CHAPTER II
CHAPTER TWO

READING

2.1 Introductory Note

The beginning of scientific study of 'reading' can be traced to the late 1870s. A number of scholars since then have tried to reflect on the nature of reading. But the greater part of this effort has remained focussed on the pedagogy of reading rather than on the nature of reading. The result has been the emergence of technocracy of reading practice with a shallow theoretical base. However, attempts have recently been made to overcome this initial hesitation by involving work from other disciplines.

The past two decades have witnessed a growing interest in reading comprehension in fields like cognitive psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, philosophy, rhetoric and literature. However, the interdisciplinary approach has yet to be forthcoming with the result that research in any area remains unapplied and unknown in the other.

2.2 Models of Reading

A number of models and theories of reading have developed over the past years namely, substrata-factor theory (developmental model), information processing model,
transactional-psycholinguistic model, interaction model, affective model, etc. In this section, the following theories have been discussed—the 'substrata factor theory', the 'transactive-psycholinguistic model', the 'interactionalist model', and the 'transactional model' of reading.

2.2.1 Substrata-Factor Theory

This theory seeks to explain how individuals attain speed in reading. They account for the individual differences and show how an individual's substrata-factor could be organised for its attainment. It relies on the statistical analysis of test variables and questions the factors accounting for the individual differences in speed and power of reading.


1. Although the terms "theories" and "models" are used interchangeably, they are not identical. A theory is dynamic i.e. it provides an explanation for a phenomenon or simply describes the way in which a model operates. A model, on the other hand, is a way of depicting a theory's variables, mechanisms, constructs, and their interrelationships.

College Level" that research in the substrata - theory of reading began. Subsequently in 1953 he formulated the theory that explained the results of his doctoral thesis. Later in 1965 the theoretical assumption was explicated and a neurological explanation was given by him for the function of the mind. In 1980, Singer incorporated the conceptual domain and through a number of perceptual, linguistic tests sought to relate the substrata factor theory of reading to the school level. His theory proved useful for teaching, diagnosis and evaluation of reading ability. Later Singer in collaboration with Holmes (1961, 1966) tested the hypothesis which stated that individuals in their attempt to solve the problem of reading will tend to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Although the hypothesis was yet to be confirmed, what emerged was the fact that a minimum vocabulary and word recognition ability was needed and this was furthered by Anderson and Freebody (1983).

4. Ibid 1985: 633
Holmes' theory has been criticized by a number of researchers. Some of his findings when applied on another set of tests have provided completely different result. The statistical assumption, which has been his strong forte, has been challenged by Sparks and Mitzel. Holmes' model further fails to talk about statements dealing with cause and effect relationship. It is because Holmes' theory does not generate hypothesis which can be tested so the limitation of this theory remains.

2.2.2 Goodman's Transactional-Psycholinguistic Model

The Transactional-Psycholinguistic Model of Reading, as has been discussed by Goodman (1987), focusses on the need to have a reading theory with a psycholinguistic base. The reader's interaction with the words on the page are seen to be a reconstruction of the writer's message. He explains this through a figure(1) which employs transformational-generative view of language, not owing to any commitment with that view but simply to explain the actual behaviour of readers.

6. Sparks, J.A. and Harold Mitzel, "A reaction to Holmes' basic assumptions underlying the Substrata-Factor Theory", READING RESEARCH QUARTERLY, I

Meaning is not derived directly but the reader tries to decode meaning through a graphic display. Goodman placed strong emphasis on top-down processing (or conceptually-driven processing) in which the decisions taken at the higher levels in the processing system are used to guide choices at the lower level. In this kind of processing the reader invokes both his knowledge of the world and his knowledge of the structure of the sentence.

Although Goodman's model (1967) characterizes reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game involving tentative information, his concern for reading as a meaning-seeking process is apparent in both 1987 model and his subsequent writings (1972, 1984). In "Unity in Reading" Goodman makes a case for a unified theory of reading based on the assumption that regardless of the point of focus, reading remains the same for all who undertake it. Meaning

here is constructed through transactions with the text. This can be viewed from the point of view of the writer producing the text, the characteristics of the text and the reader constructing the meaning.

Meaning does not reside in the text but in the reader and the writer. Texts are constructed by authors to be comprehended by readers and the text has the potential to evoke meaning but has no meaning in itself. Comprehension, therefore, is influenced by the writer’s construction of a text and the reader’s reconstruction of it. "An effective text is one that not only expresses the author’s meaning but is comprehensible to others. It must be a full enough representation of the meaning to suit the needs, background, schemata and interests of the readers".  

Recent researches on reading have examined the reader’s role in the construction of meaning. This tendency, according to Goodman, to attribute active role to a reader in the construction of meaning is rather new. To quote Goodman "Though theories of reading as a process have existed... since the time of Huey, (their views of reading were) essentially word-centred."  

9. Goodman, R.S. "Unity in Reading", in Alan C. Purves and Olive Niles (eds) BECOMING READERS IN A COMPLEX SOCIETY, 1984: 83

10. Goodman op. cit., 1984: 95
In his unified theory of reading the main issue revolves around the active role of the reader and the text, and his search for meaning. Goodman believes that reader in the process of assimilating knowledge experiences a change in the values and the conceptual schemata. During the act of reading and meaning creation, the reader constructs a text 'parallel' to the published text. These are based on the reader's original text. The reconstruction of the text is not the end but helps in the arrival of meaning.

