FLUENCY STRATEGIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Ramu Rudroju

M.A., (Eng) Lecturer in English

Aurora Degree & P.G. College, Hanamkonda

Abstract:

Most of the population of the world is bilingual. English is world highest learnt language as a second language. Perhaps that's why it is also most researched one as a second language. In the field of second language learning a popular and very well acclaimed name is Stephen Krashen. He is a professor at the University of Southern California. In the field of linguistic he has given his best contribution. He has devoted his life for finding new concepts in learning second-language, bilingual education. His noteworthy contribution is five hypotheses for second language learning. If we observe closely all the students of the world are being taught a second language in their academic subject and English is the most common of it. the group dynamic created by the use of oversized, colorful books may be important for English Language Learners who are struggling to not only decode words, but also bring meaning to the content of the words in their new world. The choral reading component may lower the inhibitions of those uncertain of their language capability, promoting a sense of involvement and community in which to practice reading in their new language. The ability to join others' voices voluntarily as a reader in a more social setting and to have the teacher beside them to guide and support them, may be an empowering feature of Shared Reading.

Keywords: Grammer, reading, language, learning, vocabulary

Introduction:

Most of the population of the world is bilingual. If we observe closely all the students of the world are being taught a second language in their academic subject and English is the most common of it. At the time of learning any languages trainers and learners use language as an object of study and as a medium. The target language is not only about a new code for any concept but learning a new language and culture and new concepts. It is about acquiring a new vision to look the world with a new ways of understanding.

There are several stages of learning any language. Judie Haynes is a scholar who has the experience of teaching elementary ESL for 28 years. She has authored and coauthor many books on ELL. She and her son Charles are content editor of the award winning website everything ESL.net. Judie actively works for NJTESOL/NJBE as a president. She observes a very important and the most common process of second language learning. Every learner who learns English as a second language undergoes through five common stages of language learning.

English is world highest learnt language as a second language. Perhaps that's why it is also most researched one as a second language. In the field of second language learning a popular and very well acclaimed name is Stephen Krashen. He is a professor at the University of Southern California. In the field of linguistic he has given his best contribution. He has devoted his life for finding new concepts in learning second-language, bilingual education. His noteworthy contribution is five hypotheses for second language learning.

Pronunciation When any new learner starts learning English as a second language one first encounters with a very dissimilar sound pattern. English has some unique sounds which are not in any language. First problem is that the teacher of English is a non native speaker so mostly teacher can't pronounce the sound properly. Hence learner don't get chance to listen to the ideal sound so how will he be able to produce the same.

Educational Significance of Inquiry

The United States becomes more ethnically and linguistically diverse every year. More than 90% of new residents come from non-English-speaking countries. Neither the National Reading Panel nor the resulting Reading First legislation examines or makes recommendations specific to reading instruction for ELLs, though the 2000 census identified 20 percent of school- age children as non-native English speakers (Jamieson, Curry, & Martinez, 2001). With the expectation that teachers meet the needs of ELLs using the best literacy practices, it is important to be sure that the strategies implemented are meeting the diverse needs of these learners. This action research examines the benefits of the Shared Reading and the Repeated Reading Instructional Models for developing reading fluency in first grade ELLs.

Grammar

To learn any language one has to learn grammar after getting some command over language. If the grammar is somewhat similar to learner's first language it is not troublesome otherwise it bonuses back. In English some grammatical points are very queer and very difficult to teach or to understand. Generally, the most confusing aspect of English grammar for Indian students is tenses. To remember sentence structure of various tenses is a challenging task for many students.

Vocabulary

The most difficult thing to learn any new language is to learn vocabulary of target language. As a person already has the fix mindset for native vocabulary, it becomes difficult to make space for the vocabulary of target language. There are many words which are also there in his native language and target language.

Four Skills

The most important aspect of ESL is teaching and learning all four skills of English with sufficient significance. In learning each skill the objective of learning differs. Mostly this aspect of ESL is ignored by many teachers or they can't manage it the sequence to teach these skills at right time. It is proved that the sequence of teaching all four skills is also important. It must be initiated with Listening followed by Speaking after some time. After enough practice of both these skills a learner can be exposed to simple Reading. Writing can be acquired at last stage. If we change the sequence of teaching any of the skills it can't give expected result.

