

# Developing Reading Skills through Effective Reading Approaches

**Md. Ruhul Amin**

Lecturer and Head (in-charge), Department of English

NPI University of Bangladesh

Email: [ruhulamin@npiub.edu.bd](mailto:ruhulamin@npiub.edu.bd)

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## **Abstract**

The research paper explores that how the students can develop their reading skills by using effective reading approaches. It is acknowledged that the reading comprehension is one of the most important parts in the English curriculum in all education level of Bangladesh. It is observant that teaching reading approaches are considered as an important procedure to develop the skills of the Bangladeshi students. In Bangladesh most of the teachers do not have the idea of teaching reading approaches. For this reason, the teachers should need to enhance their skills, knowledge and gathering proper idea about effective reading approaches as well as need to prepare themselves to utilize their practical experiences and knowledge on to their students. So the prime purpose of this study to show the effective reading approaches in order to develop student's reading skills in English. From June to December in 2018, an action research has been applied to a number of 40 students at higher secondary level in Manikganj, Bangladesh. The most important question of the study is 'could the reading approaches help student's English reading comprehension studies?' The outcome of the study specifies that students who have been tutored about the reading strategies have a development to a great level.

**Keywords:** Reading, English Reading Approaches, develop, predicting, proficiency.

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## **1. Introduction**

It is justified that reading is considered as the ultimate skill to be used in collaboration at school and all over life. In order to look for information obtain knowledge, to read books English is mandatory and often used as the medium of instruction in higher education (Sultana 2014). According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson 1985, reading is a vital life skill, which ensures a child's success in school and even throughout his life. Children need to learn different reading strategies in primary sections (Sultana & Ahsan, 2013). If a child is not habituated and acquire the reading skill his personal achievement and job success certainly will be lost (1985). Thus, reading is being given importance in the realm of education sector. It is also considered as one of the most challenging areas, which requires more attention in any education institution. Analytical and critical reading is imperative if they want the possible outcome from the materials they are assigned for. The basic idea of this is to understand the purpose and the author's intention, when reading something. In fact, reading consists of two layers of reality: one that we can see and one that we cannot see. Thus, the goal of reading is to make the invisible layer and the underlying meaning visible and clear (kose, 2006). Teele states that the objective of all readers should be to comprehend what they read (2004, p. 92). In this study it shows that among readers

those who are good are actively involved with the text and conscious of the procedures that they practice to understand what they read. Teachers can assist their students in improving their reading comprehension by giving instruction of reading strategies like predicting, making affiliation, envisaging, inferring, questioning, summarizing, and so on (Block & Israel, 2005). It is also important for the teachers to teach the strategies by naming the strategy, clarify the implemented strategy, modeling through the think aloud process, group practice, partner practice, and autonomous use of the strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2005). According to Amin, R (2018) and et, al, using multimedia projector as visuals draw more attention among the students in reading. Various visual aids like images and videos help the students to understand the conceptual prospect of the text. Moreover, visual aids create a real relation between the readers and the text. It makes the reading process quicker and lively as cited (Yunus, Salehi & John (2013)

### **1.1. Predicting**

It is not an easy task to become a good reader. For this, first of all, learners need to set a goal for their reading. Good readers always have a purpose for reading. One of the basic approaches for developing comprehension skill is predicting, which assists the readers set a purpose for their reading. It is evident that good readers utilize their experiences and knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas as they read (Block & Israel, 2005). This approach also includes student interaction that creates a sense of interest among the students and improves their understanding of the text. A comparison between the outcome of the actual text and the prediction process will guide the learner to develop his understanding of the text. Some of the approaches for teaching prediction are modeling, predicting throughout the text, with associates, with a graphic planner, or using post-it notes all through the content. Moreover, using title, table of contents, pictures, and key words are also the integral parts of the prediction approach. Another key prediction approach is to give the students task of predicting at specific points through the text, assess the prediction, and review predictions if necessary (Teele, 2004).

### **1.2. Visualizing**

Good readers can also employ their visualization when comprehending a text (Adler, 2001). Visualization is the process of constructing an image of what is read. This image is stored in the reader's memory as a representation of the reader's interpretation of the text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Teacher's role is an important factor to develop student's writing skill after visualizes setting like-Student can draw or write what comes to their mind after visualizing the content.

### **1.3. Making Connections**

In the reading process making connections is one of the important approaches. It is the process of activating the prior knowledge and making a connection with the ideas of the text to their own experiences. If the readers connect their ideas, experiences, beliefs, and the things going on outer world, reading becomes more effective and meaningful. "Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-Worlds" are the approaches which actually help students to build connection. Students can construct connections through text-to-self, photograph, making a chart, or writing. Teachers may

ask the students regarding their any kind of experience, which is being given in the events of the text. Drawing, making a chart, writing, and graphic organizations are the common processes of text-to-text connections. Moreover, these text-to-text connections could be based upon how characters in the story relate to each other, or how story elements relate between stories. Students can do text-to-world connections through comparing characters in a story to characters today or comparing the content of the text to the world today (Teele, 2004). Teachers should provide the students a purpose from asking them to find connections which would help them comprehend the ideas better in the text.

