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SOME ASPECTS OF TEACHING INTENSIVE ENGLISH READING

As a source of learning, reading can both brush up previously learned vocabulary and grammar and it can encourage students to learn more and continue with their language study. As a goal in its own right, reading can be a source of enjoyment and a way of gaining knowledge of the world. These ideas make our paper **topical**.

This article **claims** to describe and analyze some aspects of teaching intensive reading. These problems of ELT have been analyzed and systematized in a number of researches, including Roger Gower, Diane Phillips, and Steve Walters (2005), Jeremy Harmer (2007), D.Philips, R.Gower, S.Walters (2007), I. S. P. Nation (2009).

Intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It can be compared with extensive reading, which involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and to develop general reading skills.

Intensive study of reading texts can be a means of increasing learners' knowledge of language features and their control of reading strategies. It can also improve their comprehension skills. If intensive reading is to be done well, the major principle determining the focus of the teaching should be that the focus is on items that will occur in a wide range of texts. The teacher should ask "How does today's teaching make *tomorrow's* text easier?" There are four ways of putting this important principle into practice [3].

1. focus on items that occur with high frequency in the language as a whole;
 2. focus on strategies that can be used with most texts;
 3. quickly deal with or ignore infrequent items;
 3. make sure that the same items and strategies get attention in several different texts.
- Let us look at what a good reading exercise should do.

A good reading exercise directs the learners' attention to features of the text that can be found in almost any text, or to strategies for dealing with any text, with the aim "to develop in the language learner the ability to comprehend *texts*, not to guide him to comprehension of *a text*" [1, p.172].

1. A good reading exercise directs the learners' attention to the reading text. That is, the learners need to read the text or at least part of it in order to do the exercise. It

is also important that some reading exercises require the learners to consider parts of the text in relation to their wider context, that is, other parts of the text, and information from outside the text.

2. A good reading exercise provides the teacher and the learners with useful information about the learners' performance on the exercise. Good exercises provide useful feedback for the teacher and the learners. Also, if the teacher understands what an exercise is trying to teach, they can judge the value of the exercise according to what they think is important for teaching reading.

4. A good reading exercise is easy to make. Teachers have to choose texts suited to the particular needs of their learners, and if these texts do not have satisfactory exercises, the teachers must make their own.

So, a good reading exercise focuses on items or strategies that apply to any text, requires the learners to read the text, provides useful feedback for the learners and the teacher, and is easy to make [3].

According to the *Schema theory*, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as how they should retrieve or construct meaning of their own, namely acquired knowledge. This previously acquired knowledge is called the reader's background knowledge. Schemata, therefore, have been called "the building blocks of cognition" because they represent elaborate networks of information that people use to make sense of new stimuli, events, and situations [4].

Schema is the technical term used by cognitive scientists to describe how people process, organize, and store information in their heads. Schemas, or schemata, are seen as cognitive constructs by which we organize information in our long-term memory [5]. According to the Schema theory, the process of interpretation is guided by the principle that input is mapped against some existing schema and that all aspects of that schema must be compatible with the input information. This principle results in two basic models of information processing: *bottom-up and top-down processing*. *Bottom-up processing* is evoked by the incoming data and is also called data driven, because the data enters the system through the best-fitting, bottom level schemata. *Top-down processing* takes place as the system makes general predictions based on higher level, general schema, which means background knowledge in reading comprehension. From the schema theory, it is clear that meaning is not fully presented in a text passively waiting to be decoded by the reader. Meaning is reconstructed or created the reading process through the interaction of text and the reader's background knowledge. So what the teacher should do is to teach the students to link their prior knowledge with the text. By doing this the students can better understand the global meaning of the text.

Methods used in Language Teaching help the goals. To be exact they are the following [6, p.105]:

1. Exploring background knowledge.

Pre-reading activities are some classroom activities related to the text before reading, including webbing, brainstorming, strip sentences, songs, role-play, predicting, initial discussion, guessing the title or the ending, a word list of prediction, opinion polls and charts, etc. These activities don't tell the students anything that they can find out themselves by reading the text. Instead, they make the students want to read the text and help them to relate the text to his own experience, interests and aims. This initial discussion will be an exchange of ideas. Focus will be on the meaning and students will take the initiative role of the class. In addition, this will allow a variety of interpretations of the passage because at this stage, the students have not been confined by the correct answer of the teacher's.

2. Enriching the students' background information.

According to the schema theory, a text only provides directions for the readers as to how they should construct meaning from their background knowledge. Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text, and efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge.

3. Analyzing the structure of texts.

R. Ellis states that conscious rising directed at specific structure can result in subsequent noticing of these structures in input. And this noticing may help retention of the structures [2]. Some scientists also state that effective comprehension depends on the reader's ability to relate what is being read to a familiar pattern or schema. A well-written text is often put in a logical pattern. Recognizing the pattern will enable students to better understand what they are reading. When students are taught the structure of text, they are helped to find some word clues because of the signals of certain patterns of texts, which may help students know when a certain pattern is being used. There are several groups of signal words and phrases such as "first", "second", "then", "after" and "finally" signal an order to sequence of events, and words such as "however", "but", "otherwise" and "yet" signal the change of thoughts, which indicate a comparison pattern. In the process of text teaching, the students will be directed to know how many sections the texts will be divided into. For instance, materials related to the text will be listed as follows:

- 1) about the author;
- 2) about the background;
- 3) about the words;
- 4) about the explanation of the text;

- 5) about the structure of the text;
- 6) about the phrases in the text and exercises;
- 7) about the useful sentences for writing;
- 8) the deep meaning of the text;
- 9) writing;
- 10) the implication of the text in English language teaching [6, p.106].

These items are not taught separately, but related. Pre-reading, the first three items are required to learn about. The students will have to know some information about the author, his life, his living background, and the related information about the text.

In the process of while-reading, which is the main process of learning the text, the teacher will explain the text basing on the global meaning of the text. After the explanation of the text, the students will be required to have a summary about the text and give the structure of the text. These procedures mainly take place between the students and the students or the students and the teacher. The structure of the text can train students to think orderly and logically. The teaching activities are students-centered. Everything taught in the classroom is related to the pre-reading process, which the students have learned before the text. That is, background knowledge (schema theory) plays an important role in text learning.

In the last step, that is post-reading process, the students will learn useful phrases in the text, which are the basic unit in writing. The students will write an article or an essay, using the phrases learned in the text.

It can be said that in the first step (pre-reading is self-learning, the students are doing input). In the second step (while-reading) is still input process, but the difference is while-reading is based on the first step. It is a further understanding process in text learning. In the process of post-reading, it is completely an output process, which is shown in two ways, speaking and writing. In intensive reading, texts can be taught in this model.

To sum up, the above training approaches are certainly helpful to enhance the students' prior knowledge and guide them to link their existing knowledge to the new world so as to reach a global understanding of the text.

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