Strategies of Reading: Fluency

Reading fluency is commonly defined as reading with "speed, accuracy, and proper expression" (NICHD, 2000, p.3-1). While this definition seems straightforward, Hall (2006) suggests there is no universally accepted definition for it, in spite of the increasing recognition of the importance of fluency in reading instruction. Miller (2007) suggests that fluency is a combination of several factors: speed, prosody or phrasing, expression, intonation, pacing, and comprehension. Rasinski (2003) adds that we must also consider accuracy in word recognition (decoding), automaticity in word recognition (reading rate) and interpretive and meaningful reading (expression, intonation, phrasing, pacing, and pausing). Miller (2007) asserts that if the text is too hard for readers to decode, they then have to use too much thinking power for phonics, leaving no attentional resources for comprehension. While there may be a lack of consensus about how to define fluency, there is general agreement that fluency is a major contributor to comprehension. Indeed, comprehension is important; it is the goal of reading. Despite variation in the exact definition of fluency, existing literature demonstrates consistent agreement that fluency contributes to comprehension; and Repeated Reading appears to be one of the most frequently cited strategies that improves fluency.

Repeated Reading

One well-documented technique used to build fluency is Repeated Reading, where the student repeatedly reads the same passage aloud often with an adult or a student partner who can provide guidance (Samuels, 1979, p. 377). There is substantial evidence that reading the same passage several times helps to build fluency, not only of the practice passage, but for other passages as well (Hall, 2006). Hall says there are two common approaches to repeated reading. The first approach is to reread the same passage orally with guidance. The second approach is to read aloud while listening to a passage on a tape. Other forms of Repeated Reading are Reader's Theatre, choral reading and echo reading. Because fluency develops gradually over time and through extensive reading practice (Biemiller, 1977- 78), repeated oral reading with feedback, is one of the best approaches available to increase fluency (Hasbrouck, Ihnot and Rogers 1999; Rasinski, 1990; Smith and Elley, 1997) and is yet another valuable tool for reading instruction.

Shared Reading

One specific reading technique that has repetition as a component and is commonly implemented in early childhood classrooms is Shared Reading. Shared Reading, developed by Holdaway (1979), is exactly what the name implies; it is a time for sharing a story and reading it together. Shared Reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of a big book or other enlarged text, guided and supported by a teacher or another experienced reader. Students observe an expert reading the text with fluency and expression. The text must be large enough for all the students to see clearly, so they can share in the reading of the text. Shared reading can include echo reading, choral reading, or fill in the gap reading. It is through Shared Reading that the reading process and the reading strategies that proficient readers use are demonstrated. There is research evidence that a Shared Book Experience (SBE) also known as Shared Reading, results in more positive reading for young readers than traditional code-emphasis instruction (Ribowsky, 1985) or the Oral Recitation Lesson (Reutzel, Hollingsworth, Eldredge, 1994). Linking Shared Reading to fluency development, Rasinski (2004) indicated that in his own instructional efforts to develop fluency he used both Assisted Reading and Repeated Reading methods to improve reading fluency based on research shown to improve reading fluency (Kuhn & Stahl, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Assessments

Reading fluently means reading with no noticeable cognitive or mental effort, such that the fundamental skills are so automatic that they do not require conscious attention. To measure oral reading fluency, one minute measures have proven to be reliable and valid. This quantifiable method for assessing reading rate offers a relatively simple and direct approach (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). Fluency is represented as the number of words read correctly per minute (WPM); words pronounced incorrectly, substitutions, and omissions are considered errors. Self-corrections, repetitions and insertions are not counted as errors, but they do negatively affect the fluency score by taking time.

Studies have demonstrated that measuring oral fluency can serve as a proxy for measuring overall proficiency in reading (Hall, 2006). To assess student growth in fluency in this study, two assessments were administered to students prior to and immediately following the intervention: AIMSWebb (AW) and Fountas & Pinnell (F & P).

AIMSWeb

The AIMSWeb Reading Curriculum-Based Measurement (2008), and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (2008) are two standardized tools that measure fluency using a one minute timed reading. The AIMSWeb manual states that more than 25 years of research has shown that listening to a child read graded passages aloud for one minute and calculating the number of words read correct per minute provides a highly reliable and valid measure of general reading achievement, including comprehension, for most students (AIMSWeb, 2009). Four additional AW fluency measures are Letter Naming, Letter Sound, Phoneme Segmentation and Nonsense Words. The manual also indicates that this testing practice has met the standards established by Reading First, a federal program that promotes sound reading practices.

