

# *Chapter Three*

## *Reading Skill*

## **CHAPTER III**

### **READING SKILL**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Reading is one of the language skills and one of the gateways of getting worldly knowledge. Traditionally, reading was considered as a passive skill, but it is considered as an active one nowadays and one's reading ability decides his academic success.

Education of a child is incomplete unless he is equipped with the ability to read, to decipher, to interpret and to understand properly the content of reading material.

Reading is a good source of self education. By reading, a person can keep himself informed of all the news and knowledge, literature and science of world.

Reading skill enables readers to turn writing into meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension and fluency. English language texts can be used to encourage functional literacy in English among the students. By reading newspapers, the students not only improve their reading skill but also enhance their knowledge of current issues and improve their vocabulary. Normally good readers are good speakers. Those people who a wide reading habit have good oral communication skill.

Reading is one of the four major language skills and is classified under the receptive skill. This particular skill plays a vital role particularly in second or foreign language teaching. Reading is learned behavior. Though it is passive activity, the active involvement and enthusiasm of the reader will pave the way for enriching his or her knowledge and experience. The use of reading is inevitable to all walks of life. Reading varies according to one's purpose and need, proposition and domain.

Among the four language skill, reading occupies an important place in the enrichment activity. Moreover one's reading activity also helps to enhance the quality and ability of his other skill of language.

### **3.2 Definition of Reading**

Reading is a complex and conscious activity using the written symbols meaning and ideas are obtained. However, the readers' background knowledge is necessary for complete understanding of a text.

The field experts on reading have defined reading in different ways.

Widdowson (1979) says that "reading is the process of getting linguistic information 'via-print' through reading; the information conveyed by the writer through the print medium is retrieved by the reader". Needless to say that the amount of information retrieved from the printed matter may differ from reader to reader. Here, the definition also needs some specification about the amount of information a receiver gets from the text. Written text not only provides linguistic meaning but also contextual meaning. Linguistic meaning involves represented information and this is called literal. Contextual includes the socio-cultural and intentional meaning incorporated in the text. A literal meaning of a text is accessible to the ordinary reader whereas to obtain the pragmatic meaning of the encoded matter, one must have rich exposure to the ethnolinguistic aspect of the reading materials. The efficient reader can only retrieve both his literal and pragmatic meanings from a text.

Reading skill are specific abilities which enable a reader:

- to read the written form as meaningful language
- to read anything written independence, comprehension and fluency, and
- to mentally interact with the message.

### **3.3 Importance of Reading**

Reading helps one to keep oneself abreast of the ever increasing knowledge. Francis Bacon says “Reading maketh a full man”. It is through reading one can acquire knowledge in all subjects like Arts, Science, Medicine, Engineering, Computer Science, etc. It is through reading the books we learn the thoughts, emotions, life pattern, culture and tradition of the people of the bygone days and of the men and women living in different countries. By reading the works of great authors, we know about different characters, the interaction between the different personalities. We understand the way of life, the problems faced by the characters and solutions suggested by the author for the problems the characters face. Thus the knowledge acquired by reading helps us to solve the critical situations which we happen to face in life. Hence we cannot underestimate the importance of reading skill.

Educationists want to create an awareness of ‘Book mindedness’ among the people. This awareness of ‘Book mindedness’ depends upon efficient reading. Efficient reading on the other hand depends on faster reading and reading with comprehension. When many books are printed and published, they have to be read by the people. If the books are not read, the energy, the time and the money spent on printing such books will be a waste. Moreover the information, the message, the ideas and the opinion of the authors will not be communicated to the future generation, if those books are not read. Hence it is highly necessary to develop reading skill in the students, who are the future citizens of the world. The pupils in the schools and colleges will be able to make good progress in all fields of specialities only if he acquires reading skill.

An important issue in all stages of our education consists in improving the quality of learners' outcomes. In reality, different factors affect these results. Among them one can find the quality of reading, the material used during lessons and seminars and the learners' perception of value of the reading skill. Part of this perception may be a reflection of the previous stages of a learning process, the students went through and another part is the effect of current training.

Over the last decade, an explosion of research in the second language reading process including readers' strategies has been observed. They have been of interest for what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with written discourse and what their relation is with text comprehension. This interest has been seen in the number of textbooks and educational and teacher prepared materials that are being published. The studies included various aspects as regards reading skill and focused e.g. on the reading strategies of learners, individual thinking differences and strategy use, the relationship with general language proficiency, strategy use among young learners and strategy use at tertiary level.

