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Tracing Reading Fallacies in Pakistani English Language Teaching Classroom at Undergraduate Level in universities of south Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

The present study explores practical reading practices in classrooms focusing on how it is done and what are the output results with special attention to the fallacies emerging from these practices. Reading is an ever-present activity in every undergraduate classroom in Pakistani academic setting. It was observed and analyzed that reading skill is not given due importance in teaching learning process. In most Pakistani undergraduate classroom the reading activities are not done with taking care of the concept of reading skills and related sub-skills such as reading process, types and purposes. The routine strategy is devoid of application of reading skills. The present paper investigates analysis of reading fallacies present in Pakistani undergraduate classrooms. The major objective of the present study is to trace out the reading fallacies which are practised by our students in classrooms. Furthermore, to explore how such reading fallacies affect the performance of the students. The most common fallacies dealt with in this article are: (i) text reading in class is just going through the texts (ii) text reading is just knowing the written words (iii) reading in class is looking at the words. The date was collected from 200 students of different study groups such as sciences, IT, arts and commerce. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results reached were verified by analysing each item separately as well as holistically. The suggestions and recommendations were also inferred from the obtained results. The purpose of the study was to highlight the most common fallacies and provide possible applicable solutions for minimizing and to a great extent eradicating these fallacies as they harm the teaching learning process and prove an obstacle in the achievement of SLO's. It is aimed and hoped that this study will open new avenues of research in analyses of other language skills in the classrooms.

Keywords: Fallacies, SLO, Process, Analysis of Reading Skills, Sub-Skills, Classroom, Strategy, Qualitatively, Quantitatively, Investigates, Solution, Practice

Introduction

Reading is a pervasive activity in English teaching learning process in undergraduate classrooms. It is undeniable that most of the teaching learning in the subject and courses of English are based on reading activities. In fact, the written examination preparation is based on reading skill of the learners. Adhityani et.al (2021), argues that reading is a process that is carried and used by readers who want to get the message delivered by the author through the medium of words or written language. Jones, et.al (2006), states that reading is decoding and understanding written texts.

Importance of Reading

Reading has an established importance and role in every academic setting. Most of the classroom interaction between the teachers and the students is dependent upon the text reading activities. Akarsu & Harputlu (2014), maintain that reading is a complex information processing skill in which the readers interact with the text in order to create meaningful discourse. Anderson et al (1988), is of the view that reading is involved not only in class for comprehension of the prescribed text books but also possesses an undeniable significance in preparation for examination and for best examination grades and results. Reading also has importance for the teachers and the students. Both have to make the best use of this skill in classroom for achieving SLOs. In brief, reading is a central skill in any academic

class setting. It is well explained by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson (1985), that without the ability to read well the opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost.

Sub-skills of Reading

Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistic, reading is said as: "Perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that result is called reading comprehension. A good reader needs to be efficient readers. They read variety of textbooks for various purposes such reading for getting information, reading for pleasure, reading for developing critical thinking skills, reading for general comprehension and reading for becoming a better reader and so on. The sub-skills of reading have their importance and uses and effects. The sub-skills of reading include: skimming and scanning that are two very common and significant rapid reading techniques, pre-viewing that offer the opportunities for quick idea of the text. Predicting is another sub-skill of reading that enables the reader to predict and foretell what will happen in the next parts of the text. Paraphrasing is also a sub-skill of reading that provides the reader chances to simplify the texts. The readers have two general types such as: (i) academic readers and (ii) general readers. Academic reader need to have some qualities in them to become critical readers. This quality undoubtedly plays a vital role in their academic growth and achievements as successful readers and high achievers. One of the major differences between a poor reader and a good reader is the knowledge of reading skills and the use sub-skills of reading.

Three Stages of Reading

It is an established fact that reading as a classroom activity has three stages: (i) before reading also known as pre-reading stage (ii) During reading also known as While-reading stage and (iii) After reading also known as post-reading stage.

Stage1: Before Reading /Pre-Reading / Warm-Up
1. Discussion (oral) on picture, drawing, realia related to the reading text.
2. Oral questions on the title of the reading text.
3. Word list (15-20) for anticipation.
4. Jumbled paragraphs of the text to be arranged in order.
5. Predication by just-reading the topic sentences of all paragraphs.
6. Prediction with the help of the key word in the reading-text. Duration must not be more than three minutes.

