CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER IV

READING

4.1. General

Reading is a learned behavior. Though it is a passive activity, the active involvement and enthusiasm of the reader will pave the way for enriching his knowledge and experience. The use of reading is inevitable to all walks of human life. Reading varies according to one's purpose and need, proposition and domain. Among the four language skills, reading occupies an important place in the knowledge enrichment activity. Moreover one's reading activity also helps to enhance the quality and ability of his other skills of language.

4.2. Definition of Reading

Reading is a passive activity. Some psycholinguists consider reading as psycholinguistic guessing game. Linguists treat it as 'reconstruction process' on the part of the reader or as an 'interaction between the printed text and the reader'. Many others treat reading as the process of comprehension of the reader. However no holistic definition for reading has been provided so far.

Widdowson (1979) says that reading is the process of getting linguistic information 'via -print'. Through reading, the information conveyed by the writer through the print medium is retrieved by the reader. Needless to say that the amount of information retrieved from the printed matter may differ from reader to
reader. Here, the definition also needs some specification about the amount of information a receiver gets from the written text. Written texts not only provide linguistic meaning but also contextual meaning. Linguistic meaning includes represented information and this is called literal. Contextual includes the socio-cultural and intentional meaning incorporated in the text.

A literal meaning of a text is accessible to the ordinary reader whereas to obtain the pragmatic meaning of the encoded matter, one must have rich exposure to the ethno linguistic aspect of the reading material. The experienced reader can only retrieve both his literal and pragmatic meanings from a text.

Reading is a complex activity and the meaning one gets from the printed matter is based not only on the matter that is written in the book, but also on the knowledge, mood, context and the inferential ability of the reader. By merely reading a headline of a newspaper a reader could get plenty of information, with the help of his previous knowledge in the matter being read.

According to Goodman (1970) the process of reading is the reconstruction of meaning. Meaning is not in the print verse, but it is in the offending when the author begins with, when he writes. Somehow, the reader strives to reconstruct this meaning as he reads the text.

The meaning of writing is not only imposed by the reader instead it begins with the very thought of the writer. The writer’s mental conceptions are meaningfully
conceived and produced in the paper. The writer has specific intentions to convey and in order to actualize them he chooses words and encodes in the paper. The reader who reads the text tries to retrieve the same idea the writer intended to convey. Unless the reader and writer have shared knowledge, the meaning of a text of a writer will not be fully understood (by a reader). Interpretations on written matter differ depending upon knowledge level and experience. That is why poetical lines of a writer are perceived by different readers in different ways and thus different interpretations are given.

Widdowson (1979) is of the view that 'texts do not carry meaning, rather they have the potential for meaning the reader does not approach texts as a passive 'tabular rasa'. The reader creates meaning with the help of information in the text. Consequently, comprehension entails different interpretations for different readers depending upon the differential amount of prior knowledge each reader brings in to a text.

Constructivism depicts the reader as an active participant in the reading process – in building a mental representation – by reading, the new, incoming information in the text with old or previously acquired knowledge (Bernbr – 1986, 1991, Reason and Valerica 1987, Collins, Brown and Larkin 11980, Johnson 1983 and Peter 1987). From this view, it is evident that reading involves the activity of combining what one knows with what is in the text.
Harris (1970) says that reading is a very complex process in which the recognition and comprehension of written symbols are influenced by a variety of factors like perceptual skills, word analysis skills, experience, language backgrounds, the state of mind, the reading ability of the reader, the ability of anticipating information etc.

4.3. Psychologists' views on reading
Reading is a complex activity and this complex activity is viewed in different ways. It depends on the view of the research and the area of specialization. Psychologists consider that it is a guessing game and a sort of thinking activity. Reading activity includes perception, recognition, association, understanding organization and finding meaning. Hence these processes are complex in nature and related to the mental make up and ability of the reader. Reading is a psycholinguistic process. It starts with a linguistic representation encoded by a writer and ends up with meaning, which a reader constructs. So some interaction takes place between the language and thought during the reading process. The writer encodes thought in the form of language and the reader decodes the meaning of the language through the word. If the reader is not able to interact with the words, the meaning will be lost. Thorndike (1977) has emphasized that unless the reader reasons correctly in the light of the data or idea presented by the words he will fail to get the right meaning.
4.4. Reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game

Goodman (1968) points out that reading is a 'psycholinguistic' guessing game. Meaning is not inherent in the words produced by the writer, but it resides in the experience of the reader. In contrast to Widdowson, he points out that reading involves not merely getting linguistic information of the print but giving meaning to the text.

By reading a particular matter given in the printed form one cannot interpret in the same way as others do. Everyone, while performing the activity of reading intentionally or unintentionally, guesses the meaning of words and sentences. On reading novel linguistic element one involves in the guessing process. When the guessing process is complete, he arrives at the intended meaning of the encoded written matter. When he fails, he goes for other clues in the expressions. And if a writer provides ample amount of clues in his writing, that can be called as good writing and talks to all sort of people easily. The writer offers enough evidences for guessing. The experienced readers at the very first sight itself can exactly get the clues from the text and guess the meaning of the text. New readers encounter problems in matching the meaning with the clues and thereby they fail to guess correctly. In the second reading, the guessing process will not be transparent. So the process of guessing the meaning during the reading process is inevitable for the process of meaning making through reading.
Reading process helps to get not only linguistic information but also pragmatic information. Moreover it acts as a guessing game providing clues to the readers to guess infinite number of meanings. By making use of the world knowledge and exposures, the reader may able to get the intended information of the writer via print.

