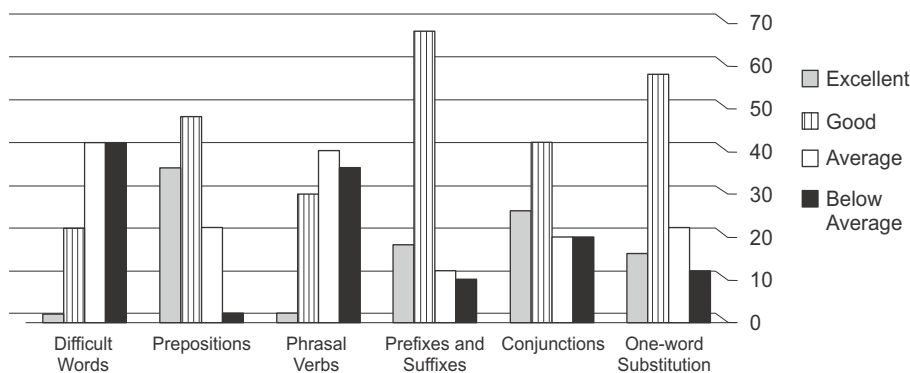
Figure 1

Note: The data presented on the right side of the graph denotes the score/ number of students in the form of percentage along with the parameters used for grading as excellent, good, average, and below average.

Post-Reading Stage

In this stage, students after reading newspaper articles also made use of the same pre-reading questions (described above) and then they have to work on language exercises for effective reading. It is also clear that the classroom exercises and activities weredesigned based on students' reading of newspaper articles with context. With clear instructions, students have to work on the tasks, that consist of six levels/steps.

1. Identifying any difficult words from the text and writing the meanings of those in a context

2. Finding out the conjunctions from the text and write at least some sentences on their own, illustrating each conjunction and its meaning.

3. Finding out phrasal verbs from the text and guess the meanings of those in a context and write at least some sentence on their own illustrating each phrasal verb.

4. Giving with incomplete sentences and asking students to fill in the each blank with a suitable preposition from a context. And also to choose one word substitutes from the newspaper articles

5. Listing out words ending with the suffixes and beginning with prefixes from the text or write the words by guesswork.

Findings of Post-Reading Stage (Post-Test)

The analysis of students written scripts involved in the post-reading stages were analyzed in the post-test using certain parameters (Excellent, Good, Average and Below average) with detailed statistical tools. (rubrics)The findings show that the students have been able to use all the language elements consciously. There has been an improvement from 'Average' to 'Good' and 'Good' to Excellent' ratings in using all the elements. However, in using difficult words not all the students have shown considerable improvement. there were about ten students who were falling in 'below average category' failing to use vocabulary effectively.The parameters of post-reading stage and the results are presented in the following table presented in the findings of the pre-reading stage) followed by the graphical representation.
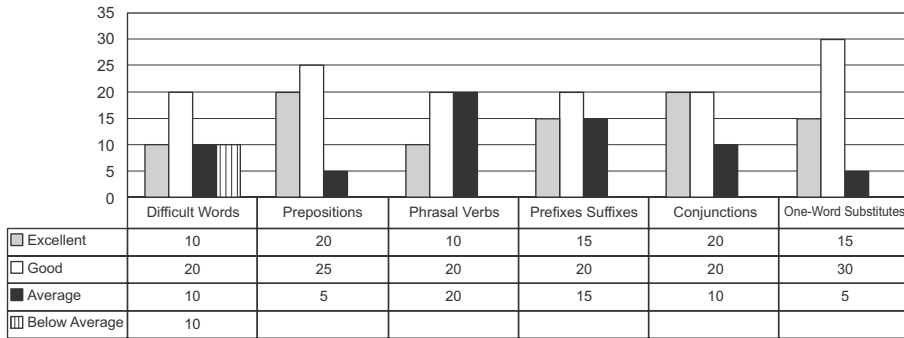
	Difficult Words	Prepositions	Phrasal Verbs	Prefixes Suffixes	Conjunctions	One-Word Substitutes
☐ Excellent	10	20	10	15	20	15
☐ Good	20	25	20	20	20	30
■ Average	10	5	20	15	10	5
▥ Below Average	10					

Figure 2

Note: The data presented on the right side of the graph denotes the score/number of students in the form of percentage along with the parameters used for grading as excellent, good, average, and below average.

The comparison between the findings of students' performances in Pre-Test and in Post-Test

TABLE 2

Language Elements	Excellent		Good		Average		Below Average	
	Pre-T	Post-T	Pre-T	Post-T	Pre-T	Post-T	Pre-T	Post-T
Difficult Words	0	10	10	20	20	10	20	10
Prepositions	17	20	23	25	10	05	0	0
Phrasal Verbs	0	10	14	20	19	20	7	0
Prefixes and Suffixes	8	15	33	30	5	5	0	0
Conjunctions	12	20	20	20	9	10	9	0
One-word Substitutes	7	15	28	30	10	5	5	0

CONCLUSION

When the students are involved in reading the authentic materials or tasks, they were able to use reading strategies like guessing, comprehending, understanding the meaning of the texts. So we can easily find out that students have showed good reading performance in advanced level of reading activity such as in 'difficult words' rather than prefix and suffixes.

One of the most useful ways to improve communication skills is through extensive reading. Extensive reading will enable the learners   to express ideas, whilst also enlarging the size of vocabulary. Reading introduces learners to a wider body of language and contexts. Reading helps learners build better grammar skills. As learners develop stronger reading skills, they develop more sophisticated speaking skills.The findings show that there has been a significant development in constructing effective sentences in writing. They learnt to construct grammatically appropriate sentences using basic language elements such as the use of prepositions, conjunctions, phrasal verbs etc. The students also learnt new words by inferring their contextual meaning from the dictionary. They were exposed to the sub skills of reading in practice.In summary they also learnt to apply these skills to extended contexts of comprehension and composition.

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