

# The power of reading skills in Second Language Learning

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## Abstract

English occupies a place of pride is a universal language; medium for communication of thoughts, ideas and feelings and transmission of culture. Among other four skills reading is one of the skills which helps a lot to the second language learners in enhance their understanding level of the English language. Reading is key to thier success. Reading helps to develop the creativity of a person. The reading habit promotions one's personal development. Reading skills plays an important role in learning second language. Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Tertiary level students who undergo their first years in Tertiary education face many problems. In general students who finished their higher secondary in Tamil medium tertiary level face many challenges with the second language. For a successful academic result students must strive hard and utilize all possible resources. This paper examines the power of reading and also a power of language.

Of all languages in the world today, English deserves to be the universal medium of communication. It is the world's most widely spoken language. One person out of every four on earth can be reached through English. English has been taught and used as a medium of communication for more than two centuries. In countries like India, Singapore etc. English is still used for official and literary purposes and for the purpose of communication. In India for instance, English continues to be the medium of instruction in colleges and Universities and is also the language of administration.

“The greatest gift is a passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination.”  
(Elizabeth Hardwick 2009)

Reading is the heart of self-learning which provides immense pleasure. As the title of the seminar mentioned, this paper focuses on language-power relations –as an intergroup communication. Previously, the language does have its own power and also creates more influence around the world through its own flexibility. The power to speak in English helps the people to communicate easily all over the world.

Language-power relations indicate the powers of language based on ones -speaking ability and its wide range of application Cognition, communication, social and symbolic functions, Interpretation, Social Communication and Language Policies. Language is for Communication and Power. This paper examines how reading skill establishes its own power to learn the second language effectively.

Reading English is something one can do to help him learn on his own, outside the classroom. Reading is common knowledge that along with the other macro skills reading is considered as an active skill, plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning language. Persons who know how to read can educate themselves in any area of life they are interested in. Thus reading is essentially a life oriented skill. Tertiary level reading is complex and demanding, so it's essential to develop strategies for reading effectively. But basically time, place and facilities may affect reading.

Reading is an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports the learning in multiple ways. Language teaching should enable students to hold and maintain the line of communication by meaningful expression and reception. Reading is an active skill that plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning a language. A person who knows how to read can educate himself in any area of life he is interested in. Thus reading is essentially a life oriented skill. This makes it indispensable to develop strategies for effective reading at tertiary level.

In this modern era, reading is the keystone for success in all academic disciplines. Which can be understood by the quotes :

“Time spent reading is related to growth in vocabulary, fluency in word recognition, and comprehension”. Yopp and Yopp (2003).

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (1710/1899) said that “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body”. According to Gray and Tinker (1967), “Reading influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as attitudes, morals, beliefs, and judgment of readers”.

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood. During adolescence, a person has different needs and tastes furthermore they may have no interest in studies. To kindle or create the interest in their studies reading will be act as a catalyst to motivate them. They may have varied tastes in reading. Fictions, short stories, stories with pictures, detective stories, the most preferred part of the English language. This curiosity will help them to learn more vocabulary in second language. It will help them to understand the text well and they will score high marks and also that second language will provide them power.

Language is steeped from top to bottom in relations of power. Tertiary level students who finished their higher secondary in their own regional language face challenges with the second language. To kindle their enthusiasm, following task based system, will promote language through reading. Reading, once a pain will turn a pleasure. This will open the way to read beyond the syllabus and enrich their overall personality by developing all the other skills. Tasks like reading comprehension, identifying Facts and opinions, recognizing a function of sentence in a text, logical organization in a text will enhance the students understanding level in second language.

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the purpose of deriving meaning or constructing meaning. It is a very important skill which should be nurtured in all stages of language leaning. In the tertiary level of language learning reading tasks should not focus on more comprehension of ideas as presented in the text. Students should be made aware of the overall organization of the text in general too. A good reader definitely will become a speaker and writer. So reading is the best way to learn English well.

“A dumb person becomes a communicator and a lame climbs mountains of knowledge through reading” (Satija, 2002).

The above quotes vividly express the importance of readings. It gives the power to the students to brighten their future too.

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