### **3.4 What is Reading?**

Reading is a reaction to the graphic symbols, may it be reading aloud or silent reading. Reading aloud with meaningful sense groups, good pronunciation, proper pauses, modulation of voice can be only understood by the reader and the listener. Silent reading helps one to read faster and comprehend better. Reading is often coupled with listening skill and is described as passive or receptive skill. But reading without understanding cannot be called as 'reading' at all. Hence, if the author is the encoder, the reader is the decoder. The reader reacts to the message according to his previous knowledge. The reader does not absorb the text as such. He is blocked by problems of unfamiliar vocabulary, ignorance of facts or

intellectual interpretations. He has to tackle all these problems in understanding the text. Reading involves a whole set of complex skill as that of thinking.

When a reader reads a text, he tries to find out what the author intends to communicate. It is assumed that the writer and the reader should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works.

Thus reading is not a mechanical skill. It is a complicated skill involving physical, mental and psychological factors. The following are the skill, one has to acquire to become an efficient reader as mentioned by P. Gurrey:

1. Skill of reading aloud.
2. Skill of grasping the gist of a passage.
3. The skill of deducing information or ideas from what has been read.
4. The skill of being able to find facts and information in books and other printed matter.
5. Skill of being able to note exact information when one is reading.

Acquiring reading skill will not be complete if the skill of comprehension and interpretation are not acquired. Reading with comprehension is related to numerous skill and they are inter-related. They are:

1. Word recognition.
2. Phrase meaning.
3. Retention of meaning.
4. Sentence meaning.
5. Reading the context.
6. Paragraph meaning.

7. Recognize the structural clues and comprehend structural patterns.
8. Skimming.
9. Scanning.
10. Reading for organization (Note making and Summarizing).
11. Draw conclusions, make inferences and read between the lines.
12. Critical reading.
13. Reading Charts, Maps and Graphs.
14. Reading to follow directions.
15. Reading to answer questions.

(Emerald V. Dechant, 1969:354); (Gurrey, 1970:84).

The printed page and the written word would be meaningless, if the meaning is not understood by the reader. Thus reading is a complex skill which includes teaching, learning and training. Unless the learner has the aptitude for reading, he cannot acquire this reading skill.

### **3.5 Psychologists and Sociolinguists Views of Reading**

Psychologists consider that reading is a guessing game and a sort of thinking activity. Reading activity includes perception, recognition, association, understanding, organization and finding meaning, so the process of reading is complex in nature and related to mental ability of the reader. Hence, reading is a psycholinguistic process. It starts with a linguistic representation encoded by a writer and ends up with meaning, which a reader constructs. Thus, it is an interaction between the language and thought. The writer encodes thought in the form of language through the words. If the reader is not able to interact with the words, the meaning will be lost.

According to sociolinguist views, the experience of the reader, interests and efforts play a role in decoding process. When a reader starts to read, he feels comfortable and he easily understands the meaning. Hence, he gets meaning and easily matches the information he gets from the text with that which is within his fund of knowledge he possesses.

### 3.6 Mechanics of Reading

Reading is recognition of printed symbol. The eyes are the gateways to enter into the 'realm of reading' which is a golden door through which one can reach the pinnacle of knowledge and wisdom. Recognition of printed or written form depends on the movement of eyes. The eyes do not move letter by letter. The eyes jump from one meaningful group or words to another. The group of words the reader recognizes at a glance is known as 'eye span'. After each jump he pauses for a short while and then he proceeds to next group. The pause is called 'fixation' during which he tries to understand what he has read. If what he has read is not meaningful to him, his eyes make a regressive movement which is called 'regression'. This regression will affect the speed of reading. The larger the eye span, the greater the speed in reading.

### 3.7 Skill of Reading

Reading is mainly a decoding process.



The encoder encodes the message and the decoder decodes it and understands it.