4.5. Sociolinguists’ view of ‘reading’

Doglas Waples (1940) a sociolinguist says ‘reading classifies’ formulates and hence helps to express ideas born out of the common experience. The social effect of reading can be understood only in the social context that reveals the community’s hopes and scans. The experiences of the reader, his interests and efforts play a role in the decoding process. When a reader happens to read contacts, which are under the purview of his interests, he feels comfortable and he easily understands the meaning. Hence he gets meaning and he easily matches the information he gets from the text with that which is within his fund of knowledge he possesses.

4.6. Diversified view of reading

Cooper (1974) has shown that views tend to spontaneously direct their line of sight to those elements which are most closely related to the meaning of the language concurrently heard. Cooper refers to this scanning as an “active anticipative process”. Cofting (1971) demonstrated ‘significant relationship between stimulus selection (visually) and success (is a visual processing “Taru”).
The physical and mental operation differs from person to person. The eye movements and the physical appearance of the text control the physical activity of reading. The mental perception is controlled by the knowledge one possesses. The readers' mood, purpose and aim — the factors that affect the reading ability of a reader.

Reading is regarded as

a. A process of relating written symbols to sound units
b. A process of understanding meaning of written materials

4.7. Effective reading

Effective reading is based on the reader's proficiency and the nature of the reading material. Not all the readers always comprehend all the textual information clearly. The factors that characterize effective reading are the context of writing, the words employed in the text, the readers' knowledge, his personal interest, and his reading ability.

Bernhardt (1985: 1986: 1991) says "proficient reading depends upon several interacting factors that combine and interact in a dynamic way. For instance prior knowledge can influence word recognition, and word recognition activate or instantiate prior knowledge". Proficient reading also relies on the techniques the reader adapts, the reading speed and his word recognition power. Gleyer and
Kolers (1974) hope that proficient readers attend to less than the total available information in word recognition and in the reading sentences is the phenomenon of 'proof readers' errors. Yarbus (1967) in his research concludes that 'the human eyes voluntarily and involuntarily fixate on those elements of an object which carry or may carry essential and useful information'. It is found in the activity of reading that the reader's eye fixations do not rely on all the words of the sentences instead it fixes only on some particular words. This type of activity is an essential need for a proficient reader to understand the meaning of the sentence. Reading word by word will consume more time and may affect the memory process involved in the reading activity.

4.8. Poor reading

Kolers (1970) found that if the readers were forced to adopt a 'letter by letter' strategy, the rate of reading would drop to one tenth of their normal reading speed. The reading ability normally fails due to the inability of the readers in the recognition of words and the speed of reading. Apart from word recognition the knowledge over the subject of the written matter also controls the reading speed of the reader. Thus reading comprehension demands some reading strategies.

Buswell (1922) and Hoffman (1927) have shown that poor readers identify fewer letters or words, per fixation. Smith (1971) has argued that the reader must be selective. It does not matter how much information enters his visual system. He can get only four or five items, through processing in into short-term memory. So
in addition to being fast, he must choose the four or five items that he readily requires.

In the process of reading, physical functions like eye movements and the memory and functions are getting correlated in order to retrieve meaning. The thinking process on the words in the sentences found in a text should actively occur in a normal speed so as to achieve the reading speed. Otherwise the reader may not achieve the desired ability in decoding the information.

Smith and Holmans (1971) point out that unless a reader can read 200 words per minute or more, he will not be able to comprehend because of memory limitations.

Neisen (1969) found that poor readers were unable to ignore the adjacent irrelevant lines. Thus poor reading occurs not only due to the lack of vocabulary power and reading practice of the readers but also due to the reader’s speed and the time they fix on the words in the text and the memory constraints that are encountered during the process of reading. For an effective reading Smith (1971) provides three principles viz.,

1. The reader has to be fast
2. The reader has to be selective
3. The reader will be able to use prior knowledge

Biemiller argues that the readers’ proficiency in processing individual letters may be directly related to higher levels of reading skills. But a good reader must also
develop reading habits that go beyond the mastery of the mechanics. This includes aspects like being able to grasp quickly whole idea found in the written material, to separate the main topic from details, to scan pages along with the other such techniques and some of the abilities.

4.9. Science of Reading Process

In the art of reading, the reader looks at the written matter that which exists in the text in the form of symbols or graphemes or texts in various forms. While reading, the eyes move from left to right, right to left, top to bottom etc. The visual items are perceived by the eyes (vision) the visionary information attained from the text is recognized and the mind checks those symbols to find out the meaning of those symbols (words). If the symbols are known and familiar to the reader, then the symbols will be assigned meaning quickly.

Michael Stubbs (1981: p.25) says reading has often been seen predominantly as a matter of visual processing involving characteristic eye movement, perceptual span, letter shapes, word gestalt and so on. In the process of reading the eye movement plays an important role. The eye moves rhythmically and smoothly from left to right and right to left but it is not real; instead the eyes stop a while at the words in order to see it clearly. The point of seeing a particular word during the reading process is called as ‘fixation’. Fixation helps one to understand the meaning and other information of words. Eye movement is not a smooth one, but a jerky movement involving stop, look, and go components. In the reading
process, the words are not only seen individually but a group of letters is seen at a glance. This time span is called 'recognition span'. If one's recognition span is large he/she may read fast and if it is too small he/she may read slowly. The inter fixation movement is the movement of the eye from one fixation to another. If someone takes too much time to make inter fixation movement that will affect the reading. Buswell (1920) and Fairbanks (1937) found that good readers had a higher material span than poor readers. Anderson and Swanson (1937) and Morton (1964) found that better readers make fewer eye movements in oral reading than poor readers.

