EXTENSIVE READING AND ITS EFFECTS ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION OF ESL LEARNERS

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Abstract

The article deals with the issues based on extensive reading and its effects on vocabulary acquisition of ESL learners and also analyzes the influence of the fiction of the target language on the development of learning new vocabulary.

Keywords: extensive reading, reading, vocabulary, individual activity

I. Introduction

Extensive reading is usually contrasted with intensive reading. Its essence boils down to the fact that the student's task is to read as much as possible, not dwelling on every word and ignoring the little things. The goal is to cover the content and read as many pages as possible. This type of reading is recommended for students' independent work with the text, followed by the teacher's control in the classroom.

As well as, it is a type of reading instruction providing a large number of reading materials to learners independently. Students are required to read extensively for general meaning, information, and pleasure. Through extensive reading, learners can develop good reading habits, build up vocabulary knowledge and enhance positive reading attitudes. In particular, it is believed that learners may encounter more unknown words when reading independently, which brings opportunities to infer the unknown words in specific contexts and thus learn their meanings. Although the mechanism is commonly accepted to be true, as Cobb states, it is still disputable whether extensive reading is important. Compared with extensive reading, intensive reading requires students to read short texts, obtain detailed meaning with close guidance from the teacher so as to acquire the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and develop some reading skills such as identifying main ideas and recognizing text connectors. Palmer defines it as “take a text, study it line by line, referring at every moment to our dictionary and our grammar, comparing, analyzing, translating, and retaining every expression that it contains”.

II. Main part

Extensive reading encourages learners to read for pleasure and information unlike intensive reading that requires detailed understanding. The purpose of extensive reading is not achieving a hundred percent comprehension but to meet the sufficient understanding (Kredatusova, n.d., p. 11). Hitosugi & day (2004) mentioned that the goal for learner is to experience reading they are not required to demonstrate their understanding by answering comprehension questions. However, —the teacher might need to ask the students to complete follow-up activities after reading for several of reasons. The reasons are: 1) to find out students understanding and experience from reading; 2) to keep track of what students read; 3) to monitor the student's attitude towards reading; and 4) to link reading with other aspects of the curriculum (Hitosugi & Day, 2004). Day and Bamfor (2002) added that for these mentioned reasons students might asked to write about their favorite characters, best or worst book they have read,
or to do a dramatic reading of an exciting part of the novel. This kind of activities extends students reading and vocabulary acquisition process in interesting and useful ways (Day & Bamford, 2002, p. 138).

Extensive reading has several advantages over other types of reading:

1) Extensive reading develops student autonomy. Reading, by its nature, is an individual activity. A person can read at any convenient time, place and at a convenient speed for him, as well as interpret and visualize what he reads as he wants;

2) extensive reading makes a conscious contribution to the development of language abilities in the target language, especially in the absence of an accessible language environment;

3) extensive reading develops foreign language competence in general, including such necessary skills as reading, speaking and writing, syntax control;

4) expands the worldview due to the material being read. Any literature has a stock of knowledge that helps students expand their knowledge of the world, learn something new;

5) extensive reading expands and consolidates the vocabulary of students through repeated collisions with words;

6) extensive reading creates and develops motivation to read literature in a foreign language [Maley 2010].

Unfortunately, extensive reading is not very popular with teachers. There are a number of reasons why extensive reading is difficult to do:

1) Lack of time;
2) Expensive reading method;
3) Inaccessibility of reading materials;
4) Extensive reading is not related to the main curriculum and subsequent exams;
5) Lack of understanding of extensive reading;
6) Pressure from superiors on teachers to follow the curriculum plan and teaching materials.

By reading books in a foreign language, students expand their vocabulary (including phraseological units), knowledge of grammatical structures, develop translation skills, language guess, oral and written speech skills, etc. They acquaint readers with specific aspects of foreign language culture, enrich the cultural background.

Another advantage of using fiction in the educational process is the originality of fiction, its difference from other styles. It has a storyline that can help develop students’ interest in reading books. The traditional staging of the plot, characteristic of literary works, including exposure, setting, culmination, denouement, is preferable for reading and trains the development of linguistic guessing, as it makes it easier to understand the course of the plot.

A prerequisite for conducting productive lessons in reading literature in a foreign language is the preliminary work of the teacher with the students. First of all, the teacher’s task is to select literature, the content of which must meet special selection criteria.

The first factor in the selection of literature is the correspondence of literature to the abilities of students: mental and age, as well as their personal interests. Properly selected literature, along with enriching vocabulary, should awaken positive motivation and a need for reading in students.

The second factor of selection can be considered the correct selection of vocabulary and phraseology, namely the frequency of use in speech of native speakers. At the same time, the teacher's task is to eliminate difficulties in understanding fiction. The teacher should be ready to give definitions to unknown lexical units and phraseological units, but at the same time, the
teacher's help should not interfere with the development of linguistic and contextual guesses in students.

We should not forget about such criteria for the suitability of texts as:
1) bright and entertaining plot;
2) emotionality and imagery of presentation;
3) relevance of the material;
4) thematic proximity of the subject of presentation to the life experience and interests of students;
5) the possibility of a clash of points of view and judgments that give rise to discussions;
6) the possibility of various situational transformations of the content of the text or excerpt;
7) educational value [Fadeev 1979: 30].

The material of the works can be expanded with additional information about the author, his biography, information about the era, country, events that formed the basis of a work of art. Such knowledge will significantly expand the general stock of knowledge and contribute to the development of socio-cultural competence.

In addition to an adequate choice of literature, an important factor affecting the effectiveness of extensive reading is the teacher's approach, his methods and techniques for conducting classes. The task of the teacher is to compose such a set of exercises that will positively influence the development of socio-cultural skills and abilities. In addition, before starting to work with the selected literature, the teacher should assess the students' readiness to read foreign literature.

**Conclusion**

Thus, extensive reading is an independent type of educational process, the main difference of which from other types of reading is the enjoyment of working with the text. Literature for conducting extensive reading is chosen either by the students themselves or by their teacher, depending on the preferences of the students and their readiness to read literature in a foreign language. Speaking about the preparedness of students, it is worth considering not only the psychological characteristics of the students, but also the level of language proficiency. Depending on the level of language proficiency, you should select adapted or authentic (unaltered) literature. Literature of a foreign language has great educational potential. As a fiction can help not only to develop extensive reading, but also to accustom students to autonomy in learning a foreign language, to increase the vocabulary of students.

**References:**