Technology as an Aid to Teach Reading Skills

K. Manigandan, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Academy of Maritime Education and Training, Kanathur, Chennai, India. Manigandan.english@gmail.com

Mr.J.Premkumar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Vel Tech High Tech Dr.Rangarajan Dr.Sakunthala Engineering College, Avadi, Chennai, India. premkumara1710@gmail.com

N. Santhakumar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Aadhi College of Engineering & Technology, Kanchipuram, India

Abstract - **In this paper the author tends to inform that the importance of Reading skill among the ESL Classes. According to National Reading Panel (2000) "Students who do not develop reading fluency, regardless of how bright they are, are likely to remain poor readers throughout their lives". In the country like India, which has multi-cultured and has multi-language system gives less importance to the fluency in reading a text in the ESL classes. This results in fluency disorder in reading as well as speaking. The solution for the problem is in the hands of the Teachers and their strategies to teach reading. It is the duty of the language teacher to make the learners to be fluent in all the language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.**

Keywords: ESL, Technology, VAKT, Reading, speaking.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the important skill in enhancing the fluency in Pronunciation, Stress, Intonation and Pause. International Reading Association (2002) said "The goal in fluency instruction is not fast reading, although it happens to be a by-product of the instruction, but fluent meaningful reading". Listening good models of fluent reading doesn't make the reading sense or enhance fluency. Every learner is different in all the psychological aspects when compared to other learner. Hence one strategy doesn't help the students to enhance the reading. The learner of this decade needs variety and novelty in all the activities. It is very difficult for the teachers to fulfill their objectives in their classes. The Government has also started some novelties in teaching like Smart Classroom and Digital Classroom for impairment students. Therefore slowly there is a supplementation of technology in the language classrooms.

This Paper also concentrates on the ways to enhance reading of the poor readers in the ESL Classrooms with the supplementation of technology in the teaching reading Strategies and how to develop the efficiency of the Language Teachers in the use of technology while teaching Reading. Reading serves as an important skill in every walk of life. We can hardly imagine a day which goes without reading in an individual's life. Especially, learning to read in English is a paramount important in the country like India which is bearing multi-language and multi-cultural society. Manulana Abul Kalam Azad stated, "English has today become one of the major languages of the world, and Indians can neglect its study at the risk of loss to themselves." Most of the students those who are studying in rural government schools lack proficiency in reading in

English. It is observed that even the ninth grade student is struggling to read a passage from their English textbooks and we have made little attempt to enhance their reading skills in English by adopting various approaches and Strategies and utilizing various available technologies to teach reading to ESL learners.

In Indian context, ESL learners are properly trained to read in English effectively. At the primary level, the development of reading skill is considered to be apex importance but once the child enters the fourth or fifth grade, teaching reading comes to an end as the teachers do not feel that the teaching of reading is a basic requirement of ESL learners. At this level, the disabled readers population begins to increase and often it leads to drop outs. The English language teachers should take initiative steps to develop the reading skills of ESL learners and make use of the technology in their language classroom in order to develop interest and positive attitude towards learning to read in English in an effective way.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The English language teacher's approach must be adapted. More emphasis is given to develop writing skills rather than to develop reading ability of the students. Sheorey and Mokhtarib (2001) demonstrated that ESL and US high-reading-ability students show comparable degrees of higher reported usage for cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies than lower-reading-ability students in the respective groups, and while the US high-reading-ability students seem to consider support reading strategies to be relatively more valuable than low-reading-ability US students, ESL students attribute high value to support reading strategies, regardless of their reading ability level.

Chall (1979) has provided an excellent stage analysis of the acquisition of reading skills. Learners at the advanced level seem to be less anxious compared with beginner and intermediate level students (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Liu, 2006). Oczkus (2003) portrayed that the teaching is a scaffolded technique based on trainer modeling, student participation, and four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Even though reciprocal teaching originally was designed for use with besieged readers. Ipek (2004) revealed that reading anxiety levels varied in conjunction with language proficiency. Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) proved that English speaking student's awareness and perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic or school-related materials.

III.   DEVELOPMENT OF READING SKILLS TO ESL LEARNERS

Reading consists of many specific skills which involves an interrelated and interacting skills and abilities. The act of reading defends on the simultaneous use of numerous skills and sub skills and the abilities to decode symbols and to determine meaning are significant in reading. According to Strang (1955) "Reading is many –sided. It is a visual task involving sensation and perception. Reading is a psychological process; it involves fusing symbols with their meanings to comprehend an author's thought. Reading is a complex and unique experience involving the organism as a whole. It is a pattern of activities which varies with the reader's purpose & the kind of material which he is reading".