One type of eye movement is called 'forward' or 'sweep.' In 'sweep' the eyes also move quickly from the right end of the line to the left and of the next line. The eyes move backward to get a second look at what was read earlier and this movement is known as regression. Poor readers may have many regressions and more fixations. If regression and fixation could be reduced, reading will be improved.

4.10. Reading models

Reading is more than a passive activity when it is considered in terms of the mechanics involved in the reading activity. The eye movements are activated and move around the target. In the text, that is being read, there is no particular set point to fix the eye movement. It moves over and in all directions but before it moves from one word to another it pauses for a while and then moves so as to
confirm the letters, their shapes and so on. Shebisste (1975) says that comprehension ability of a person is controlled through two scanning control mechanisms, namely IRS, an Indirectly Regulated Scanning and DRS directly regulated scanning. The IRS mechanism, monitors the amount of information as an input button which holds visual information from two or three fixations and depending upon whether the button is empty or full increases or decreases the rate of eye movements – the comprehension process influence the rate of reading out from the button and therefore indirectly influence eye movements.

4.11. MISCUE PATTERNS IN READING

Goodman (1965) says ‘miscue’ is an unexpected oral reading. Goodman developed this term. In ‘miscue’ research the oral reading errors are analyzed taking into account the similarity and difference found among the words, found in the text and inferences are made about the occurrence of miscue. Such works have shown that readers use graphic, syntactic, semantic and discourse information in text during their processing. Alderson (1984) says the miscue appears in the reading process in the following ways during the process of reading.

1. Prediction: The reader's thought about the possible next chunk of language
2. Sampling: Selection of minimum information from text constituting the prediction
3. Confirming: Testing the prediction against the sample
4. Correction: If the prediction is not confirmed another prediction is generated.

Findings of miscue research process and its patterns will be useful to study the readability of the readers which in turn helps to enhance the reading ability.

4.12. MECHANICS OF READING

Reading is a skill performed by human beings and it is a literacy skill pertaining to the society. Effective reading of the written material is based on the ability of the reader in using the reading mechanics. A reader who handles these mechanics effectively has the chance of having good reading ability. The deficiency in the reading mechanics will affect the totality of the reading activity. Two types of mechanics that are involved in the reading activity are.

a. Elementary mechanics and
b. Advanced level mechanics

Elementary level reading mechanics includes activities like

- Identification of the letters or symbols with the sounds

Establishing Spelling/sound correspondence

Sometimes the spelling determines the sound not the individual letters

For example the word

'Island' is reader as /aibɔd/

Advanced level mechanics includes the following activities.

Establishing Spelling/meaning correspondence
Words and their meaning are important in reading. The knowledge of the words and their semantic functions and identification of them come under this mechanics.

4.12.1. Making the words/sentence – meaning

The words employed in the sentence are matched with meaning units.

4.12.2 Correlation/words/sentence

Selected words are arranged in an order in order to correlate them with the sentences of the same kind, which the reader already knows. Sometimes the performer tries to match those words with the words, which he already knew in order to have some information about it.

4.12.3. Graphology/symbols

The graphological symbols, which are found in the words, are varied significantly. Some higher order semantic features are also found in the advance level of reading mechanics. The present research aims to test the students through the reading mechanics.

4.13. TESTS ON WRITTEN LEVEL

4.13.1. SYNTAX

1. Comprehension selection
   Inference
   Identification
   Matching
   Logic
Analysis

2. Vocabulary
   synonyms
   Antonyms
   Substitution
   Selection
   Replacing
   Completion
   Addition/deletion/vocabularies
   Literal (idioms and phrases)

3. Literal meaning - idioms, phrases
   Phrase meaning – selection
   Logical inference
   Reason and factor

4. Oral reading
   1. Sound/letter – coherence
   2. Pronunciation

5. Fill up the every sixth word of the sentence in the paragraphs

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All the informants were tested through these above test batteries and the responses got for the tests were analyzed to find out the difficulties they faced in the activity of reading.

4.14. READING, READING SKILL, READING COMPREHENSION

Reading in general is an ability through which the reader gets meaning particularly by availing the clues found in the print. During the reading activity, the reader’s perception is controlled by several factors, which have been discussed by many educational linguists. Some such factors are:

1. The language proficiency of the reader
2. The purpose and background of writing
3. The readers linguistic knowledge and the pragmatic importance of writing
4. The readers’ mood
5. The purpose of reading
6. The importance of or the state of the affairs connected with the writing
7. The writing style
8. The amount of time which the readers get for reading and
9. The physical appearance of the written text

If a reader has mastery over the relationship between the graphemes and phonemes of a language he can read all the words in that language. But the quantum of meaning he gets by his reading would be based on the level and his
power of comprehension and the knowledge and experience over the material he reads.

Reading is a process in which a reader employs his reading skill. The degree of reading skill varies from person to person. Reading speed, eye movement, eye fixations, meaning making etc., are important points that characterize the reading skill. The following techniques normally decide the reading skill of a reader.