2.2.3 Interactional Model

Whether it is Goodman's top-down model or Gough's bottom-up processing model, neither of these position seems to be entirely satisfactory. Rumelhart (1977), drawing on work in artificial intelligence, proposes a more balanced model in which linguistic knowledge from several sources (orthographic, lexical, syntactic and semantic) interacts in the reading process. A schematic representation of Rumelhart's model is shown in figure (2) below:
Figure 2: A representation of Rumelhart's Interactive Model of Reading.

In the first stage the information is picked up by the eye and registered in a Visual Information Store (VIS) or icon. The component Feature Extraction Device extracts visual features from this store and makes it available to the central component of the model called Pattern Synthesizer. The central component then draws upon a wide variety of different sources of information, namely syntactical, semantic, orthographic, lexical and uses them to work out the most probable interpretation of the text. Unlike earlier models of reading, Rumelhart's model deals with contextual effects more adequately, however, there are a number of other aspects of the process where this model fails. For example, the model says nothing about the basis
on which the various kinds of hypothesis are generated. This model also fails\textsuperscript{11} to specify the relative importance of the contribution from each knowledge source and even does not indicate how the influence of each source varies with the reader's strategy and with the reading conditions.

2.2.4 Transactional Model

Transaction underlines the acceptance of two-way relationship which, in ecological terms, human being has with nature, or, in terms of reading, a reader may have with a text. This notion of transaction simply rejects the underlying "epistemological dualism that places the human being against nature as two separate or autonomous entities."\textsuperscript{12} If one goes into the history, the transaction view of relationship arose as a reaction against "interaction" by Dewey (1896)\textsuperscript{13}. Dewey in KNOWING AND THE KNOWN chose "transaction" to simply indicate a two-way reciprocal relationship in which 'knowing' assumes a transaction between a 'knower' and a 'known'. The

\begin{itemize}
\item[12.] Rosenblatt, L.M. "The Reading Transaction: What for?" in Robert P. Parker and Frances A. Davis (eds) DEVELOPING LITERACY: YOUNG CHILDREN'S USE OF LANGUAGE, 1985: 120
\item[13.] Ibid 1985: 120
\end{itemize}
transactional model of reading places the text and the reader at the centre. Transactional view of reading makes reading a particular event, involving a particular reader, a particular item of the environment—a text, at a particular time, under particular circumstances.

The autonomy of the text was first expostulated by the New Critic, who not only rendered centrality to the text but also questioned the elements outside the text. However, it was as early as 1929 when I.A. Richards had focussed attention upon the reader's response. In the PRACTICAL CRITICISM a group of undergraduate students were exposed to eight poems and their responses noted. It was seen that their responses varied. Richards' concern was on the incorrect readings and on the factors which inhibited a 'correct' response. He was also concerned with the application of new knowledge emanating from psychology in order to understand the response process. In this sense Richard stood in two intellectual camps. As Bleich (1975) had put it: "One camp was New Critical: that is he believed in the fundamental purpose of learning to read literature faithfully because he believed in the enduring integrity and autonomy of the work of art. The other camp was much more psychological, and in his early work, PRINCIPLES OF LITERARY CRITICISM (1925), Richards went to great lengths to describe and demonstrate the subjectivity of aesthetic value
judgement. He believed in the necessity of developing a psychology of literary judgement. Thus, while recognizing for the first time that real readers' responses must be studied in order to develop such a psychology, Richards implied that such a psychology is normative, and that different responses and different readings can be corrected on the basis of that norm. "14

Placing emphasis on the reader and regarding the reader as assuming the role of the critic have certain advantages. Margaret Early (1980)15 had talked of "good" readers of literature in this sense who take "conscious delight" in literary work and perform the role of a critic. They rely on their own judgements, are aware of their limitations in viewing the text, strive for universality and realize the necessity of wilful suspension of disbelief. However, on certain other fronts they do not behave in a manner expected of a critic. Not only that they bring their own individual histories to the experience of the work, but also encounter text in different contexts.


and for varied purpose, and, therefore, their response is affected.

New criticism placed the text at the centre of experience, thereby minimizing the role of the teacher as an authority for whom the work would be looked at as an 'objective cultural phenomenon'. This shift from the text to the reader signifies a concern for felt response. The purpose is not to arrive at definite readings but things revolve around what one is capable of finding and on the purpose of looking for it. Work since Richards had focussed on the reader's contribution to literary experience. The New Critics' emphasis was on naive encounters of the text thereby denying the reader experience as all important. Rosenblatt (1978)\(^\text{16}\), however, denied this view and stated that the process of literature involves the negotiation of meaning between the reader and the writer. Instead of viewing reading as a single line of action as in the case of interpretational model (reader acting on the text) or the response model (the text acting on the reader), Rosenblatt goes on to assert the transactionalist notion of reading. The relation between reader and text according to transactional model of reading is not linear but situational occurring in a context of time and space. To quote

Rosenblatt (1983): "A person becomes a reader by virtue of a relationship with a text. A text is merely ink on a page, until some reader evokes meaning from it." 17 The transactional theory rejects both—the formalist tendency which concentrate on the text as all-important and the reader as passive, and "subjective" literary theorists who look at reader as all-important and the text as passive. For transaction reader and text are mutually essential and meaning happens during this interaction between the two. The reader, therefore, is viewed as a "co-creator" of the literary work. Bleich developed an extensive curriculum framework through which students learn to appreciate and accept their responses. As a co-creator, the reader's response to the text will be characterized by tension and discord as well as by concurrence and harmony. The emphasis placed on reader will get a justification if one looks at the role of the reader.