Stage 2: During/ While Reading

While reading activities take place after silent reading of the text within the limited time has been completed.
1. Global (usually done through skimming)
2. Multiple choice items with three choices.
3. Fill in the blanks, short summary of the reading text.
4. Jumbled main ideas for each paragraph in the reading text to be matched.
5. Choosing or suggesting another title for the reading text.

Stage 3: Post-Reading / After-Reading
1. Detailed skimming and scanning
2. True false statement for teaching comprehension
3. Inference / find the reason question
4. Vocabulary finding synonyms
5. Reference
6. Transfer of information labeling the pictures, diagram etc. finding in the flow diagram, mind-maps, forms etc.
7. Tables for Classification.
8. Table for certain words expressions, name.
9. Table with list of adjectives with who, when, why columns.
10. Sentence completion coming less than one headword.

Follow Up
1. Discussion on the text-related topic in pairs of groups.
2. Reading incidents similar to what is described.
3. Asking the learner to make model if possible producing supplementary reading materials for intensive reading.

4.   Suggesting some books for extensive reading.

Goals for Three Stages of Reading

Stage	Title	Goal
1	Before (Pre) Reading	To build connections and make text more comprehensible.
2	During (While) Reading	To encourage student initiated reading.
3	After (Post) Reading	To encourage self-regulatory actions that can be used to facilitate comprehension.

Types of Reading

Intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. For Example: The learners read a short text and put events from it into chronological order. In the classroom: Intensive reading activities include skimming a text for specific information to answer true or false statements or filling gaps in a summary, scanning a text to match headings to paragraphs, and scanning jumbled paragraphs and then reading them carefully to put them into the correct order. Intensive reading is for thorough understanding. Intensive Reading is sometimes called "Narrow Reading".

Extensive Reading involves students reading long texts or large quantities for general understanding, with the intention of enjoying the texts. Extensive Reading helps learners to build reading speed and reading fluency. In extensive reading class the students are usually asked to write a summary after reading an article or a passage.

Loud Reading is a reading in which you are on the top of your voice and it helps you with your oral expression. For example, reading texts of different subjects in class.

Silent Reading is a reading without uttering a single word or voicing the words. For example, reading a novel or a magazine for pleasure.

These types of reading are generally used for different classroom text reading activities.

The Objective of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the objective to trace the common fallacies about reading skill in Undergraduate class. The main objective was the differences between original concept of the reading skill and related sub-skills and the current reading skill teaching learning practices in undergraduate classrooms. In light of the major objective further the following objectives are:

(i)   To determine the most common in-class fallacies about the reading skills.
(ii)   To analyse the impact of these fallacies on SLO's and teaching learning process.
(iii)   To suggest improvements in teaching learning process.

Research Questions

The present paper is based on the following research questions:

(i)   What are the most fallacies about reading in undergraduate classroom in Pakistan?
(ii)   What is the impact of these fallacies on teaching learning process?
(iii)   How to remove these fallacies and improve teaching learning process of reading in class?

Statement of the Problem

The teachers as well as the students face problems in effective and productive use of reading activities in the undergraduate classroom. Reading is done without any focus on the productive output. The teachers do not effectively introduce the real concept of reading skill and the sub-skills. The students spend time in the company of texts without learning anything. The problem is lack of proper introduction and implementation of reading skill in the undergraduate classroom.

The Significance of the Study

The study aimed to explore the most common fallacies about reading skills and reading activities in the undergraduate classrooms. It focused to guide English teachers for effective application of reading skill and the sub-skills that can help the students to become result-oriented readers. This may also be helpful in introducing purposeful reading culture among students and help the teachers to achieve the set SLO's. This study may help the teachers of other subjects to make effective use of reading activities in their classrooms.

Delimitation of the Research

The research is delimited to only Undergraduate Classrooms and was carried out in only English Classes with reading of texts in the classrooms.

