



## Reading Strategies' Variations Can Boost Overall Language Competences' Enhancements of Senior Middle School Students

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### Abstract

Language competences are based upon the accumulation, assimilation and utilization of the learnt language, whose acquisition depends upon the practice amount and practice opportunities of the language, so students are supposed to plunge into the activities of language practice actively and habitually by acting on their initiative. I think strengthening the guidance on reading strategies is a satisfactory solution to the pressing question of providing Ss with adequate self-experience opportunities, because reading can provide Ss with adequate self-experience and practice opportunities for the comprehensive acquisitions of language skills due to reading's intrinsic characteristic.

**Keywords:** Variations, Enhancements, Senior Middle School Students

### 1. Some evaluations about the current commonly-seen teaching mode in schools

Language acquisition is more imitation and self-experiences than teaching, though teaching plays a certain role in the whole process. In the traditional bilateral activities of teaching and learning, Students are in a passive status being regarded as containers of storing knowledge, while teachers' functions are highlighted, with Ss' learning substituted by teaching and self-experience opportunities suppressed or constrained, which severely affects students' showing their initiative in obtaining knowledge and hinders the abilities' cultivations of students' utilizing what they've learnt. Though teachers' necessary teaching and guidance are indispensable, teaching activities should be student-centered, with students being the 'main body'. However, the core of our education is how to arouse the initiative of language learners. It's time that we advocated the concepts of strengthening their self-study abilities and consummating the pedagogy methodology of language acquisition. A methodology shift from grammar-centered to reading-centered should be attempted.

### 2. Some phenomena I've experienced or observed in schools

#### 2.1 Low structural percentages in test paper

When my students are tested each time by using the standardized test paper which is in conformity with the paper's structures of the entrance examination to college in Guizhou province, which includes the following sections: phonetics(listening), grammar, cloze, reading, situational conversation, words spelling, error correction and writing, I find that most of them lose many points in each section. When it comes to the reading parts, the situation is even worse with the average score between 20-30, which is not an ideal percentage of the total score 45.

#### 2.2 The prevailing traditional grammar-centered teaching mode

In our school, the traditional grammar-centered teaching mode prevails, which tends to spend at least two thirds time laying emphases on the imparting of grammatical points, considering it as a short cut to language acquisitions and hoping to make conspicuous progress. We take it for granted that this kind of teaching method is sure to boost overall enhancements of the learners' language competences. Actually, grammar-centered method is not a highly efficient way according to my personal experiences.

### 3. The reasons why I lay emphases on English readings' strategies

#### 3.1 Self-experiences produces genuine knowledge

There's a saying which goes roughly like this: Practice produces genuine knowledge, which implies the significance of self-experiences, here because of the intrinsic qualities of reading, it can provide Ss with lots of practice opportunities in all-sided competences: phonetics, listening, grammar, cloze, reading, situational conversation, words spelling, error correction, writing and so on.

#### 3.2 Practical and constructive theories on the manipulation of reading

Many educators or teachers have done lots of researches on reading and have formed their practical and constructive theories on how to manipulate teaching English reading effectively and efficiently, which provide me with theoretical methodology substantially. Reading has become the most important way for students to participate in language practice and cultivate their language competences. Theoretically speaking, reading is advanced sublimation of competence. Therefore, a shift of teaching methods from grammar-centred method to reading-centred method, I suppose, may be a feasible way to achieve an all-sided improvements in the language acquisitions and should be attempted.

### 4. The concrete measures I've taken and the beliefs I've held in my teaching Ss to read

#### 4.1 The most fundamental factors of reading abilities

Accumulation and consolidation of glossary and syntactic rules are the most fundamental factors of reading abilities. Only by combining the appropriate amount of vocabulary with the basic syntactic rules can we settle the problematic core, both being indispensable. In the aspect of syntaxes, simple sentences are easy to handle, but noun clauses, adverbial clauses, attributive clauses, emphatic sentences, inversion sentences, subjunctive mood, non-predicate verbs, parentheses and so on are the hard nuts to crack. We must lay a solid foundation on them to make our reading results smooth and bumper. Syntax and reading are mutual propelling, which means that syntax makes reading smooth and reading consolidates a firm grip on the learnt syntaxes and a virtuous cycle can be achieved. The escalation of reading abilities must have the extensive reading as the prerequisite, which can contribute to forming the language sense over a long period of time. However, even if you have stored a large glossary in your brain and have had a good mastery of the grammatical points, without reading much, the escalation of reading abilities will run counter to your efforts or go astray from the right path. Progress by leap and bound will be impossible. Words are the basic units of sentences, sentences make up paragraphs, paragraphs form an entire passage. The understanding of them cannot be separated. Macro group senses and passage senses must be built up. Word-for-word reading affects the reading speed as well as the fathoming of the themes of reading materials.