2.3 Role of the Reader

Reader has been looked at as both a co-creator and a recreator. The former emanates from the transactionalist view of reading where the reader is regarded as interacting

17. Rosenblatt op cit, 1985: 120
cooperatively with the writer in the joint process of literary creation. The latter suggests that 'something' exists before a reader gives meaning to the printed symbols. Rosenblatt, although holds a transactionalist view of reading, shows an ambivalence with regard to the role of the reader. While, on the one hand, she stresses the transactional nature of the activity and treats literary process as a negotiation of meaning in which the reader's role is essentially that of a co-creator. On the other hand, she speaks of the process as one of recreation where "Every time a reader experiences a work of art, it is in a sense created anew." 18

The recreative aspect of reader's reading has its implication on retelling in the literary process. Historically, retelling has evoked an inferior response. It has been looked at as a failure to come to grips with more difficult or abstract concepts. However, the evidence put forward by Bleich (1975) gives an entirely opposite view—a view in which retelling becomes far more complex. Recreation, for Bleich, therefore, includes the action of retelling and it is "not so much a recreation of the

18. Rosenblatt op cit. 1976: 113
authorial conception as a resynthesis and a restatement in terms of the reader's personality." Readers need to examine their subjective responses which can be achieved through the objective treatment.

Stratta, Wilkinson and Dixon (1973) talk of recreation through various exercises where readers exercise their rights and responsibilities in making texts mean. This is an entirely different view of recreation in which the reader is viewed as being engaged in recreating "imaginatively the experience expressed in the abstractions on the page." Although still operating within the transactional model of the reading process, the perspective offered by Stratta et al. gives more responsibility to the reader and also calls for an active role of the teacher in helping readers develop and mature their responses to literary texts.

The contemporary view of reading reduces the essentialist role of the reader and looks at the reader and the writer as holding the interactional relationship which is mediated through the text. Thus the interaction between the reader, writer and the text holds importance. This view


of reading may be traced to Bakhtin (1929)\textsuperscript{21} whose dialogic relationship between reader and writer is considered important in the reading of the text. He asserted that language as a sign system embodies both the element of conformity as well as of non-conformity. This multiple meaning concept has commonalities with Derrida (1978)\textsuperscript{22} when he talks of multiplicity as being an inherent characteristic of the text rather than something outside the text. Booth (1981)\textsuperscript{23} talks of the reader-writer interaction as one which occurs between an "implied reader" (which is a role offered to the reader by the author through the text) and "implied author" (who represents the presence of the author in the text). The reader here assumes the role of a real reader as required by the text, and constructs an image of the author as narrating the text. Booth's distinction between real and implied readers and authors has echoes of Iser's theory of textual blanks\textsuperscript{24} which are subsequently filled in the process of reading. Whether a reader is a co-creator or a recreator, there is no denial

\begin{itemize}
  \item 22. \textit{Ibid} p.20
  \item 23. Booth, W.C. 1961 THE RHETORIC OF FICTION
  \item 24. Iser, W. 1978 THE ACT OF READING: A THEORY OF AESTHETIC RESPONSE
\end{itemize}
that there is a transactional relationship between a reader and a text. Readers give and take with the text makes an interesting case for looking into response to literature i.e. how individual readers and literary texts interact with each other.

2.4 Response to Literature

Early in this century, literary theorists looking into the study of response to literature assumed that there was only one correct way to read a work of literature. However, Rosenblatt in LITERATURE AS EXPLORATION has provided a sharply radical viewpoint about response to literature in which she explores the interactive relationship between the individual readers and the literary text. Working from the tradition of Dewey and liberal humanism, Rosenblatt showed how the response statements issued by individuals in the classroom are dependent upon subjective, inter-subjective and social forces. Unfortunately her subjective perspective was soon lost in the onrush of formalist exegetical criticism which emphasized the objectivity of literary knowledge. It was


in the late 50s that attention was focussed on Rosenblatt's concepts. Research as early as 1984 by James Squire and in 1966 by James Wilson emphasized on how response led to a subtlety in all aspects of literary ideation. These studies, and others which followed them, showed "the senses in which pedagogy was an activity in which new literary knowledge was synthesized by each reader, and not one in which established knowledge was funnelled into young and vacant minds."27

David Bleich in "The Identity of Pedagogy" makes a presentation to prove his point that individual responses to literary works could be as valid as authoritative, formal techniques of literary interpretation. The study undertaken here is of Kafka's "A Country Doctor" where four response statements by the same person have been elucidated. Research here instead of trying to seek universal rules, tries to create orientation which are new in reading. The importance here would than be towards the reader's accomplishment rather than the correct or incorrect reading. The interpretive judgements are viewed and understood objectively in keeping with the real aim of research and pedagogy. The reader therefore, teaches a new sense of the author.