1. The perception of grapheme – phoneme representations in the context
2. The traditional methodology followed in the writing/reading activities
3. Reading speed
4. Eye fixations, eye movement
5. Finding out the relevant hints in readings
6. Knowledge in the use of index and the methods that are followed in writing/reading activities
7. Adopting the conversion reading and writing
8. Number of skimming and skipping and
9. Range of guessing etc.,

4.15. READING WITH COMPREHENSION

The purpose of reading is to get the information from writing. The reader has to comprehend the written matter by making use of his knowledge. The mental ability of the reader plays a vital role to get the information from the printed material. The following factors involve in the process of reading comprehension.
1. The readers' knowledge in the identification of words and meaning of the vocabularies in the language
2. The readers' ability in understanding the different styles of writing
3. The reader's favor in the language skills
4. The knowledge on ethnography of reading
5. The knowledge on pragmatics of reading and
6. The knowledge on mechanics of reading

4.16. TYPES OF READING
The reading process differs according to the profession, purpose and need. For all types of reading the physical activity is same but the employment of reading mechanics and mental ability of the reader characterize the type of reading.

4.17. INTERNAL READING
Internal reading is silent reading, which is performed with understanding. The reader comprehends the meaning given in the words and he passively reads and sees the words. During this activity the reader passively understands the meaning of the words through the active movement of his eyes, so that it is passive skill.

4.18. EXTERNAL READING
In external reading or sound reading, the reader produces audible representation of the words he reads. During external reading the reader may or may not
always comprehend what he reads. Reading can take place without knowing the
meaning of the matter being written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
<th>READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The writer follows the traditional rules of writing</td>
<td>The reader checks the conventional rules of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In writing the writer may commit mistakes and errors unknowingly - grammatical, syntactical and semantic. Hence unmindful of those shortcomings he can satisfy himself that his job is over</td>
<td>Reading is a self-centered activity. In the reading process the reader can easily find whether he is able to understand the writing or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The writer has chance to convey a meaning with the knowledge he possesses in the use of vocabularies</td>
<td>Reading and understanding meaning are not only based on the readers vocabulary power but also the writers power of using the vocabularies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing includes reading</td>
<td>Reading act may include writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The writer interacts potential readers</td>
<td>The reader interacts with the writer through the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The writer expresses</td>
<td>The reader receives information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.19. IMPORTANCE OF WRITING AND READING
Both writing and reading are equally important. Without one skill the other will not be of any use. Hence the development of the one skill will automatically enhance the development of the other. The deficiency in one skill will affect the other also. However both the skills are desiderative of the literacy of a person.

4.20. PLACE OF READING IN LITERACY
The skill of reading and that of writing are the visual media of language. Another way of representing these skills is not on the basis of medium but on the basis of the activity of the language user. Thus speaking and writing are said to be active or productive, whereas listening and reading are said to be passive or receptive skills.

4.21. READING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER SKILLS
Reading helps in the development of speaking skill. Through reading a speaker can learn the tasks behind speaking and can easily develop his speaking ability. Reading also helps one to develop the writing skill. Reading provides more knowledge to the reader and helps him to transfer this knowledge acquired by reading skill through writing. Hence writing process is kindled through reading.

Vernan (1971) points out that the ability to read is generally regarded as the foundation of education but also as an essential possession of all citizens of civilized countries.
Strang (1967) says ‘reading proficiency is the royal road to knowledge’. Learning depends largely upon one’s ability to interpret the pages accurately and fully.

4.22. PROSE COMPREHENSION

Arthur C. Graser (1981) says there are six knowledge domains involved in prose comprehension namely:

1. Linguistic
2. Rhetoric
3. Casual conceptualizations
4. Intentional conceptualization
5. Spatial and
6. Roles, personalities and objectives etc.,

4.22.1. Linguistic knowledge

In order to comprehend prose, the reader must obviously have the knowledge of language. Linguists emphasize the knowledge of language in terms of knowledge about,

1. Phonemic
2. Lexical
3. Syntactic
4. Semantic and
5. Pragmatic aspects associated with language.

4.22.2. Rhetorical knowledge

Rhetorical knowledge involves aspects like how utterances and statements are to be introduced, ordered and interrelated in different kinds of prose so that the message has an impact on the reader.

The reader who could perceive rhetoric of text should be able to perceive the modes of presentations of text after reading the first two or three paragraphs of the text.

4.22.3. CASUAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

Statements in prose are often presented casually. Casual conceptualizations involve both events and states. States are properties of the physical, social and mental worlds of a character.

4.22.4. INTENTIONAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

Goals, plans and actions are organized by virtue of intentional conceptualizations. It has been postulated that intentional action sequences are organized by structures of goals and plans (Abbot and Black, 1980, Becker, 1975, Bruce, 1978, Willensky, 1978).

4.22.5. SPATIAL KNOWLEDGE

The reader often constructs scenarios or spatial contexts for the actions, events and states that are expressed in prose.
One effective strategy of acquiring and remembering difficult verbal material is to generate vivid mental images to objects, characters and events within a spatial framework (Bower, 1970, Levin and Dressla, 1978, Pairio, 1971).

4.22.6. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ROLES, PERSONALITIES AND OBJECTS

The characters in stories fulfill roles. Roles and stereotypes enrich our impressions about characters in stories.

The personality impressions are constructed on the basis of nouns and adjectives that are used to describe individuals as well as the actions the individuals perform and their reactions to events. When readers recall stories, their recall protocols substantially differ depending upon the views they take on the perspective of different characters. (Anderson and Picher, 1978; Bower 1978).
4.23. Comprehension

Comprehension is a fundamental process in understanding the meaning of a text. While comprehending a particular information supplied in a text, the reader or listener may get more information than what is given in the text, provided, the subject matter and knowledge of the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of the text is well known to him. If the reader has a poor ability and if the text is unfamiliar, he may get less information than what is actually provided in the given text. Thus the skills involved in the comprehension activity may be based on the meaning of the text, the interpretation of the text and the competence of the reader.