Fountas & Pinnell

Fountas & Pinnell (F & P) assessments are based on empirical research on language development, vocabulary expansion, reading acquisition, and reading difficulties (Heineman, 2008). In particular their Assessment System measures the five elements of reading identified by the National Reading Panel: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. In addition, it addresses issues of student motivation and interest in reading. The authors indicate that their scales (developed for and published by the National Assessment of Educational Progress) found a strong relationship between fluency and reading comprehension.

These two diagnostic assessment systems provide assessment of an extensive set of reading skills and are based on a solid body of reading research. Because of their proven effectiveness and reliability, the AIMSWeb and F & P System were used to monitor students' progress over time and assess the intervention outcomes for this project.

Literature Review

The National Reading Panel (NRP) has documented clearly the importance of incorporating fluency in reading instruction. Evidence suggests that fluency should be given close attention because it is critical for reading comprehension. Yet, Allington (1983) and Anderson (1981) have both argued that fluency is a neglected goal of the reading curriculum. Without oral language skills (including oral reading fluency), students are hard pressed to learn and demonstrate their knowledge. Consequently, a study to examine the impact of Repeated Reading and Shared Reading on the grade level English Language Learner's fluency seemed relevant and important.

Conclusion

Overall, results from this analysis indicate that a Shared Reading experience is more effective than a Repeated Reading experience for these English Language Learners' fluency development. A possible explanation for this finding is that the students were visibly excited and engaged in the Shared Reading experience, which included the use of oversized, colorfully illustrated books in a social group setting. Anecdotal notes collected during the study reflect excitement and enthusiasm from the students when engaged together with the big books. Some of the comments heard were:

"I really love this book!," "Can I take this home?," "I want to read it to my Mom!," "I love this book; really love this book, can I take it home?," "This is the best class, this is so much fun!," "I love the pictures, they are beautiful!," and "I love that book!"

The group dynamic was highly energized, as the illustrations were explored, predictions discussed, and characters examined. On successive days of each week, the book was read aloud once and the students continued to be eager to read along in this guided and supportive experience.

Contrasting the enthusiastic engagement of the students during Shared Reading, Repeated Reading lessons created less energy and excitement amongst the readers, with no anecdotal jubilance noted. Even with the inclusion of a variety of techniques and other elements, such as computers, phonic phones, dice throwing, readers' theatre and graphing, students were less enthused. Though the Repeated Reading provides the reader the opportunity to read text repeatedly and gain exposure to the language in the text, perhaps the Shared Reading contributed more to making meaning of the text, resulting in an understanding of the words and improved decoding and automaticity and resultant gains.

Lastly, the group dynamic created by the use of oversized, colorful books may be important for English Language Learners who are struggling to not only decode words, but also bring meaning to the content of the words in their new world. The choral reading component may lower the inhibitions of those uncertain of their language capability, promoting a sense of involvement and community in which to practice reading in their new language. The ability to join others' voices voluntarily as a reader in a more social setting and to have the teacher beside them to guide and support them, may be an empowering feature of Shared Reading.

Works Cited

1. AIMSWeb. Test of Early Literacy-CBM. Retrieved January 8, 2009, from AIMSWeb

2. Allington, R. L. (1983). The reading instruction provided readers of differing reading abilities. *Elementary School Journal,* 83 (5): 548-559.

3. Anderson, B. (1981). The missing ingredient: Fluent oral reading. *Elementary School Journal*, 81, 173-177.

4. Web site: http://www.aimsweb.com/measures-2reading-cbm.

5. Biemiller, A. (1977-78). Relationships between oral reading rates for letters, words, and simple text in the development of reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly,*13:223-253.

6. Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2004) *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model.* Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

7. Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children.* Portsmouth,

NH: Heinemann.

8. Pinnell, G.D., Pikulski, J.J., Wixson, K.K., Campbell, J.R., Gough, P.B., & Beatty, A.S. (1995). Listening to children read aloud. Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

9. Rasinski, T. V. (1990). Investigating measures of reading fluency. *Educational Research Quarterly,* 14 (3): 34-44.

10. Ribowsky, H. (1985). The effects of a code emphasis approach and a whole language approach upon emergent literacy of kindergarten children. Alexandria, VA: Educational Document Reproduction Service. ERIC:ED 269 720.

11. Shinn, M.R. (2001). Best practices in curriculum-based measurement. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), Best practices in school psychology IV. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.