27. Bleich op. cit. 1980: 351
Response statements make it possible for research and pedagogy to be carried out simultaneously. The student, instead of passively accumulating knowledge, learns to view learning as a self-regulating process. This then does not become the domain of a few but of anyone with inclination and interest. The reading theory covers judgements which can be validated and authorized. As Bleich has rightly pointed out "Using response statements as teaching and research helps to demonstrate this equality of access, and encourages younger people to take more seriously their own natural initiatives with language as well as their perceptions of other people's language. The whole concept of intellectual authority is then shifted from that of a force to which one must accede, to one that can be independently developed by each person and by each community." 28 If the meaning of a literary work is dependent on the individual reader then it is also dependent on the text's language, structure, situation in which an individual responds to a text. In most of the work, be it a research on reading or response to literature, there is a focus on the process of making meaning. Insofar as literature can be taught as a "way of exploring, understanding, and reflecting on the strategies

by which readers— all readers— generate meanings in the act of reading", 29 writing about reading is one of the best ways to get students to "unravel their transactions so that we can see how they understand." 30 Writing, is not only a record of understanding but an act of understanding and therefore "writing process can aid the reading process." 31

2.5 Reading and Writing

Mariolina Salvatori in her article "Reading and Writing a Text" has raised the issue of dichotomy existing between the activities of reading and writing. The disparateness between the two activities may be seen as arising out of influence of certain literary theories that tend to emphasize on the analysis of the structure and the meanings of a text. The underlying assumption of these theories is that there is a highly trained reader who generates meanings. This could be true, but in the process these theories "usually neglect to account for, and to explain, the complex activities of that reader's mind as she

29. Salvatori, M. "Reading and Writing a text: Correlations between reading and writing patterns," COLLEGE ENGLISH, 45,7, 1983: 659

30. Petrosky, A.R. "From story to essay: Reading and Writing". COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, 33,1, 1982: 24

31. Spack, R. "Literature, Reading, Writing and ESL: Bridging the gaps", TESOL QUARTERLY 19,4, 1985: 709
or he receives, responds to, and generates those meanings." Tzvetan Todorov says that "a text always contains within itself directions for its own consumption." Salvatori believes that this statement assumes an a priori knowledge of how to read and respond to those directions. This statement further tantamounts to assuming that the reader is not only aware of the great variety of activities entailed in the reading of a fictional text, but has also developed the appropriate skills to perform such reading. Tall claims indeed, for such an expertise is expected from a knowledgeable critic and not from an inexperienced reader. Actually, it is this claim of Todorov that has contributed towards creation of an artificial boundary between reading and writing. If one continues to operate from this perspective, then the loss would be considerable. As Rosenblatt states that "literary texts provide us with a widely broadened 'other' through which to define ourselves and our world. Reflection on our meshing with the text can foster the process of self-definition in a variety of ways... The reader, reflecting on the world of the poem or play or novel as he conceived it

32. Salvatori op cit 1983: 658
33. Todorov, T. "Reading as Construction" cited in Ibid 1983: 658
and on his responses to that world, can achieve a certain self-awareness, a certain perspective on his own preoccupations, his own system of values." 34 What is required, therefore, is an exploration of the strategies used by the reader in meaning generation which is possible if the two activities are treated inseparably.

Andrea A. Lunsford states that language skills are related activities and that reading comprehension is related to sentence formation and to thought process. The correlation between reading and writing has been established and it has been convincingly concluded that "the teacher of writing must automatically and always be a teacher of reading as well." 35 Reading is an act of making meaning and "if it is to represent engaged and meaning making activity" then reading "must allow for the ways in which readers contribute to and make connections with the text." 36 In this endeavour, writing provides a unique opportunity for discovering and exploring these contributions and connections, because it allows the reader to dialogue with a text and find a particular way into it. As Petrosky 'has


35. Lunsford, A.A. "What we know and Don't know-about Remedial Writing," cited in Salvatori op. cit 1983: 859

36. Zamel, V. "Writing one's way into reading", TESOL QUARTERLY, 26,3, 1992: 468
rightly pointed out that "the only way to demonstrate comprehension is through extended discourse where readers become writers who articulate their understandings of and connections to the text in their responses".  

The processes of reading and writing are mutually enhancing. Strotsky (1975), in her review concerning the ways in which children's syntactic knowledge and sentence combining activities affect writing abilities and reading comprehension, concludes that "a significant crossover modal effect can theoretically occur, on the one hand, permitting speaking, listening, and reading activities to influence writing ability, and, on the other hand, permitting writing activities to enhance reading comprehension". Smith (1982) also hypothesized that "reading experiences enhance writing when students reflect over language with a writer's eye and develop a sensitivity that directs their attention to it". Recent research suggests that the reading and writing processes are related and experiences in one enhance growth in the other.

37. Petrosky op cit 1982: 24


Although the teaching of composition is perhaps the least of Iser's concerns, some of his ideas about reading will help us discover important correlations between reading patterns and writing patterns. In fact, his description of the processes by which readers produce meanings as they interact with a text throws considerable light on the reasons why students adopt ineffective reading strategies. In his ACT OF READING, Iser claims that, "central to the reading of every literary work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient... The literary work has two poles... the author's text... and the realization of it accomplished by the reader".  

The work, indeterminate and dynamic, cannot, therefore, be put down to one interpretation, one perspective, but would be subject to frequent modifications of perspectives. Meaning too cannot be reduced to the "assumed reality of the text." Iser stresses upon the "virtuality" of the work or text. To call something "virtual" seems to be at the same time an acknowledgement that it is not "real". Virtue means beyond what

the matter-of-fact words of the inert text would offer. Iser tries to balance the reader's own disposition with the role prescribed by the text. This he does by saying that if the reader's own disposition "were to disappear totally, we should simply forget all the experiences which are constantly bringing into play as we read...And even though we may lose awareness of these experiences while we read, we are still guided by them unconsciously, and by the end of our reading we are liable consciously to want to incorporate the new experience into our own store of knowledge." 41 It is this relating of our own world to the world of the text that partly accounts for some texts being easier and some more difficult for us to read and subsequently, the reasons for students adopting ineffective reading strategies.