Reading activity involves perception, recall, reasoning, evaluating, imagining, organizing, application and problem solving. The goal of all reading is the comprehension of

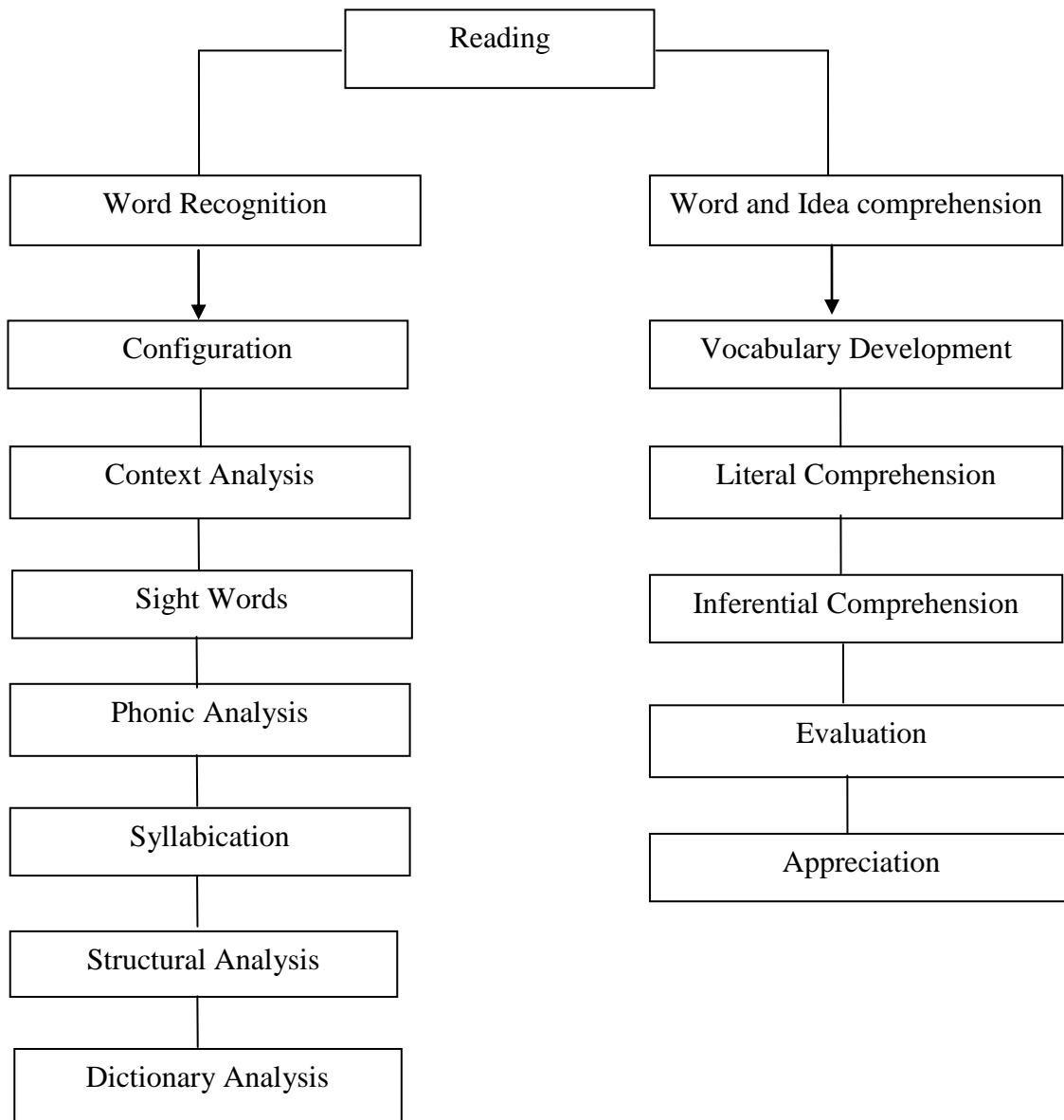


meaning. Effective reading includes not only a literal comprehension of an author's word, but also an interpretation of his mood, tone, feeling and attitude (Dechant and Smith, 1977:237).

### 3.8 Reading- An Analysis

Reading content is divided into word recognition skill and comprehension skill.

The following figure - An Organizational Framework of Developmental Reading Skill illustrates these skills.



(Mercer et al., 1987:375)

From the chart, it is clear that comprehension is the construction of ideas out of the reader's pre-existing concepts in interaction with the ideas of the writer represented by the writing in the text. Five major areas are included in Reading comprehension (Ekwall and Shanker, 1985; Smith and Barrett, 1974).

### **3.8.1 Vocabulary Development**

To understand the words used by the writer, vocabulary development is essential for the reader. Exposure to books, people and places will provide meaningful experience in learning words from context and this will aid in vocabulary development.