#### **1.4. Summarizing**

In plain English, summarization is the process of taking a lot of information and creating a condensed version that covers the main points. It requires the reader to determine what is important when reading and to condense the information in the reader's own words (Adler, 2001). During the summarizing procedure, the students will be able to differentiate the core ideas from the underneath thoughts. Moreover, through summarizing, students would be able to differentiate the associated knowledge from the unrelated one. Summarizing would enable the readers improving comprehension skill, organizing ideas, and long reading passages which are usually perceived as threat for the students.

#### **1.5. Questioning**

Questioning is another approach which also helps the readers to enhance their own comprehension abilities. Readers can use the questioning before, during, and after English language reading. The questioning process involves readers to ask questions of themselves to construct meaning, improve understanding, find answers, resolve problems, and discover new information (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). In this approach, the students are expected to come again to the text throughout the reading process to find the answers to the questions asked by the teacher before, during and after English language reading. This strategy enhances the students' ability to distinguish between questions that are authentic inferred upon their prior knowledge. By following this process, students generate questioning strategy; text segments that are unified and thereby improve reading comprehension (NRP, 2000).

#### **1.6. Inferring**

Inferring is the strategy, which requires reading between the lines. In this process, students are expected to use their own knowledge as well as information from the text to come to a conclusion. This process would enable the students to come to conclusions, make predictions, distinguish underlying themes, use information to generate meaning from text, and use images to create meaning (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Students can be given techniques to use illustrations, graphs, pictures, dates, related vocabulary and titles from the text to make inferences.

## **2. Question of Action Research**

This is the area which gives prominence on reading strategies in order to improve reading comprehension. This area is mostly highlighted by the scholars since it is evident that most of the students have to strive throughout their academic and adult life without a solid foundation of reading approaches. It is believed that through creating reading awareness and by teaching reading comprehension strategies, this would be very effective to develop a more meaningful reading experience. One of the most basic questions under the reading strategy is, 'Would reading approaches help my student's English reading comprehension studies?' The objective of this study is to evaluate the development of the student's reading skills after they have taken presentations on reading approaches.

## **3. Methodology**

Reading proficiency is considered as the most essential skill for educational learning and success in school. It is believed that reading proficiently is significantly associated with a person's achievement in his or her personal and professional life (Block & Israel, 2005). This is the reason for which I have decided to do this action research. Usually an action research is carried out in a school setting. According to Corey (1953), the worth of action research is in the variation that happens in our daily routine instead of generalization to a broader audience. It is the reflective process which deals with the practical concerns and is close to the instructors that let them to make a change. The main purpose of an action research is to find out the solutions for real problems faced in schools and search for possible solutions in order to ensure the success of the students. Action research assists instructors in evaluating needs, documenting the steps of inquiry, examining data, and making informed choices that can lead to desired outcomes. An instructor has to follow the following phases in doing action research:

- ✚ Planning
- ✚ Acting
- ✚ Observing
- ✚ Reflecting (McNiff, 1988, p. 22)

The result of action research shows that students improve comprehension, when they analyze which strategy they are using and how it assists in bringing meaning to the text.

### ***3.1. Data collection instrument and the process of the research***

It is mentioned above that one of the main objectives of this research project is to find out the English reading awareness level of the students and improve their English reading approaches (ERA). There are six approaches which the research teacher followed by predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning, and summarizing. These approaches were required to the students and needed to be practiced for three weeks. In the beginning, the research teacher was required to do a 'Reading Awareness Survey' in order to find out if the students were aware of the

approaches. The result of the study showed that 10 of the 25 students were not aware of the approaches. Then, the approaches were modeled by the teacher researcher. Following it, in the second step, the approaches were practiced by the whole class, then small groups, and finally independently. After that, following the presentation of the English reading approach (ERA), the teacher researcher administered the Meta comprehension Strategy Index (MSI) to find out if the approach presented has changed students' understanding in reading. The index is the apparatus which evaluates students' familiarity about reading approach that were used before, during and after reading. The teacher researcher then practiced four reading texts from the book English Language book by Alan Etherton for about five weeks.

#### **4. Results & Conclusion**

The results of the reading awareness scale and my personal experience showed that at the beginning of the study, there was a lack of knowledge in the area of reading approach in my students. However, after a comprehensive study, there was an improvement in their success. As a researcher, at the beginning of the study, I had the worries of implementing the English reading approach in the classroom. Moreover, a number of approaches were another hindrance as the students might have found them confusing. Another question was about the success of the students' using the comprehension approach independently since many of the students were not familiar with these reading comprehension approaches. In order to overcome these obstacles, I had to guide and monitor the students in every step of the process especially for the questioning, inferring, and summarizing approaches. After an intensive study, I have found an unprecedented improvement in my students' reading comprehension. The journey of this research was rewarding for both my students and me. After this research journey, I have observed the students' better understanding of the approaches and their comprehension in reading has been improved. This action research was a productive experience. Thus, I have observed an extensive understanding of reading comprehension approaches as well as an improvement in English reading comprehension of my students.

##### **4.1. Implications**

Future research on the revised reading approaches will probably include a larger random sample. A number of instruments using check list for writing down the improvement of each student weekly based on participation and the approaches they use more commonly were being used by the researcher. It is important to suggest that the other researchers may explore meta-comprehension dissimilarities between female and male students. Moreover, in preparatory school groups, students of remote areas in Bangladesh, English can also be examined in order to see the differences in competence. Because, examining a larger group of students would give a better understanding about the differences. This study can be done between two different groups by two different researchers and the outcomes can be compared.

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