This imaginative game between the reader and the writer would continue only if there were no governing rules. The enjoyment comes when the reader is allowed to be creative and productive, and this is possible if there is a transactional view of the mode of existence of a literary work. For this view not only liberates us from absolutist rejection of the reader, but also helps us preserve the importance of the text, and permits a "dynamic view of the

41. Iser op.cit 1978: 37
text as an opportunity for ever new readings, yet readings that can be responsibly self-aware and disciplined."

Another notion in Iser's theory derived from social psychology is the aspect of 'blanks' or "gaps" in the text. These blanks provide an avenue for transactional relations between the reader and the text. The reader confronts blanks in the text and his mind works on these in order to reach an understanding. A number of incorrect reading may take place before something substantial emerges for the reader. The reader here, while reading, indulges in two activities which are of 'consistency building' and 'wandering viewpoint'. Wandering viewpoint helps the reader by recognising his thoughts and in generating a revision of his previous perspectives. Consistency building tends to confirm the perspectives by providing familiar evidences. Iser gives a few suggestions to balance these readings.

Interactive nature of reading has also been looked at from socio-cultural and cognitive perspective. Kathleen McCormick and Gary, F. Waller in "The interactive nature of the reading situation" made an attempt to bring together "reader-and culture centered criticism to produce a model of

42. Rosenblatt op cit 1978: 129-30
43. Iser, op cit
the reading situation that acknowledges both cognitive and cultural factors.**44 Here reading is viewed not as an individual experience but as occurring in a social context. Readers, like texts, are not autonomous but are caught in the cultural determinants to produce meaning. The socio-cultural set up implies the text with general and literary ideology. The repertoire of the text would comprise the ideas, conventions, norms and experiences. The repertoire would refer to the appropriation of the text to its ideology and can be divided into literary and general repertoire. The interface between the reader and the text occurs as a result of the matching of the repertoires.

A reader’s general repertoire of assumptions and beliefs may tend to differ with that of a text and may lead to clashes. A text may have both the dominant cultural practices and counter-dominant practices which the reader may come across and accept as being significant. Readers reading texts from a varied ideological formation and different cultural setting are more likely to see “symptoms or signs of power”**45 and the contradictions in the cultural—


45. Ibid
ideology, which they are less likely to encounter in texts produced within their own cultural set up. Assimilatory information which are at variance in the repertoire of the text may then focus on historical distancing more than on features which are universal.

The universals in literature suggest the timelessness of a text and insist on certain universal themes as being important. Catherine Belsey\(^{46}\) views that when literary criticism invokes history "whether as world-picture or as long-lost organic community, it is ultimately in order to suppress it, by showing that in essence things are as they have always been." Texts here are 'dehistorized' but on careful analysis the universals can be seen as being historically situated.

The literary repertoire of the text would come of its literary conventions and strategies. Reading can be enhanced by taking into consideration these and the 'gaps' which may exist because of repertoire which are either 'impoverished' or 'enlarged'.

The general repertoire of the reader is a product of the ideology of society and may vary making certain

\(^{46}\) Belsey, Catherine 1983 "Literature, History, Politics." cited in McCormick and Waller op cit 1987: 199
dominant ideologies more plausible than the other. The readings of a text differ because of the varied repertoires of the reader. A text of a distant historical period is read by referencing certain other text but because the text is read in the present time, the concretization of the meaning takes place by providing their own repertoires. This may differ from the original text and the difference may be for reasons which are cultural specific. Siegfried Schmidt (1985) asserts that, texts are not regarded as possessing their meanings and being literary; instead, subjects construe meaning from texts and they perceive and treat texts as literary phenomenon in their cognitive domain by applying the linguistic norms and conventions they have internalized in the process of socialization in their respective social groups. Schmidt says that "'intuitive notion' of an autonomous meaningful text should be accepted as a 'pragmatically valuable fiction' and 'sense', 'relevance', 'value' are cognitive constructions made by readers". A reader's literary repertoire consists also of their cognitive style and their reading strategy. These influence the reader and his interpretation while reading and processing a text.

47. Schmidt, S. 1985. "On writing histories of Literature: Some remarks from a constructivist point of view" cited in McCormick and Waller op cit

48. Schmidt, cited in McCormick and Waller op cit 1987: 204
The interaction between the repertoires takes place if there is a fulfilment of the reader’s expectations by the features of the text. Mismatchings occur if there is a mismatch between the two. The clash in the repertoire occurs when the reader disagrees with the textual features. The perfect match, however, is never achieved but readers build up their readings of a text.

Given this view of reading as an extremely complicated cognitive and social activity in which the mind is at one and the same time relaxed and alert, expanding meanings as it selects and modifies them, confronting the blanks and filling them to reach an understanding, it becomes possible to call reading process as dynamic in nature. Research on writing suggests the processual and dynamic character of writing and stresses the similarity between the essentially dynamic nature of the reading and writing activities. Whether it is reading or writing, the finding or evocation of meaning remains crucially important. The evocation of meaning requires a selecting-out from the reservoir of thought and feeling, the acceptance of some elements into the centre of attention, and the relegation of others to the periphery of awareness.