Krashan (1981, p: 102) says comprehension may be at the heart of the language acquisition process;

David Crystal (1985, p: 63) says ‘the general sense of the term comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret spoken or written language’. The reader or the listener should know the text should have the ability to make textual inference in order to have a better comprehension of the text.

The present study has been conducted to test the reading ability of college students learning English as SL. 15 types of tests were administered to the students to test their reading comprehension and the questions selected were Text based and Textual inference based.
Further these questions give focus to linguistic categories belonging to

1. Word
2. Sentence and
3. Passage levels

Questions are of objective type. The intention of the test is to test the reading ability of the students, and so written type answers were not drawn from the learners.

4.24. Testing skills

Comprehension includes main skills like, recognition, reorganization, inference, recreation, recall, appreciation and evaluation.

These skills were taken into account for testing the reading comprehension.

4.24.1. Recognition

Recognition involves reading the matter, identifying the words with their grammatical, syntactical and semantic features in the context where they appear. For a better understanding of a passage the reader must know the meaning and the grammatical features of the particular words, which occur in that passage. In order to test the recognition skill, the following test items were used.

1. Identifying the synonyms and antonyms of the words,
2. Identifying the meaning of the phrases, and idioms,
3. Identifying the structure of the sentences and patterns,
4. Recognizing the information and numbers in the passage.
4.24.2. Inference

Inferring is a skill of associating some related information that is not found in the text. In comprehension, the activity of inference plays an important one. It is a higher order skill, that demands the knowledge and experience of the reader. To test the inferential ability of the students, the following test items were selected.

1. Inferring the concepts and facts given in the paragraph,
2. Inferring the tables to find out the arithmetic values,
3. Inferring information related to textual information.

4.24.3. Re-organization

Re-organizing the concepts and words found in a reading text is also carried as one of the important skills involved in the comprehension process. Only when one could read and comprehend the text fully, he may get the intended meaning of the text. One has to organize the facts to get the meaning in a rational way. To test the degree of this re-organizing ability among the test subjects, the following tasks were included in the questionnaire.

1. Arranging the nouns in a sequence,
2. Arranging the facts in a sequence,
3. Replacing the subjects by other subjects,
4. Re-organizing the sentences by, tense and voice forms,
5. Organizing the information found in random order.
4.24.4. Re-creation

During the comprehension process, the reader of a text imposes meaning to the words in order to get the meaning intended by the writer. Unless the reader understands both the contextual as well as the pragmatic meaning of the constituent sentences, he cannot get the clear meaning of the passage. On most of the occasions the writers deceive the readers through their rhetorical power and the idiomatic expressions they use. Apart from the literal and pragmatic meaning of the passage, the reader must be in a position to match the meaning that he gets from the text with the other type of meaning, which he might have assumed.

The following types of tasks were included in the questionnaire to test the recreation ability of the students.

1. Creating new words by analogy,
2. Writing sentences similar to those given in the text,
3. Writing new sentences by making use of the words taken from the passage.

4.24.5. Recall

Recall is an aspect of literal comprehension. Comprehension has a direct impact over recall. Text organization, long-term meaning, short-term meaning, knowledge level, comprehension ability etc., will have some influence over the retention and the recall ability of the individuals. If comprehension is higher, then recall degree also will be higher. To test the recall capacity of the students subsequent to the act of reading, a test was administered to the students. A
paragraph was selected and the students were asked to fill every sixth word in
the paragraph. 12 blanks were given in the passage, and the students were
expected to fill in the words representing grammatical forms like:

1. Pronouns
2. Auxiliaries
3. Verbs
4. Conjunctions and
5. 'Be' verbs, etc.

4.25. Reading analysis

Word level (text)

4.25.1. Test item no: 2.1 identifying the meaning of the words

Given text: passage-in appendix-II

Instruction

Select the correct meaning of the given word

Question: parting means

Given options: -

a. Breathe with short quick breathe
b. Breathing slowly
c. Sneezing quickly
d. Severe cough

Expected correct response: -a. breathe with short quick breathe
Comment

41.33% students selected the correct answer to the question. 58.67% students selected the incorrect response to this question. The wrong selection happened due to the students' lack of vocabulary power, availability to infer meaning from contexts. Most of the students misunderstood the word 'parting' as sneezing', and they could not differentiate the words, like parting, breathe, sneeze, cough.

4.25.2. Test item no: -2.2 identification of answers to the questions from the text.

Instruction:

*Read the following question and select the suitable answer.*

Given text: one passage-in-appendix-II

Question

For how many years the birth rate increased after the world wars?

Answers: -

a. Five years

b. Six years

c. Three years

d. So many years
Correct response: - a). five years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Test No.</th>
<th>Given text</th>
<th>Mode of answers</th>
<th>Comprehension skill level</th>
<th>No. of students tested</th>
<th>No. of correct res.</th>
<th>Incor. Res.</th>
<th>% of the correct res.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Word Identification</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

This question is based on the textual information. Identification task is assigned in this test question. 80% students have performed well and this score is highest among all the reading tests.

4.25.3. Test item no: -2.3 Identification of the number of characters involved in a sentence

Instructions: read the following sentence and identify the number of characters involved in it.

Given text: “the sister of mohan’s father was aunt to mohan’s sister. Mohan’s uncle was a military man.

Qn:- how many characters are revealed through this sentence.