### **3.8.2 Literal Comprehension**

Recognition and recall of explicitly stated information is literal comprehension. Skill involved in literal reading are ability to read for the central thought and main ideas, remembering significant details, sequence of event and to find answer to specific questions.

### **3.8.3 Inferential Comprehension**

It requires the reader to make hypotheses based on stated information, intuition and personal experience. Grasping cause-effect relationships, anticipating the remainder of a story, and forming opinions are inferential comprehension skill (Cecil D. Mercer and Ann R. Mercer, 1989).

### **3.8.4 Evaluation**

It deals with judgment based on the reader's experiences, knowledge or values. Evaluation focuses on qualities of accuracy, acceptability or probability of occurrence. It includes making value judgments and analyzing the intent of the author.

### **3.8.5 Appreciation**

It is the reader's emotional and aesthetic sensitivity to the written selection. The reader identifies with characters and incidents.

Therefore for a valid assessment of the skill of comprehension, all these five areas should be incorporated with measuring instruments.

### **3.9 Factors Influencing Reading**

Many factors may influence the skill of reading. Some of the conditions needed by children to make maximum progress in learning to read are physical and mental health, abilities of visual and auditory recognition, intelligence, background of experience, knowledge of the language, desire to read, purpose for reading, interest in reading, confidence and certain other environmental factors.

#### **3.9.1 Physiological Factors**

Various Physical deficiencies cause reading disability. Visual, auditory, speech impairments and neurological status are some physical deficiencies, which cause reading disability. Correction of visual defects enables children to learn to read more easily. Kavale (1982), on the basis of a meta-analysis of 161 studies, concluded that visual perception is an important component of reading achievement. Both the ability to pronounce words correctly and the ability to understand what they mean is based on a child's language ability, which has been acquired through listening. Although children with severe and extreme hearing losses always have great difficulty in learning how to read, those with lesser impairments often do reasonably well if the hearing loss is identified early and appropriate medical and educational measures are taken (Guy L. Bond *et al.*, 1989:53).

Manroe (1932) says that faulty articulation may directly affect reading by causing confusion between the sounds the child hears others make and the sounds the child hears himself make when he is asked to associate print symbols with sounds in reading. Speech defects are not associated with silent reading achievement but only with oral reading disability. It can be said that good health is conducive to good reading and poor health is associated with reading deficiency. Physical inadequacies also contribute to reading problems. Physical inadequacy makes it difficult to become enthusiastic about learning.

### **3.9.2 Sociological Factors**

Language background depends on the extent of experience. Though the school can do much in the matter of language background and general experiences with speech and vocabulary, reading ability is a concomitant of home conditions. There is a close relation between reading and social factors. Home background can include -

- 1) economic condition.
- 2) opportunities for play and for social experiences.
- 3) nature and amount of speech and language patterns of children particularly as they are influenced by the talk of the parents.
- 4) amount of reading done in the home and the availability of books.
- 5) quality of family life in terms of inter-parental relationships.

A background full of meaning and experience provides clues to the nature of word patterns and enables pupils to make maximum use of content in word recognition. According to Seigler and Gynther (1960) there is more evidence of family conflict in the homes of poor readers than in those of children with no reading difficulties. Crane (1950)

shows disturbed parent-child relations, marked sibling jealousy, and unfavourable school situations were characteristic of the poor readers. Home tension and pressures hinder reading progress. Likewise school environment also plays a significant role in the development of the skill of reading. The school library or media centre plays an important role in the reading programme. Through them the child's interests in reading are pursued and expanded. The varied book collections in the library offer students opportunities for reference reading, research and additional reading. Gaver (1961) found that higher educational gains were made when there was a school library and students read more and better books when there was a library. A number of educational factors may lead to difficulty in the reading programme. Some of them are -

- 1) curriculum requirements taking the teacher's time and they are unable to individualize the programme satisfactorily.
- 2) using materials and methods that seem dull and unimportant.
- 3) procedures which do not tie class activities to the reading programme.
- 4) inappropriate emphasis on the basic reading skill prevent effective reading.
- 5) over emphasis on phonic analysis causes disability.

To progress satisfactorily in learning to read there should be a balance between the type of skill and abilities to be developed and the type of home and school environment available for the pupils.