2.6 Selective Attention in Reading: Efferent and Aesthetic

Selective attention in reading is simply a sorting-out activity dealing with reader’s purposes for
reading. In the reading transaction Rosenblatt (1985) says that words, activating memory do not include just public referent but also personal referents like affective, associative and sensuous referents. This would mean the selection and reflection of certain elements in the act of reading. The reader exerts his choice while reading, for the words on the page activate the consciousness of the reader which leads the reader to do some selection in order to arrive at meaning. In case of a mismatch, a rereading is expected.

However, this selection is not sufficient and the kind of meaning needs to be defined. The reader needs to be selective about the 'stance' towards the text. Two basic stances towards texts are efferent and aesthetic, which have been actually seen as two ends of a continuum. A reader's approach to the text would be efferent when he is primarily concerned with happening during the actual reading event. In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during this relationship with a particular text. Therefore, to regard reading as an efferent activity is to focus attention on the information a reader is expected to take away and use during and after reading. Attention here is on the public meaning,

49. Rosenblatt op cit 1985: 123-24
like on actions, information and analytical concepts, which would be the case usually in the reading of a textbook, report or factual description.

Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, involves the aspects of rememberance, speculation and association which are evoked in the process and the concentration here is on what transpires during the reading process. The feelings and thoughts aroused during the reading process acquire importance.

During the act of reading the reader may clearly adopt one or the other, either efferent or aesthetic reading as the predominant stance. An efferent reading could admit some associative, affective element within its range just as an aesthetic reading would have some referential component.

Bill Corcoran (1987)\textsuperscript{50} has isolated four basic types of mental activity which seem to be involved in an aesthetic reading. These are:

(a) picturing and imaging,
(b) anticipating and retrospecting,
(c) engagement and construction, and
(d) valuing and evaluating.

\textsuperscript{50} Corcoran, B. "Teachers creating readers", in Corcoran and Evans (eds) \textit{op cit} 1987: 44
What evidence is there of these four types of mental activity has been discussed by Gill Frith (1979)\textsuperscript{51} in her research on accounts of "What Reading is For Me" offered by her students as reactions to their reading and interpretation. Involved readings lead to images being constructed while uninvolved reading gives little significance to the printed page. It is as Iser (1978) points out that "mental images do not serve to make the character physically visible; their optical poverty...is an indication of the fact that they illuminate the character not as object, but as bearer of meaning."\textsuperscript{52}

The activity of anticipating and retrospecting works in a number of cases. A nonliterary text could work on the process of prediction because the information sought could be derived. A literary text would be more involved with retrospecting because the activities of guessing, hypothesizing could be applied here.

The process of engagement and construction suggests the reader's emotional reaction to the text. It also suggests that texts, because of their inscribed ideologies, have at least the potential to change

\textsuperscript{51} Frith, G. 1979 "Reading and Response: Some questions and no answers" cited in Corcoran \textit{op. cit.} 1987: 44

\textsuperscript{52} Iser, \textit{op. cit.} 1978: 138
readers. Britton's (1977)\textsuperscript{53} concept of "piecemeal contextualization" which is an interplay of engagement/construction, has commonalities with Rosenblatt's efferent stance, and thus involves an aspect of selective reading. "Global contextualization", on the other hand, involves the reshaping of literary experience to a verbal constraint where reading and the reader shape each other. This is a simplistic view of reading. In fact, reading instead of being a straightforward act of derivation from the reader is, as Rosenblatt reminds us, "an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group."\textsuperscript{54}

With the reader's need to arrive at certain judgements, the stance of valuing and evaluating is considered. Valuing would occur when a reader tries to make a judgement about the worth of the text and of its perusal,

\textsuperscript{53} Britton, J.N. 1977 "Language and the nature of learning: An individual perspective" cited in Corcoran op. cit 1978: 48

\textsuperscript{54} Rosenblatt L.M. 1985 "Transaction versus Interaction- a terminological rescue operation." cited in Ibid p. 48
and evaluating would occur after the text has been read. While commenting on valuing and evaluating activity, Applebee (1978)\textsuperscript{55} says that "not only are most things evaluated, but the way in which they are evaluated becomes a more or less permanent part of our memory of the response." Although the selective attention in reading deals with the reader's purpose of reading, the need is to look into defining reading program effectiveness and of choosing one reading program for pedagogical purposes.

2.7 Reading Programme Effectiveness

After the significant increase in reading and reading programmes, the educators when faced with these have to choose one programme over the other.\textsuperscript{56} Walmsley (1981) had pointed out about little attention being paid to this aspect.\textsuperscript{57} Peter Mosenthal talks of how one defines reading programme effectiveness where the need is primarily to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Applebee A. 1978 THE CHILD'S CONCEPT OF STORY: AGES TWO TO SEVENTEEN. cited in Corcoran \textit{op cit} 1987: 50
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Mosenthal, P. 1984 "Defining Reading Program Effectiveness: An Ideological Approach" in POETICS 13
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Walmsley, S.A, 1981. "On the purpose and content of secondary reading programs: An educational ideological perspective", cited in \textit{Ibid}
\end{itemize}
define reading and programme effectiveness. Messick (1981)\textsuperscript{58} says that this can be answered at three levels which would be the word level, the social science theory level and the ideological level where ideology has implications for society. At the level of ideologies the reading programme would need to be compatible with a particular educational and societal goal. The ideologies further establish various means appropriate for the differing societal ends.