Answer:

a. 6

b. 5

c. 4

d. 7
Correct answer  b.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Test no.</th>
<th>Given text</th>
<th>Mode of answers</th>
<th>Comprehension level</th>
<th>Skill tested</th>
<th>No. of students attended</th>
<th>No. of correct res.</th>
<th>No. of Incor. Res.</th>
<th>% of the correct res.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

Kinship identification normally confuses the readers. Many of the learners could not identify the number of persons presented in the sentence correctly. Only 43.3% students have given the correct answer. 30 % students have selected the answer a,. The students would have counted the names as tokens.

4.25.4. Test item no:2.4. identification of grammatical categories

Instruction Read the given passage and answer the following questions

Given text:

Mr. and Mrs. Kothari used to come for counseling. When Mrs. Kothari spoke, she pointed to herself as the most dedicated, understanding and praiseworthy housewife, married to a cruel, irresponsible, unsympathetic man.

Question

The word ‘counseling’ in line no.1 is a: -

Answers

a. Verb

b. Gerund
c. Present participle

d. Continuous form

Correct response b. Gerund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Comprehension level</th>
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<td>word</td>
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<td>150</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>64.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

Identification of the words and their grammatical function is essential for the L2 learners, particularly for comprehending the reading material. 64.66% students identified this word and came up with the correct answer. 5 percent of the students have selected the answer 'd'.

4.25.5. Test item no: 5 identification of grammatical categories

Instruction: -- *read the following passage and match the following columns*

Question: Match the column 'a' with 'b'

Given text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column ‘a’</th>
<th>column ‘b’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kothari</td>
<td>a. Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>b. Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herself</td>
<td>c. Preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irresponsible</td>
<td>d. Noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>e. Adjective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answers

a. 1-b, 2-a 3-d 5-c 4-e
b. 1-d 2-a 3-b 4-e 5-c
c. 1-e 2-b 3-c 4-d 5-a
d. 1-d 2-a 3-c 4-a 5-b

Expected correct response –b) 1-d 2-a 3-b 4-e 5-c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Test No.</th>
<th>Given text</th>
<th>Mode of answers</th>
<th>Comprehension level</th>
<th>Skill tested</th>
<th>No. of students attended</th>
<th>No. of correct res.</th>
<th>Incor. Res.</th>
<th>% of the correct res.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Pas sage</td>
<td>Objec tive</td>
<td>word</td>
<td>Identifi cation</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

57.3 % students selected the correct answer. The grammatical categories given for identification are primary categories and so they have easily understood and answered correctly.

4.25.6. Test item no: -6 filling the missing the words in the given passage.

Instruction: read the following paragraph and fill the blanks with appropriate prepositions, articles, verbs, and pronouns.

Question

Fill the every sixth word in the following paragraph.

Given text
Harappa was located on the —1---Ravi. It was the first —2--to be excavated. Harappa ranks ---3--- the premier city of civilization.---4--- interesting thing is the factors---5--- there are no group of ---6--- sites around Harappa. In Harappa a ---7--- section of the population has---8--- in activities other than food---9--- like administration, trade, and craftwork---10---religion. Harappa was located in the ------11---of some trade routes which ---12---still in use.

**Expected correct response;**

1. river 5. that 9. production
2. site 6. such 10. and, or
3. as 7. considerable 11. midst
4. the 8. engaged 12. are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Test No.</th>
<th>Given text</th>
<th>Mode of questions</th>
<th>Comprehension Level</th>
<th>Skill tested</th>
<th>No of Students attended</th>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>Fill the blanks</td>
<td>Inference</td>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment**

Nobody has filled the blanks giving right answers to all the questions. This paragraph has been drawn from their text book and hence content may be known to them. But the results show that their performance in filling up the words is not up to the expected level.

12 to 8 words filled 11% of the students
Prior practices in reading and exercises related to the identification and use of verbs, adverbs, pronouns, articles will be useful to the students in substituting and guessing the missing words in a text.

4.25.7. Test item no; 7 sequencing the nouns in an order

Instruction: read the following sentences and answer the question that follow it.

Given text: In a class, Sohan secures higher marks than Mohan, Hari secures more marks than Mohan.

Question: who secures the lowest marks?


Expected correct response. C. Mohan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Test no.</th>
<th>Given text</th>
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<th>Comprehension level</th>
<th>Skill tested</th>
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<th>No. of correct res.</th>
<th>Incor. Res.</th>
<th>% of the correct res.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Sentence tive</td>
<td>sentence</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>54.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

54.6 percent of the students have given the correct answer to this question. Based on the textual information the students were expected to infer the information. 20 percent of the students selected the answer b. this shows poor inferential capacity on the given text.
4.26. ANALYSIS OF WORD LEVEL, TEXT BASED QUESTIONS

4.26.1. Test item no: 8 finding the arithmetic value in sentence.

Instruction

Read the advertisement and answer the following question.

Given text: -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50% Discount sale for Silk Sarees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only from 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; January to 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue: govt. exhibition hall, covai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 8.00 am to 10.pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: -

The discount is valid only for --------

Options

A. 10 days  b. 11 days  c. 12 days  d. 13 days

Expected correct response: c. 12 days
Comment

Numerical skill is also one of the skills involved in the reading activity of course, governed by language use and so this question eliciting the numbers and value has been included in the questionnaire. Only 20 percent of the students have responded correctly. The probable reason behind the incorrect selection of the answer may be due to a simple substitution.

Closing date 31
Starting date 20

Thus 40 percent of the students have selected the wrong answer b (11) days.