Having clear ideas of what the elements of reading provides the teacher with built in guidelines for instructional practices. The essential elements to impart reading skills to ESL learners are as follows:

1. Phonemic Awareness: It is the ability to notice, think about and work with the discrete sounds in spoken words.
2. Phonemic: This involves the relationship between letters and individual sounds.
3. Fluency: It is the ability to read a text quickly and accurately. Fluent readers recognize words automatically and group words as they read, creating a flow of words rather than pauses between words.
4. Vocabulary: It refers to words and their meanings. Research has shown that vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of reading comprehension ability.
5. Comprehension: Refers to the ability to understand what one is reading – comprehension is more that just reading or decoding the words aloud.

IV.   REASONS FOR POOR READING ABILITY AMONG ESL LEARNERS

It is obvious that a majority of students are not able to read the assigned textbooks. Poor reading ability of the ESL learners can be attributed to the following reasons:

1. Inadequate exposure of the English language
2. Lack of phonological awareness.
3. More focus on to develop written skill and neglect of reading skills.
4. Lack of vocabulary and poor spelling knowledge.
5. Inappropriate method of teaching reading skills.
6. Lack of motivation.
7. Lack of systematic teaching method
8. Defective evaluation system.
9. Lack of active participation of the students in teaching – learning process.
10. Hindrance of mother tongue.

V.   TEACHER'S ROLE IN TEACHING READING SKILLS

The teacher training institutions do not train the English teachers in an effective way to teach the English language to the ESL learners: How can the teacher teach when they do not know how to teach. Hence the quality of teacher education needs be improved. We can see the innumerable number of teacher training institutions functioning in out country but the quality of training given to them is not adequate. Most of the institutions do not have a language laboratory. The student teachers must be well trained to utilize the lasted technology in their ESL classroom. The existing training program for the language teachers do not provide adequate opportunity to the student teachers to develop their teaching competency.

The purpose of learning English is to use it in out day-to-day life, and communicating with other people and not just to get mere pass mark in examination. Thus The language teachers must give equal concentration from making the students to pass examination rather than to make the students to use the English language efficiently in their different real life situation. The read of the hour in the attitudinal change among the English teachers & they should realize that the learning of library language is for utilitarian purpose.

The pace at which knowledge is growing & changing is so rapid, much of the education we give to our students will go out of date within their life times. They will have to re-educate themselves for their careers. There is a need for continued attention to the teaching of reading skills up to the higher secondary level. So, the teacher must adopt new teaching strategies, & innovative techniques and make use of available technology to teach reading skills to ESL learners.   Obviously, it is seen that the ESL learners have difficulties is developing reading ability. The root cause of the problem is adopting inappropriate method of teaching language skills to the students, and they were made as passive listeners. The main area to be improved

lies in the evaluation mechanism followed in our education system. It encourages mere rote memory of the students rather that developing their language skills. The importance should be given to assess and develop the oral language skills of the ESL learners.

In the language classroom, the students should play an active role. Most of the students feel that their language class is very monotonous and boring to them. Ample opportunity was not given to develop their reading ability. The situation has to be changed; the students should no longer remain as a passive listener and merely receiving information from the teachers. The best way to teach the second any language is to create an appropriate environment for the students to learn the language. Making the language class as lively as possible & interactive is in the hands of the English teachers. The teacher should also take part in the learning activates of the students. Technology can be used to break the monotony of the language class and make the learning experience as an enjoyable process.

VI. ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING READING TO ESL LEARNERS

Technology occupies a prominent place in teaching learning process. The research studies proved that the use of technology in the language classroom enhanced their learning process and arouse students' interest in learning the concept through multi-sensory approach. The multi-sensory method is based on the premise that some students learn best when content presented in more than one modality. Here, comes the role of technology in ESL classroom.

The advent of modern technology is one of the strongest influences in motivating world wide interest in extending and improving the reading skills of every individual. Reading lies in the forefront of the education system. The percentage of failure of the students from the primary to the higher secondary level shows that the cause of this wastage lies in their undeveloped reading power. The use of technologies such as radio, television, mobile phones, multimedia, computer etc., in the language class room aids the teachers to enhance the reading ability of the students. Computers in the ESL class room help the language teachers in a numerous way. It provides and opportunity to give individualized instruction changes the interaction pattern from one to many to one to one interaction and paves way to imitate and practice pronunciation of the words and sentences. It becomes and effective tool to give drill and practice to the ESL learners develops vocabulary and helps to teach through multi –sensory approach by using computers. In this approach, the student sees, feels, says and hears the content. The multi-sensory techniques that include tracing, hearing, writing and seeing are often referred to as VAKT (Visual – Auditory –Kinesthetic-Tactile). The English teachers have to use the available

technologies in an effective way to improve the reading ability of the students.

VII. CONCLUSION

From this paper it is obvious that the need for better reading instruction should be provided to the students by adopting various technologies to teach how to read proficiently in English. The English teacher has to give more importance to know how to use technology oriented education among the ESL students. Now, the time has come to use modern technologies in language teaching in order to make the teaching learning process effectively. ESL teachers to teach more related technology oriented reading strategies such as analyzing the texts, guessing the meaning of unknown words, using dictionaries. These reading strategies would help the technology as an aid to teach reading skills.

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