

PASSION FOR TEACHING STUDY SKILLS IN ENGLISH.

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Abstract: *Reading involves critical ability. While learning a foreign language one should know how to read and understand the texts and the discussions. The skill to read and interpret texts and discourses is important since learning English brings us into contact with written texts. Teaching reading skills is of utmost importance for students of higher education. Reading skill improves not only the knowledge of language but also its use for academic purposes. Reading comprehension is very necessary for training students of higher education for it enables the teacher to judge the competence of the students. In this paper I will focus only on using passages of reading comprehension to test the development of reading skills. Testing students for reading skills is largely a diachronic activity, i.e., that is, testing their reading abilities across time. I conducted my research work with first year students in Samarkand and I used the manual which is designed for teaching reading skills alongside with other skills such as listening, speaking and writing.*

Key words: *reading skills, reading comprehension, teaching, reading in a second language.*

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to investigate teaching reading skills in Higher Education in Uzbekistan. Reading is essential English skills which foreign learners have to master it to acquire knowledge and new information. Brown states that reading is the most necessary skill in educational context since it can be the assessments for students' general language ability (Brown 2007, p 185). Reading comprehension is one aspect of language skills that students must be able to understand when reading a written text. Students should have good understanding ability in order to interpret and absorb the information from a reading material. To master learners' reading comprehension teachers should have knowledge of and skills in teaching methods and approaches by which they can teach, explain and organize classroom activities. In fact, there are still many problems in teaching and learning reading comprehension in Uzbekistan. One of the main problems is students' English levels. As mentioned before Uzbek students have already studied English for at least 12 years before entering universities. However, most students still have very poor English language knowledge and continuing teaching process with stated level which is B1, which makes the teaching process more difficult for both teachers and students. As teaching materials are widely available on the Internet, teaching reading skill using variety texts can be very successful. However, the main problem still remains on the level of students. There are four skills in learning and teaching English language such as listening, reading (receptive skills), speaking and writing (productive skills). They are important to acquiring a language. The researchers state that improving and developing reading skills leads to better understanding of a language. For example, Alan (2011:37) said "Reading is the most important skill a child can

develop, learning to read is an important skill every child must develop to be successful in school". Regardless of the subject matter taught, a child must be able to read and comprehend what they are reading. "Good reading skills are the foundation for a proper education" (Alan, 2011:5). Moreover, Many studies such as (Chen, 2003; Fuchs, et al., 2002; Li, 2004; Yang & Hung, 2008; Abu shamlah 2010, Al Udaini (2011) and Habboush (2010). have proved that there is a strong correlation between reading comprehension skills and academic success. Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from the text. The goal of all reading instructions is ultimately targeted at helping a reader to comprehend a given text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people; the reader and the writer. "The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message" (Chen, 2003: 161). In brief, the main purpose of reading is to comprehend the text being read, if comprehension does not take place then the activity of reading is without purpose. Charl Nel, Carisma Dreyer and Mariaan Kopper also researched on reading. They have published their article An analysis of the reading profiles of first-year students at Potchefstroom University: a cross-sectional study and a case study. Their aim was finding problems which the first year students face during reading, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the reading assessment profiles of one efficient and one inefficient student and make recommendations in terms of the reading support needed by these students. In the book "Reconceptualizing language teaching: An in-service teacher education course in Uzbekistan" the importance of extensive reading is mentioned. The authors claim that students can learn better outside the classroom due to modern technologies which they can find much information available on. It is also mentioned that assessing and testing students before beginning classes is vital for language teachers since they can know what they need to teach according to the results. "Assessment is an inseparable part of teaching because language teachers have a dual role of teaching and assessing, which ultimately will have an impact on students' learning and motivation. They make decisions about who could pass or fail a quiz, test, or course or study; they determine whether the class is going well, and if the teaching they do is effective". Before beginning the teaching reading skills the Test 1 has been taken from the 1st year students to choose appropriate teaching materials. The Communicative Language Teaching was introduced in Uzbekistan in 2012 and the focus has shifted from Grammar Teaching. Communication competence can be taken part through four skills, such as speaking, listening, writing and reading.. Reading is one of the way of communicating information, ideas, beliefs, emotions, and attitudes to their readers. Through reading readers can communicate with a writer and their codings any information. To make the process successful one should understand what they read for this reason teaching reading skills is important. Reading comprehension The understanding of a written text is called reading comprehension. Teaching, learning or practicing of reading comprehension is not as easy and simple as its definition. Reading comprehension is an intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing. The main basic of the act of reading is reading comprehension. In a reading process a reader engages in a complex array of cognitive processes. He simultaneously uses his awareness and understanding of phonemes (individual