4.26.2. Test item no: 2.9 ‘Identification of the meaning of a word in context’

Instruction

*Read the following word and select the answer, which refers to it.*

Given text –passage in appendix-II
Question: the word ‘nuisance’ in line no.5 refers to: -

a. The action of the pedestrians.
b. The action of the players in the playground.
c. The disturbance of the author and his friend.
d. The disturbance of the public.

Expected correct answer: c. The disturbance of the author and his friend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Objective</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>31.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

While playing in the streets, the author disturbed the pedestrians. In order to mention this activity the word ‘nuisance’ is used in the given text. Most of the students could not identify that the word ‘nuisance’ in the given passage refers to the playing activity of the author and only 31.33% have provided the correct answer to this question.

4.26.3. Test item no: -10 identification of the action

Given text: -passage- in appendix –1

Instruction: select the correct referential meaning to the given word.
Question: - the word 'passing' in the line no: 3 refers to: -

Answers:-

a. Throwing the ball.
b. Sending the ball to someone else.
c. Passing the ball on the heads of the pedestrians.
d. Passing the ball for playing.

Expected correct answer: c. Passing the ball on the heads of the pedestrians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
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<td>word</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>38.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

The real meaning of the word 'passing' is not revealed in the sentence instead an ironic expression is revealed through this expression, that is the author passed the ball to the heads of the pedestrians. Only 38.66 percent of the students inferred correctly and selected the correct answer to this question.

4.26.4. Test item no: 11 identification of the time reference

Instruction: which one of the following sentence shows the time reference?

Given text-
a. In the 19th century, however, science and improved technology almost troubled life expectancy.

b. When the probabilities of human survivor are poor, nature makes many babies.

c. When chances of man's survival improved, nature reduces the number of new babies.

d. All these happen without the conscious co-operation of or even the knowledge of human concern.

Comment:
Sixty percent of the students wrote the correct answer to this question. This question has been included with the idea of testing the students ability in identifying the temporal reference in the passage. Maximum numbers of students have selected the correct answer to this question.

19% of the students have selected the answer "B" or "C" the reason may be that both the sentences are having the word 'when'. The students might have thought of it as sentences with time reference but a) is the best suitable answer in which the time reference is clearly mentioned.


Instruction: identify the sentence, which gives negative

Given text

a. The birth rate continues to rise for five years

b. All these happened without the conscious co-operation of the human knowledge.
c. When the human survivors are poor, nature makes many babies.

d. Science an improved technology almost troubled life expectancy.

Expected correct response d.

<table>
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<td>Passage</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

68 percent of the students wrote the correct answer to this question. Students' knowledge in identifying the theme of the passage is important. In order to support the message of the passage the author has said that the science and technology has troubled the life expectancy. This statement may not be true in other contexts. The reader has followed the reason behind the statement, for this the identification of the theme and sense of every sentence is important in a passage. In order to test the student's identification of the sentences with meaning and thematic point of view this question was included.

4.26.6. Test item no: 2.13 Identification of personal reference

Instruction: which one of the following sentences shows impersonal information?

Given text:

a. Our team was formed by Jambu.
b. As soon as we were finished school we.

c. People passed a long unmindful of the nuisance.

d. Panting and perspiring and hungry, we turned...

Expected correct response: **c. People passed a long unmindful of the nuisance.**

---

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
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<td>sentence</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

64% students selected the correct answer. Almost all the lines in the passage show the personal note of the author. The answer c. is the only sentence does not show any of the reflexive pronouns, and so the students easily selected the correct answer.

4.26.7. Test item no: 2.14 Identification of the action

Instruction: **Which one of the following sentence shows the action of the character?**

Given text:

a. We were from different schools.
b. We marched along to the lake playground, lightly tossing, kicking, and passing the ball over the heads of pedestrians.

c. At the field we had our ground beside the railway line.

d. Panting and perspiring and hungry, we turned homeward.

Expected correct response: ‘b’

Comment

In reading activity the evaluation of action is important. The given passage shows the playing activity of the author and his friends. The manner of action and place have been clearly described in the passage. One question related to the action of the character has been included and most of the students performed well in answering to this question.

4.26.8. Test Item No: 2.15 Identification of the feelings found in the person narrated.

Instruction: read the following four sentences and identify the sentence, which shows, the physiological state of the person narrated.

Given text
a. Our team was formed by Jambu.

b. We went down the vellalar street and across the Ponni Amman street.

c. We were hungry, when we turned homeward.

d. We rolled up stones to make their goal posts.

Expected correct answer: - c. We were hungry when we turned homeward.

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<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
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<th>Incor. Res.</th>
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<td>103</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>68.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

Comprehending the emotions, feelings and moods of the persons narrated in the text is essential for a fuller understanding of the meaning of the text. As for this test is concerned most of the students have easily identified the correct expected response.

4.26.9. Test item no: 2.16 Sentence – text inference

Inferring the facts of the sentences (meaning)

Given text: - passage appendix-II

Instruction: say true/false to the following sentence

Question: - the author should have disturbed the pedestrians while playing

Given options: - true/false

Expected correct response: - true
Comment

For this question many students have provided the correct response. The question asked is about the consequence of the action performed by a person. The action performed is “passing the ball over heads of pedestrians in the street or through the wheel of carriage from one side of the street to another”. These clues might have helped the students to arrive at the correct answer and 59.33% students have provided the correct answer.