Literature Review

Reading activities to be used during the application of reading skill play a significant role in teaching learning process. Text reading in Pakistani undergraduate classrooms has two styles: first is the

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reading of the text by the teachers and the second is the teaching by the students. Generally speaking, a reading skill or ability is recognized as the ability to interact with a text. Reading is also known as the process of looking at written symbols and letters and understanding their meaning. The purpose of reading is to make the invisible layer, the underlying meaning, visible and clear (Kose 2006). Teele (2004), maintains that the goal of all readers should be to understand what they read. Reading is an essential skill for schooling. It can determine the educational success or failure of a person since most of the knowledge is transmitted through written material (Küçükoglu, 2013). It is believed that reading proficiently is significantly associated with a person's achievement in personal and professional life (Block & Israel, 2005). It is also upheld that time spent reading contributes to reading achievement in ways that simply doing worksheets or other activities does not work effectively (Kozak, 2021). In the same way, Teele (2004), states that teachers should provide the students a purpose from asking them to find connections which would help them comprehend the ideas better in the text. To be brief it can be said that as opined by Duke & Pearson (2005), it is important to teach the strategies by naming the strategy and how it should be used, modelling through the think-aloud process, group practice, partner practice, and independent use of the strategy.

Reading culture in undergraduate English classrooms in Pakistan can be reflected by two common styles. The first style of reading practice in classroom is text reading done by the teachers of English. The second style is that the students are asked to read the prescribed texts in the class. In both styles of text readings one common factor is that the students are not effectively taught the reading skills with its sub-skills and the important related aspects such as the types of reading, purposes of reading and the stages of reading with their specific goals and set SLOs. The outcome of such teaching learning practices in English classes is that the students not only read with fallacies about reading but also become fail to become efficient and proficient learners. It also has been put forward by Huang et al (2009), reading can enhance not only language proficiency but also other content related learning, and it helps to gain an understanding of the world, enabling the students to think about and react to what they read. Keeping in view the above mentioned reading culture in undergraduate English classrooms in Pakistan it can be said that it the need of the hour to change and improve the current teaching learning practices as these practices are not productive and result-oriented for the undergraduate students of Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This research was designed to trace the most common fallacies about reading skill and its sub-skills as understood from the current teaching learning practices in undergraduate classrooms. A survey was developed and shared with the undergraduate students studying in the universities of south Punjab, Pakistan.

Population and Sample

The population of the research was the students of English of Science, IT, Arts and Commerce group of undergraduate English classes only. For this study 200 students were chosen from English classes at undergraduate level of different institutions.

Data Collection

The researcher designed a survey questionnaire to collect data. Data was collected from the undergraduate students personally by the researchers. All the research and ethical considerations were observed during and after collecting data.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Results and Findings

Research results of the present study show that the students are not taught reading skills as a comprehension skill and a useful teaching learning source by introducing the basic concept related points and sub-skills of reading skill. The analyzed results help to reach the findings and recommendations that lack of proper knowledge about reading skills is resulting in an ineffective teaching and learning process. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the teachers to apply reading skills as a comprehension and productive skill by designing and implementing effective in-class reading activities based on result-oriented approach.

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Data Analysis

Here is the data analysis of the present study. The data was analyzed both qualitatively by discussing the results and also quantitatively by analyzing the results on the basis of percentage scale. These analyses have given reliable results.

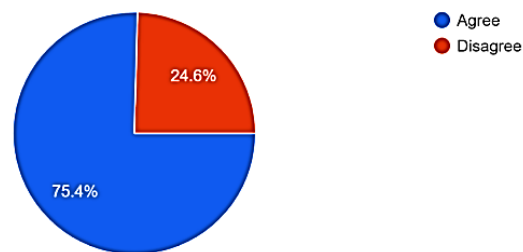**1. Text reading in class is just going through it.**
232 responses

Fig.1

Fallacy # 1
Table # 1

Agree	**75.4%**
Disagree	**24.6%**

Discussion

In response to the fallacy no. 1 (Figure # 1) that text reading in class is just going through it, 75.4% of the respondents responded by confirming that classroom activity verifies that reading is not given due importance as well not implemented in class as a skill with some sub-skills. While 24.6% responded that they consider reading as just going through it also confirms the fact that the students are not well-aware of concept of reading skill. The above graph proved that reading is an ignored skill in class.