Mosenthal then attempts to define reading in terms of a 'Context Pyramid Model of Reading' which has a Reader Context, Material Context and Task Context. The Reader Context includes the physical and cognitive variables which influence a reader in the process of reading. Material Context represents the variables such as the content, structure and meaning in the text. The Task Context comprises the procedures and criteria used by the reader in the act of reading.

Reading researchers do not define reading in fully specified definitions but in terms of simplified context pyramid version. Mosenthal (1983) and Walmsley (1989) have discussed five ideologies pertaining to education which are

\textsuperscript{58} Messick S. 1981. "Evidence and ethics in the evaluation of test's", cited in Mosenthal \textit{op.cit}.
(a) academic,
(b) utilitarian,
(c) romantic,
(d) cognitive, and
(e) emancipatory.

The academic ideology passes down to the other generation the knowledge skills as considered important by the previous generation. The assumptions of behaviourism, taxonomic linguistics, etc. are certain examples of this. Reading here is viewed as a reproduction of the text.

The utilitarian ideology tells of the goals needed for utilitarian purposes. This may be at the level of processing theory or transferring appropriate processing theory. The emphasis is on the reader correctly following the procedures of some real-world task and successfully meeting the criterion of this task. This ideology defines reading in terms of reproduction and reconstruction of current text.

The romantic ideology talks of the development of the autonomy of the individual. Reading here is defined in terms of reader context where the reader's prior assumptions are said to determine reading. The conceptual and textual
schema theory go on to show how these are useful in meaning construction.

The cognitive development ideology talks of promoting the intellectual growth of a child and reading is defined in terms of interaction among the reader, material and task context.

The emancipation ideology talks of changing the socio-political and ideological structure. The proponents are on the need of the not so good student to come up to the level of the better ones and the need is, therefore, to establish an egalitarian approach.

The various ideologies, therefore, suggest various goals for implementing reading programmes for some societal end.

Any definition of reading programme effectiveness requires breaking it up into two parts—reading and programme effectiveness. The different ideologies of education for educational enterprise in general and reading instruction in particular, may help understand and define program effectiveness. However, reading can effectively be understood by relating it to comprehension. The need is, therefore, to look at reading in tandem with comprehension.
2.8 Reading and Comprehension

Reading has been viewed as the reader's interaction with the text and comprehension is an aspect of reading. Knowledge is viewed as being stored in schematic structures and comprehension is seen as the process involved in forming and modifying these structures.

Pearson and Johnson (1978) have defined comprehension in the following words: "Comprehension is building bridges between the new and the known... Comprehension is active not passive; that is the reader cannot help but interpret and alter what he reads in accordance with prior knowledge about the topic under discussion. Comprehension is not simply a matter of recording and reporting verbatim what has been read. Comprehension involves a great deal of inference making." 58 Inference is considered to be an integral part of comprehension and viewed as "critical acts of comprehension". 60 It is seen that inferences are related to comprehension and an increase in inferences drawn leads to an increase in comprehension. Reading comprehension has been viewed as the process of using cues provided by the writer.


60. Ibid, p.7
and of using one's prior knowledge in inferring the intended meaning.

Factor-analytic studies of reading comprehension have suggested a close relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Anderson and Freebody (1979)\(^1\) have examined the three competing hypotheses, namely instrumentalist, aptitude, and background knowledge, which explain closeness between word knowledge factors and comprehension.

The instrumentalist position states that word knowledge is directly related to comprehension and a decrease there would lead to a decrease in comprehension. The aptitude hypothesis, which is a holistic approach, considers vocabulary knowledge as another index of verbal IQ, which is the real factor accounting for comprehension. The background knowledge hypothesis says that vocabulary knowledge is a secondary index in assimilating schemata. Of all the three, it is the knowledge hypothesis which has been viewed as being consistent, as suggested by the studies carried out so far.

Keeping in view the schema-theoretic notion of reading comprehension, Spiro (1980) has proposed a series of

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61. Johnston op cit 1984: 14
"subskills" have been derived from background knowledge. His analysis arrives at the following possibly distinct areas:

1. Schema availability: presence or absence of background knowledge.
2. Schema selection: selection of an appropriate schema to arrive at meaning.
3. Schema maintenance: maintaining activation of a particular schema while reading a text.
4. Schema instantiation and refinement: making use of the selected schema to refine the existing schemas to form an organized whole.

Robert J. Tierney and James W. Cunningham (1984) have made a distinction between increasing comprehension from the text and increasing ability to comprehend from text. The former reviews the studies which examine teacher's intervention to improve the student's ability to understand or recall. The latter makes an attempt to view the studies whose goal is to improve reading comprehension studies.

62. Spiro, R.J. 1980 SCHEMA THEORY AND READING COMPREHENSION: NEW DIRECTIONS

2.8.1 Increasing Comprehension and Learning from Text

This includes pre-reading, guided reading, and post reading activities. Pre-reading activity attempts to provide a bridge between the text and the reader's prior knowledge. A student's lack here is made up by teaching vocabulary as a pre-reading procedure, providing experiences or by teaching conceptual framework. Teaching vocabulary is viewed as a specialized knowledge development and is popularly used in most reading programmes. Comprehension studies using vocabulary as pre-teaching technique have been both successful as well as unsuccessful in achieving some effect. Some refinements called for are teaching key words in the target passage (Beck, Perfetti and McKeown 1982; Kameenui, Carnine and Freschi 1982), teaching semantically and topically related sets (Beck, Perfetti and McKeown 1982; Stevens, 1982), teaching only a few words at a time (Beck, Perfetti and McKeown, 1982; Kameenui et al 1982; Stevens, 1982).\(^{64}\)

Research has further pointed out that improving background knowledge leads to a significant increase in comprehension. (Graves and Cooke, 1980; Graves and Palmer 1981; Graves, Cooke and La Berge 1983).\(^{65}\) It remains to be

\(^{64}\) Tierney and Cunningham op cit 1984: 611

\(^{65}\) Ibid p. 612
experimented and seen as to what approach to use in developing the background knowledge of learners.