4.26.10. Test item no: 2.17 identifying the theme of the sentence

Instruction: - say true/false

Given text:

i. All cloths are shirts    ii. All shirts are red

Therefore: conclusion: all cloths are red.

Question: - the conclusion arrived out statement I. And ii. Is true/false?

Expected correct response ‘true’
Comment

46.66 percent of the students selected the correct answer to this question. This question tests the inferential ability of students based on the cues given in two statements.

4.26.11. Test item no. 2.18

Given text: one passage –given in appendix-II

Instruction: read the passage and answer the question

Question: after major wars people produce more babies:

a. Because they have suffered
b. Without knowing that they are doing
c. Because they want to co-operate with nature.
d. Because nature guides them so.

Expected correct response: d. Because nature guide them so.

Comment

46.66 percent of the students selected the correct answer to this question. This question tests the inferential ability of students based on the cues given in two statements.

4.26.11. Test item no. 2.18

Given text: one passage –given in appendix-II

Instruction: read the passage and answer the question

Question: after major wars people produce more babies:

a. Because they have suffered
b. Without knowing that they are doing
c. Because they want to co-operate with nature.
d. Because nature guides them so.

Expected correct response: d. Because nature guide them so.
**Comment**

Only 35.2% students wrote the correct answer to this question. This question expects the gist of the passage, and the students have to take into account the information found in each and every sentence of the given passage. Most of the students could not select the correct response and in particular 15 percent of the students selected the incorrect option a. (because they have suffered. The students might have over generalized the idea based on their own assumptions.

**4.26.12. Test item no: 2.19 arranging the nouns in a sequence.**

Given text: statements

Instruction: *read the passage and answer the question.*

Text:

a. Prem wanted to buy a white color costlier pen.

b. Sam wanted to buy a red color costlier pen

c. Ram wanted to buy a white color cheaper pen.

All the three went to a same shop and the shopkeeper responded to them as: -

I have all the varieties of pens except, the cheaper green, blue, gray, pens and costlier red, pink, violet pens.

Question: who will have the chance to buy their desired color pens?

Given options:

a. Prem and Ram

b. Prem and Sam

c. Sam and Ram
d. All the Three


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
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<th>Comprehension level</th>
<th>Skill tested</th>
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<th>% of the correct res.</th>
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<td>117</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment:

22 percent of the students wrote the correct answer to this question. This question has been included in this questionnaire with the aim of testing the students' knowledge in comprehending the complex information.

4.36. Summary on Reading

Reading skill is considered as the most important skills in the learning levels, through which the other skills of language can be easily learned. Reading, a passive activity is characterized as literacy skill and it begins from school where a child starts learning and in some cases it starts in the home domain in which the child is placed. In learning and using the reading skills, many sub skills are involved. It is the duty of the reader to consider the reading sub-skills like, identification, inference, recreation, reorganization, recognition etc. It is not necessary that all the sub skills be involved in a same reading text, but all the above said skills play a role in the decoding process. In order to test the reading
ability of students in English language a specially designed questionnaire, which included the questions related to all types of reading skills was used. The test results found from the analysis of the reading tests of the students show that the reading ability of the graduate students in English language is not up to the expected level. The overall results and the scores they achieved in the sub skills show lesser degree achievement.

Students’ performance in the identification and inference skills is much better when compared with their performance in recreation, reorganization and recognition skills.

The reason behind reading difficulty is due to the lack of reading materials other than the one coming under the curriculum. The test results show that 18 percent of the students have not fully read the given passage. It is found from the test results that 30 percent of the students could not correctly answer the questions related to the identification skills. Before the reading test began all the informants were asked to read the passage at least three times before answering to the questions, but many of them have not followed it.

The following are the conclusions arrived from the analysis of the responses to the reading test.

1. Students have achieved better results in the skills of **identification**, **inference** than in skills like **recognition**, **reorganization** and **recreation**.

2. **Reading** in relation to **sentence level** has been answered well than those asked in relation to **word level**.
3. The recognition skill, especially finding meaning to the individual words is poor.

4. Reading skill in a passage of a novel is better when compared to the reading in a scientific passage.

The overall reading test result shows that only 47 percent of the students were able to comprehend the items given in the questionnaire. Reading is a passive activity, unless the informants, write anything about the understanding of the given passage, it is impossible to measure their reading comprehension level. The objective type of questions asked in the reading comprehension may not reflect the understanding level of the informants. These types of questions only show whether they are able to comprehend or not. The test results can be corrected only when they fully understand the given passage.

Remedial measures for developing reading skill.

1. Giving reading comprehension exercises.

2. Giving reading practices in texts like, newspapers, novels, news items, scientific writings, reports, etc.

3. Introducing more number of exercises related to the skills like reorganization, recognition, inference, etc.

4. Introducing exercises based on analogical creation in word, meaning, and concepts levels.

5. Introducing the exercises like fill in the blanks in the passages.

6. Exercises like completion of the texts, which are given in fragmental form.
7. Synonyms test in isolation and in relation to given passage.

8. Introducing the new set phrases and collocations for students to learn.

9. Teaching the idioms and usage of the second language to the students.

10. Giving exercises related to conversion, and transformation skills with reference to texts.

11. Practices for developing, general intelligence, general reading, and reasoning for making logical inference. These will enhance the readability, and intelligence of the readers, which play a crucial role in the identification and reorganization of the texts.

12. Tests related to decision-making based on the text, and the inference based on the reader's previous knowledge can be included in the reading tests.

13. Tests based on the clerical aptitude especially designed to the recognition of words and letters will really enhance the reader's readability.