sound “pieces” in language), phonics (connection between letters and sounds and the relationship between sounds, letters and words) and ability to comprehend or construct meaning from the text. This last component of the act of reading is reading comprehension. It cannot occur independently of the other two elements of the process. At the same time, it is the most difficult and most important of the three. Vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension are two elements that make up the process of reading comprehension. In order to understand a written text the reader must be able to comprehend the vocabulary used in it. If the individual words don't make the sense then the overall story will not either. Foreign learners can use their prior knowledge of vocabulary, but they also need to continually be taught new words. The best vocabulary instruction occurs at the point of need. Teachers should preteach new words that students will encounter in a text or aid them in understanding unfamiliar words as they come upon them in the writing. In addition to being able to understand each distinct word in a text, the reader also has to be able to put them together to develop an overall conception of what it is trying to say. This is text comprehension. Text comprehension is much more complex and varied than vocabulary knowledge. There are many different text comprehension strategies that readers use to develop reading comprehension. These include monitoring for understanding, answering and generating questions, summarizing and being aware of and using a text's structure to aid comprehension. How does reading comprehension develop? As it has been said, reading comprehension is incredibly complex and multifaceted. Because of complexity, readers cannot develop the ability to comprehend texts quickly, easily or independently. Knowledgeable and experienced teachers must teach reading comprehension strategies over an extended period of time. It might seem that once a student learns to read in the elementary grades he is able to tackle any future text that comes his way. This is not true. Reading comprehension strategies must be refined, practiced and reinforced continually throughout life. Teachers need to continue to help their learners develop reading comprehension strategies as their reading materials become more diverse and challenging, students need to learn new tools for comprehending these texts. Content area materials such as textbooks and newspaper, magazine and journal articles pose different reading comprehension challenges for young people and thus require different comprehension strategies. The development of reading comprehension is a lifelong process that changes based on the depth and breadth of texts the person is reading (K12Reader). Why is reading comprehension so important? Reading is nothing more than tracking symbols on a page with your eyes and sounding them out without comprehension. Imagine being handed a story written in Egyptian hieroglyphics with no understanding of their meaning. You may appreciate the words aesthetically and even be able to draw some small bits of meaning from the page, but you are not truly reading the story. The words on the page have no meaning. They are simply symbols. People read for different reasons but understanding is always a main of their purpose. Reading comprehension is essential part because without it the reader cannot be provided with any information. Another importance of reading comprehension is functional literacy. In order to survive and thrive in today's world individuals must be able to comprehend basic texts such as bills, housing agreements (leases, purchase contracts), directions on packaging and

transportation documents (bus and train schedules, maps, travel directions). Reading comprehension is a critical component of functional literacy. Think of the potentially dire effects of not being able to comprehend dosage directions on a bottle of medicine or warnings on a container of dangerous chemicals. With the ability to comprehend what they read, people are able not only to live safely and productively, but also to continue to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually (K12Reader) My PhD title is teaching English reading skills to the students of higher education, so I need also to state out what is teaching. Teaching does not only consist of teachers but also students. It includes developing students' knowledge as well as assessing their skills so that a teacher can measure the progress of their students in the teaching process. Designing, content selection, delivery, assessment and reflection are main part of the teaching. A teacher plan a lesson beforehand taking into consideration their students' age, abilities, needs and learning strategies. S/he also selects an appropriate content for the class thinking of how to deliver a new theme to their students. After explaining or giving the knowledge, they check the students' understandings by different activities/ways which we call it assessment. In the reflection part, a teacher evaluates their classes; their progress and the problems that need to be work out. Thus teaching does not only mean transmitting information but also engaging students to the class and assess them. So far many definitions have been given to the word 'teaching'. Mark K Smith gives definition to teaching as following: Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things, and go beyond the given. From dictionaries we can conclude that teaching is imparting knowledge or instructing students as to how to do something. The word 'teach' goes back to the Old English *tæcan* meaning 'show, present, point out', which is of Germanic origin; and related to 'token', from an Indo-European root shared by Greek *deiknunai* 'show', *deigma* 'sample'. Giving definitions of philosophers of education make the word clearer. Paul Hirst (1975) concluded, 'being clear about what teaching is matters vitally because how teachers understand teaching very much affects what they actually do in the classroom'. According to him there are two main points: Setting out with the intention of someone learning something. Considering people's feelings, experiences and needs. Teaching is only teaching if people can take on what is taught. Jerome Bruner's opinion is following: 'To instruct someone... is not a matter of getting him to commit results to mind. Rather, it is to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge. We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on that subject, but rather to get a student to think mathematically for him, to consider matters as an historian does, to take part in the process of knowledge-getting. Knowing is a process not a product'. (1966: 72) Conclusion We can see that understanding the meaning of teaching is very important for teachers because through this they can understand the teaching process better and this has an impact on the classroom process and progress. Keeping them in mind, a teacher should design their class of intention not only giving their students knowledge of their subjects but also must receive the students' understandings. These given definitions of teaching give a good reason why I have chosen teaching English reading skills. Since teaching includes giving instruction, involving

students, developing knowledge and receiving back what has been taught, it is very appropriate way for improving students' reading skills. References

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