Another way of improving is through the use of analogy. This has been explored by philosophers and psychologists but researchers have only indirectly explored analogy's use in reading comprehension. Some studies undertaken here have shown the positive evidence of the use of analogy (Ausubel and Fitzgerald, 1961; Hayes and Tierney, 1982).

If readers have the necessary background knowledge, efforts have to be made to activate it. This can be divided into activities directed to teachers and those directed to students. Teacher initiated activities would be advance organizers, pretests and prequestions. Students directed would deal with student generated questions. Advance organizers as proposed by Ausubel (1963, 1966) sets out to bridge the gaps between what the reader knows and what he needs to know. The problem with advance organizer is that specific guidelines have yet to be developed for its development. Further, for a single text there may be a variety of advance organizer and research needs to establish its impact. A hybrid of advance organizer has been referred

66. Tierney and Cunningham op cit 1984: 613
to as structured overview in social science and science classes. Another is the story preview which was used with students before reading or learning stories. Graves and Slater (1981)\textsuperscript{67} concluded that these had a positive effect on story comprehension. Another method which is not very new is the use of pretests and prequestions to increase a student's sensitivity. They interact with passages to provide differential effects (Richmond, 1976).\textsuperscript{68}

The student-centred reading activities differ from teacher-directed preactivity in that they encourage student response in terms of directing the focus of activity. It activates problem-solving behaviour and the desire to use ideas and alternatives. Stauffer's DRTA (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) is a procedure where purpose setting and interaction take place. Another strategy is the request procedure by Manzo (1969) where the student poses a number of questions based upon his reading.

Apart from the selected strategies there has been little support for student-centred approach. Informal pre-questioning and discussion are commonly used in classes but there is little research which examines this and its effects on learning techniques.

\textsuperscript{67} Tierney and Cunningham \textit{op cit} 1984: 618
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid p.618
A number of interventions have been used by teachers and researchers to influence readers in comprehending text. Adjuncts and activities are some interventions. Inducing imagery, inserted questions, self questioning, oral reading and study guides are few such activities.

2.8.2 Increasing ability to Comprehend and Learn from Text

An important issue which concerns researchers is how far the teacher's intervention assists the learners in comprehension. Research lately, has focussed on the comprehension strategies which have been divided into two: (1) metacomprehension and inference training, (2) meeting text based needs of readers.

These comprehension strategies have been defined as "cognitive activities which good readers engage in to foster comprehension." They may include engaging background knowledge, goal setting, identifying task demands, context evaluation, predicting, self questioning.

The use of prior knowledge in enhancing comprehension has been variously studied. Research has indicated the various ways in which students can monitor

69. Tierney and Cunningham op cit 1984: 630
their prior knowledge. Studies by Hansen (1981)\textsuperscript{70} etc. have shown that groups given treatment on background knowledge fared best in recall and in inferencing items. A study by Carr (1983)\textsuperscript{71} consisting of structured overview, cloze and self-monitoring checklist showed an improvement in the student's ability to infer passages.

Metacomprehension research has suggested that successful readers are more conscious of the use of strategies during reading. A study by Raphael and Pearson (1982) examined the usefulness of giving instructions to readers.\textsuperscript{72} Trained students were seen to surpass the others in the quality of their responses to question and in the use of question answer strategy.

Studies have further shown an interrelationship between the ability to summarize and to comprehend. A study by Day (1980)\textsuperscript{73} on the effectiveness of summarization to facilitate self-monitoring showed that students benefitted

\begin{itemize}
\item Hansen, J. 1981 "The effects of inference training and practice on young children's reading comprehension", READING RESEARCH QUARTERLY, 16
\item Tierney and Cunningham, \textit{op.cit} 1984: 631
\item Ibid p. 632
\item Ibid p. 632
\end{itemize}
from the rules for summarization but it varied with the differencing ability of the students. Weaker students needed to have more explicit training than others.

Developmental psychologists have examined the role of enhancing learning with that of reading comprehension instruction. Palincsar's (1982) experiment with the seventh grade poor readers, made deliberate control of four comprehension strategies, namely, summarizing, self-questioning, predicting and clarifying unclear text. It was seen that students who received strategy training achieved 70% accuracy by the fifteenth day of their training. 74

Thus, increasing comprehension from text and increasing ability to comprehend from text remain fundamental goals for research on reading and comprehension. It is in the nature of text that its organization is in the mind of the reader as much as on the page. Within limits governed by the text, readers organize what they read in the very process of comprehending it. The structure of a text is something readers perceive. This perception is governed simultaneously by characteristics of readers and features of text. The best way to see how and why the structure of text is a perceived property is to

74. Ibid. p.633
to assume the perspective of schema theory. Schema-theoretic approach views the text as not having meaning in itself and the text as simply a guide to retrieving information and constructing meaning. What a person can know depends on what he already knows. What is schema theory? How does schema affect comprehension? These are some questions that form the basis for the next chapter.