### **3.9.3 The Psychological Factors**

Reading is an interpretation of graphic symbols. It is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meanings with them. Reading involves an

interaction between the writer and the reader. The reader interprets what he reads, associates it with his past experience, and projects beyond it in terms of ideas, relations and categorization. Horn (1937) points out that the writer does not really convey ideas to the reader; he merely stimulates him to construct them out of his own experiences. The one who takes the most to the printed page gains the most. Therefore the psychological factors such as –

- 1) Interest
- 2) Intelligence
- 3) Reading readiness
- 4) Attitude towards reading
- 5) Cognitive style etc.

may influence the reading competence of the pupils.

### **3.9.3.1 Interest in Reading**

Ryans (1942) says interests are learned responses which predispose the organism to certain lines of activity and which facilitate attention. Cummins and Fagin (1954) suggests that interest is an emotional involvement of like or dislike which is associated with attention to some object. Interest is the tendency to give selective attention to something. Lack of interest is the cause of poor reading.

Wheat (1955) points out that as a person learns to read, reading enters his mental make-up as a permanent mode of behaviour. He now uses reading as a means of enjoyment, studying and thinking. He will arrange his work and play in order to provide time for reading. He will use reading to discover new interests.

If the child should read, his interest must be captured. He must learn to read, his interest must be retained and he must continue to read. Appropriate reading materials must be introduced to the pupil that must motivate the student to action. The pupil must be lured to new interests through the ladder of suitable materials.

### **3.9.3.2 Intelligence**

Intelligence is an important determinant of reading. Reading is a process of thinking. Intelligence is the ability to learn and to apply what is learned. According to Eames (1960) intelligence is the functional manifestation of the integrity of the central nervous system. The intelligence manifested by a person bears a relationship to the structural and functional state of his brain.

Buttery and Mason (1979), Cegelka and Cegelka (1970), and Kirk, Kliebhan, and Lerner (1978) point out, low intelligence is the cause of reading disability when appropriate educational adaptations are not made. Carlson (1949) found that individuals with high intelligence tend to comprehend better when reading rapidly than when reading slowly; those with average or low intelligence comprehend better when reading slowly, than when reading, rapidly.

Students with high IQs read books that are more difficult. Boys who score high on intelligence or aptitude tests (IQ 130 or more) read mystery stories, biographies, history, and westerns; girls of above-average intelligence read historical fiction, modern novels, biographies, mystery stories, teen-age books, sports, animal stories, science, history, and books treating social problems (Barbe, 1952).

### **3.9.3.3 Reading readiness**

Lamoreaux and Lee (1943) emphasized that each stage of reading is a step towards readiness for further reading. Success in reading depends on the child's overall level of maturity. The child has to pass through different stages of mental maturity before he can receive reading instruction with profit. Gessell and Ilg (1949) suggest that readiness for learning results more from internal unfolding rather than from external stimulation, relevant learning experiences, practice, and integration of information.

Sutton (1964) reports that children who read early tend to be girls, have siblings and parents who read to them, come from upper socio-economic homes, have parents who are interested in school affairs and educational progress, are interested in words, are conscientious and self-reliant, have good memories and know how to concentrate, can name most of the letters of the alphabet, and have fathers who engage in mental rather than manual work. Pupils in our Indian schools may have only poor Reading readiness due to the lack of language competence.

### **3.9.3.4 Attitude towards reading**

The child should develop a favorable attitude towards school, classmates, and reading. Positive attitudes faster progress in learning to read and negative attitudes result in reading difficulties. Personal and social adjustment, home conditions peer relationship, teacher-pupil relations, and the instructional programme all influence attitude toward reading (Guy L. Bond *et al.*, 1989:77). Kantawala (1980) states that the higher the Socio-Economic Status, the better was the reading attitude. According to him students of small-size families had a more favourable reading attitude than those of large-size families. Due to the lack of independent reading, students may not have developed a positive attitude towards reading.



### **3.9.3.5 Cognitive style**

Cognition and reading are related in two important ways. First, specific cognitive abilities are essential for the acquisition of reading skill. Second, reading is a powerful means for knowledge acquisition, structuring and application.

Recently research concerning the relationship of several aspects of cognitive style and reading has been conducted. Field dependence and field independence have been related to reading ability and achievement. Field independence was found to be related to reading achievement by Blaha (1982), based on his study of 324 inner-city fifth-grade children. Research by Paradise and Block (1984) who studied that students who closely match their teachers on field dependence - independence make greater gains in reading achievement than students who are dissimilar.

Field-dependent children process information in a generally global fashion and appear to be easily influenced by their environment. But, field - independent children process information in an analytical manner and tend to be individualistic.