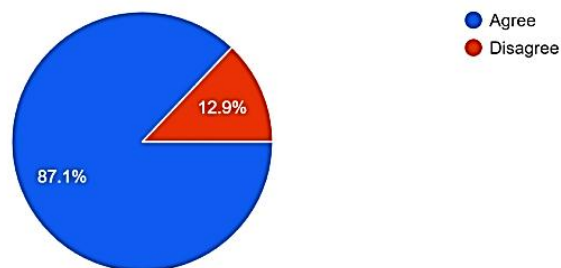**2. Text reading is knowing the written words.**
232 responses

Fig.2

Fallacy # 2
Table # 2

Agree	**87.1%**
Disagree	**12.9%**

Discussion

In response to the fallacy no. 2 (Figure # 2) that text reading is knowing the written words, 87.1% of the respondents responded by agreeing that reading in classroom is taken as only knowing the written words not understanding them. It means that reading is not taken as an important skill and not implemented in class as a comprehension skill. While 12.9% responded that they consider reading knowing the written words confirms the fact that the students are not taught reading skill with its original effective concept. The above graph clearly proved that reading is taken for granted in class.

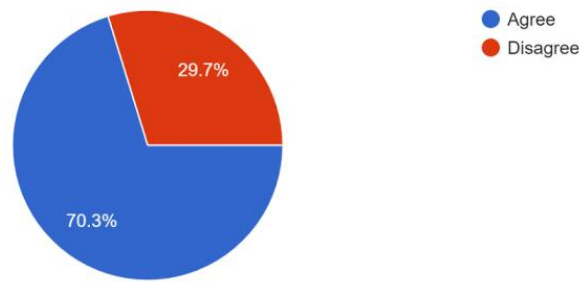3. Reading in class is looking at the words.

232 responses

Fig.3

Table # 3
Fallacy # 3

Agree	**70.3%**
Disagree	**29.7%**

Discussion

In response to the fallacy No. 3 (Figure # 3) that text reading in class is looking at the words, 70.1% of the respondents responded that to them reading in classroom is regarded only looking at the words not reading and responding to the written texts. The responses showed that reading is not shared as a comprehension skill and not implemented in class as a skill to be learnt in class. While 29.7% responded that for them reading looking at the words confirmed the fallacy that the students were doing reading in class without the knowledge of its original effective concept and implementation. The above response graph clearly proved that reading is not used as a productive skill in class.

In view of the results obtained through the survey responses, it is stated that the present study confirms that there are three most common fallacies about reading skill in Pakistani undergraduate classroom. These fallacies are the result of common teaching and learning practices in undergraduate English classrooms. The result point out that such old, out-dated and useless reading skills practices need immediate rejection and replacement with updated, effective and result-oriented teaching learning approaches and practices in our classrooms. The results may be used as an eye opener for the present teaching learning practices deficiencies. Effective classroom instructions are possible only by introducing and implementing highly significant skill like reading skill in true spirit. Any teaching learning process by ignoring reading skill and its sub-skills will not be beneficial in academic growth of the learners. In light of the present results obtained through this study, it is recommended that improvements are direly needed and unavoidable for achievement of SLOs and effective academic practices as well as for the eradication of the worn and ineffective practices.

Recommendations

In view of the results obtained from the following recommendations are being offered:

(i)   The teachers should introduce the original concept of reading skill in classroom before implementing any reading activity. This will be useful for the teaching learning process.

(ii)   The related sub-skills of reading skill should be effectively introduced and practiced in the classroom. Reading comprehension takes place only when the teachers teach and the students learn the skills properly to be able to make use of these skills.

(iii)   Reading activities done in the classroom without the prior introduction and implementation of reading skill do not give the desired results. Any such activities need immediate replacement as they are of no academic use to the learning process.

(iv)   The SLO's cannot be achieved if the reading skill is not practiced in classroom in true spirit. Teaching of language skills is for life. Academic process is and should always be target-based activity and process.

(v)   Teaching learning process of other subjects and classes can be improved in light of this study. This study will open the doors of new researches. It is realized that such and many more researches are needed for improvement in education system.

Implications

Like every research, the present study has its implications. Future research in the domain of reading skills and its sub-skills can also be undertaken by the researchers by extending the number of fallacies about reading in any other class or level with boarder scale. It is also possible that as a research gap, other researchers may study to explore the differences between ESL classrooms and native speakers' classrooms. This study can also be used as a mode for two different subjects by two different researchers.

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