#### 4.2 Development of good reading habits

Students are supposed to develop the habits of reading fast, locating the needed answers accurately. The strategy of training students by setting time limit to the given reading amount is beneficial to increasing their reading speed. Good reading habits are the cornerstones for the fast improvements of reading abilities. While reading, the phenomena of stop, repetition, making sound, consulting dictionaries, quoting meanings out of contexts, word splitting and dillydallying ought to be avoided habitually. We should get a reading done without any letup with energy focused on the process. Time concept must be observed to have a quick findings of the main ideas. Making proper guesses at new words through contexts and word-building regularities is essential to comprehending reading.

#### 4.3 The cultivation of Ss' interests in reading.

Teachers must cultivate Ss' interests in reading. Interest can be defined as desire, need, motivation as well as the best teacher. Mood and enthusiasm are inter-dependent and mutual-propelling. Enthusiasm can arouse the motivation of language learning. Interest is the best teacher. Therefore, the cultivation of mood in language acquisition outweighs cognitive skills. In the process of teaching and learning, the input of teachers' glamour, mood and enthusiasm can achieve a benign interaction in driving students to excavate their latent abilities and passion. Only when Ss show strong interest in reading are they able to transfer passiveness into activeness, regarding English reading as a happy thing instead of a burden. In the initial stage-senior Grade One, we must put the cultivation of reading interest into the place of first priority. The enhancement of reading capacity cannot be accomplished in an action and it should be gradually advanced according to the planned agenda, prevent students' polarization, grope after the rules of reading activities and testing modes of reading and put them into practice. The teaching mode of teaching reading should be simplified with high feasibility. Teachers should be fast in leading students into the required reading by utilizing the situation, illustration and conversation and what not. Arouse their reading desire and avoid taking a roundabout way. Be straightforward, concise and comprehensive. Traditional reading-related teaching modes are unfavorable to the cultivation and improvement of students' reading enhancements, for teachers are accustomed to spending longer time in narrating the reading materials depriving them of the comprehension opportunities with students positioned in a passive status.

#### *4.4 Making guesses at the meanings of the new words from the contexts*

The purpose of fast reading is how to acquire the ability of finding the required answers to the designed questions, breaking away from relying on English dictionaries.

#### *4.5 Techniques for putting forward questions*

The questions for different students ought to be stratified and the principle of teaching students in accordance with their aptitude should be followed. The questions for backward Ss should be simpler for the purpose of motivating their reading desire.

#### *4.6 Steps for describing reading materials*

Multi-phase description of the reading materials: give a rough idea after a fast reading and a more detailed narration after an intensive reading, whose reading speed should be comparatively slower. After teachers' more advanced elaborations on the difficult points over a long time's training, Ss' abilities of analyses, induction, memory, organization and spoken expression can ascend to a higher level.

#### *4.7 Emphases on the rhythmic beauty, grammatical points and overall consideration*

Teachers need to pay attention to the rhythmic beauty of teaching reading, expound the difficult and important grammatical points thoroughly and explicitly and never leave students in a state of bewilderment.

#### *4.8 The transition from quantitative cognitive accumulation to qualitative sublimation*

The focus of English teaching in junior middle school is laid on the quantitative cognitive accumulation of glossary, sentences and syntaxes, while English teaching in senior middle school is shifted gradually towards qualitative sublimation. The significance of language skills is more protrusive. Laying more emphases on reading intensively and extensively can accelerate the comprehensive abilities' acquisitions of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation (interpretation). The combination of extensive reading and intensive reading broadens our knowledge range, deepens our understanding of diverse cultures, enlarges our vocabulary and takes full advantage of the syntactic knowledge. The all-sided destinations of learning English are permeated in reading activities organically, effectively and efficiently. Learning English well through reading is the short cut to a larger extent:

#### *4.9 Combination of the enlargement of glossary with reading*

Glossary resembles building materials, without which buildings would be just mirages. Similarly, without a certain amount of glossary as the foundation stone, the bettering of reading abilities would be unimaginable, consequently, enlarging Ss' glossary is imperative under the situation. Glossary are the basic units of reading materials, hence the mastery of glossary should be accounted for in the concrete contexts and their meanings can never be quoted out of the contexts. Naturally, the best way to enlarge vocabulary is through increasing the amount of reading. Reading materials should be typical, wide-ranged and stratified according to Ss' actual levels, including politics, economy, military, historical cultures, characters, natural environment, science development, customs and what not. The application of language should be native to the English-speaking countries, writing styles or types of literature should be diversified. To name a few, English Tutoring Newspaper, *English Weekly*, *China Daily*, and the *21<sup>st</sup> Century* are of such kind.

#### *4.10 Controlling of the choices of reading materials appropriately*

The types and contents of reading materials should be in conformity with the development law of Ss' bodies and minds, on which the cultivation of reading interest and readability are based. Readability is the reference standard or criterion of deciding on reading materials. Reading parts in the textbooks are the perfect and all-inclusive materials with sound, glossary and syntaxes interwoven as an organic entity. Choosing texts from textbooks as reading materials is the most productive resort in dealing with the cultivation of Ss' reading capacity

#### *4.11 The significance of teachers' proper and timely guidance*

Teachers' proper and timely guidance on Ss' reading is greatly significant to the building of Ss' confidence in reading, which can counteract on the accomplishment of their reading abilities. The introduction about the reading-related background is especially indispensable and the methodology guidance can never be neglected.

#### *4.12 The benefits of getting immersed into pure language atmosphere*

The cultivation of reading skills is beneficial to Ss' forming the language sense due to its pure language atmosphere. It's the comprehensive training of the desired abilities (listening, speaking, reading and writing according to the relevant theories of pedagogy and psychology). Intensify the reading skills of skipping and scanning. Scanning techniques are aimed at working out the main ideas of the reading materials quickly, for the purpose of foretelling the contents through the titles, fore and hind paragraphs, introductions, illustrated pictures, catalogues and key words. Skipping techniques are mostly used for fast locations of the key words of the pre-designed questions. What the two reading methods have in

common is the training of reading speed. To draw a conclusion, English skill reading is the omnipotent key to the overall enhancements of English reading abilities. The crux of the problem is how to proceed the reading trainings. The essence of methodology is to guide our practice effectively and productively.

#### 4.13 *Habit is second nature*

Persistent perseverance makes reading an enjoyable part of our daily life. Work out a target management system and a self-supervision system according to one's actual situation. Time-fixed and quantity-limited reading is the usual practice.

#### 4.14 *The training of comprehension ability*

Comprehension ability is a more advanced ability among reading abilities. Whether a reading is accomplished smoothly and successfully is often evaluated according to whether the grasp of structures, interrelations of the paragraphs, backgrounds, purpose of the writing and communicative functions are achieved.

### **5. The benefits of highlighting the reform of reading strategies**

English reading, virtually, is a synthesis of phonetics, listening, grammar, syntaxes, writing, which means it's a comprehensive activity. So the cultivations of interests in reading, good reading habits, appropriate reading methods and techniques can pose counteractions on the overall grasp of language abilities. By collecting the data from my teaching career and analyzing them in scientific statistics (SPSS) comparatively, objectively, horizontally and longitudinally, I find that the average scores' increases are sure to result in Ss' overall enhancements and are in direct proportion to those of reading, the changes being conspicuous and significant. so strengthening reading strategies' reforms is conducive to overall improvements in language acquisition, shifting teaching methodology from grammar-centered to reading-centered is to the benefits of both teachers and students. Meanwhile, moral educations are permeated into readings organically. Practically. Self-dependent reading activities cover the following aspects: self-reading, self-understanding, self-assessment and self-questioning, which is aimed at increasing their reading quantities, cultivate their capabilities of resolving questions independently, actively and creatively. In reading, we need to fuse reading and actual life, emphasize its practicalities, make students enjoy studying and be good at learning and learn willingly. The ultimate aim is to enjoy the senses of happiness and accomplishments. The traditional teaching mode for reading must be updated to bring students' initiatives into full play in excavating their reading potentiality. Getting rid of the stale and bringing forth the fresh to form characteristics are the soul of life and development.

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