From the analysis of the psychological factors associated with reading it is clear that for any study aimed at studying the problems related to Reading comprehension a complete picture would be available only when some of the suitable psychological factors are treated as dependent variables of the problem under investigation.

### **3.10 Teacher Related Factors**

Reading is a complex process made of many interrelated skill and abilities. Success in teaching children to read depends on the teacher. The teacher who is inept because of poor training, lack of experience or a slavish devotion to inflexible routine, is unable to adjust reading instruction to the varied needs of the students (Guy L. Bond *et al.*, 1989:86).

A comprehension lesson has two interrelated areas. They are the thematic and linguistic. Thematic content of a comprehension lesson is composed of the ideas expressed in the linguistic fabric of the lesson. The linguistic area covers the lexical items and structures, which constitute the linguistic body of the lesson. The objectives of teaching a comprehension lesson are:

- to enable the pupils to understand the ideas inherent in the linguistic fabric of the lesson (a piece of writing or passage)
- to enable them to recall, analyze and classify the ideas expressed in the passage
- to enable them to understand contextual meanings of lexical items and structures fitted into the build-up of the passage
- to enable them to understand the usage of lexicals and structures involved

A comprehension lesson requires a goal-oriented silent reading on the part of the students. The teachers' language teaching competence influences the reading skill of pupils. Teachers themselves are not voracious readers. They seldom give illustrations from other books. In schools teachers never encourage the students to read anything other than the text. They prepare the students only for the examination and their language teaching is syllabus and examination oriented. Moreover most of the children fail to take reading as a leisure time activity. They read texts only to memorize for the examination. So, there is no chance of developing the essential reading skill. Hence, contrary to the earlier conceptualization, the attainment of the skill of reading may not be to the expected level.

### **3.11 Factors affecting the reading Background**

Most studies have shown that children from homes that provide a rich background of experience generally read faster and better.

### **3.11.1 Intelligence**

Many studies have been conducted to find the correlation between Intelligence and reading achievement. There is high correlation between the intelligence and reading ability of the pupils (Emerald V. Dechant, 1969:41-43).

### **3.11.2 Physical Health**

If a pupil has got a good physique, he would read efficiently. He would not become mentally fatigued. The mal-nourished child does not have energy to become an effective reader. “Frequent absence from school resulting from illness necessarily retards progress in reading and may produce attitudes of aversion or indifference towards reading” (John J. De Boer and Martha Dallmann, 1967:27).

### **3.11.3 Visual Adequacy**

For efficient reading a pupil must have a good eye sight. There should be co-ordination of the eyes to move along a line of print and to make appropriate return sweeps. Good eye sights would lead to good and efficient reading.

### **3.11.4 Hearing**

A child who suffers from loss of hearing is often found to be a poor reader.

### **3.11.5 Text**

Reading speed varies according to the format of the material.

### **3.11.6 Knowledge of Language**

Good knowledge of language is necessary for efficient reading. Evidence shows that there is a strong relationship between linguistic ability and reading achievement (John J. De Boer and Martha Dallmann, 1967:35-37).

### **3.11.7 Interest**

Interest in reading, which is a motivational factor is closely related to readability. ‘The combination of structural and lexical difficulty is readability’. Students read with those material which deal with topics of interest.

### **3.12 The Reading Ability**

1. Reading, being a receptive skill has the highest cultural value by giving access to literature.
2. It has great practical value in regard to technical and commercial pursuits by enabling the reader to keep abreast of developments in his subjects.
3. The opportunities for reading practice are unlimited as they are provided by books and periodicals and do not call even for companionship.
4. It is comparatively easy to acquire since the vocabulary is not to be thoroughly mastered but only to be ‘recognized’ in contexts.
5. Once the student has been trained to read, he is virtually independent of the teacher and may practice his skill unaided, or rather with the help only of a dictionary.
6. This side of language promises success even for the weakest students.
7. In class it allows for the maximum participation of the pupils; it also permits the application of self study methods.

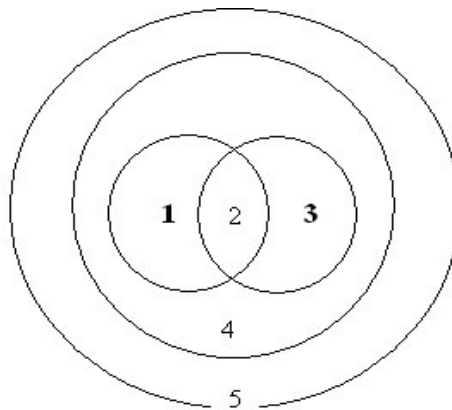
### **3.13 The Reading Process**

Reading is a visual process. It is the ability to see symbols clearly with the eyes. It is a perceptual process-perception meaning that our thought process are able to take

these symbols and to invest them with meaning. It is an experimental process; because, without experience the mind will be unable to invest meaning to the symbols that we see. Reading comes about when we take meaning to the printed page, not just the act of taking meaning from the printed page (Berg, 1971:10).

Reading is a transactive process in which readers negotiate meaning or interpretation. During reading, the meaning does not go from the page to the reader; instead it is a complex negotiation between the text and the reader that is shaped by the immediate situational context and broader socio-linguistic contexts (Weaver, 1988). The immediate situational context includes the reader's knowledge about the topic, the reader's purpose for reading, and other factors related to the situation. Broader socio-linguistic contexts include the language community that the reader belongs to and how closely it matches the language used in the text, the reader's culturally based expectations about reading, and the reader's expectations about reading based on his or her previous experiences.

#### The Reading Process



**Adapted from Weaver, 1988:30.**

1. Reader; 2. Transaction; 3. Text; 4. Immediate Situational Contexts and  
5. Broader Socio Linguistic Contexts.

### **3.13.1 Bottom up and Top down Processing in Reading**

In the case of reading, as with other cognitive process, psychologists have distinguished two kinds of processing. They are bottom up and top down processes. Bottom up processes are those that take in stimuli from the outside world-letters and words, for reading and deal with that information with little recourse to higher level knowledge. With top down processes, on the other hand, the uptake of information is guided by an individual's prior knowledge and expectations. Teriman (2001) says that in most situations, bottom up and top down processes work together to ensure the accurate and rapid processing of information.

### **3.14 Reading and Reading Skill**

Reading in general is an ability. The reader decode meaning from the printed or written words. In the process of reading, the reader employs his reading skill. The degree of reading skill varies from person to person according to the linguistic competence and background knowledge he possesses. However, the following are some of the important components of reading skill.

1. Recognition of the graphemes.
2. Recognition of the correlation of graphemes within words.
3. Recognizing word boundaries and sentence boundary.
4. Recognizing the meaning of words and its relationship in sentence.
5. Recognizing relationship between and among sentences in a discourse.
6. Deducing meaning of unfamiliar words
7. Inferring implicit and explicit information and ideas of text, etc.

### **3.15 Reading Comprehension**

Reading means reading with comprehension. In the process of reading comprehension, the printed words are not just decoded as it is, but it is decoded by a reader using his linguistic competence, socio linguistic and existing knowledge about the topic. Reading is not only the activity of merely decoding the writer's meaning, but also it is the activity of more than that. That is, sometimes the reader goes beyond that or understands nothing from that.

It is the fact that one's comprehending ability can be decided by the internal and external factors. Under the internal factors, linguistic competence (what the reader knows about the language) motivation (how much the reader cares about the task at hand as his general mood about reading), schooling and accumulated reading ability, how well the reader can read are included.

Under the external factors, the elements on the printed page, the qualities on the reading environment, factors related to textual characteristics like text readability and text organization are included. Further, the qualities of the reading environment include factors like teacher activity that incorporates what a teacher does before, during or after reading in order to help the students understand the information found in the text. Moreover, the way peer groups react to the reading task and the general atmosphere in which the reading task is completed are also included.

### **3.16 Types of Reading**

Reading may be classified as oral and silent reading, informational and recreational reading, observational, assimilative, reflective and creative readings. Yoakem (1955) has classified reading according to the form, purpose and the

psychological process involved. On the basis of 'form', reading is categorized as silent and oral reading. The reader either reads to himself or to others. On the basis of the factor 'purpose' reading may be classified as recreatory or leisure reading and informational or educational or professional reading. Further, on the basis of psychological process, reading can be classified into four types. The first one is observational reading, where the reader makes note of what the writer intends to write but makes no special efforts to analyze it or to remember the words or ideas. The second one is assimilative reading, where the reader tries to understand fully and remember what he reads. The third one is reflective reading, where the reader reads with a critical attitude. The last one is called creative reading, where the reader tries to discover ideas so that he can use them subsequently in oral written expression.

In another way, reading is classified as skimming, scanning extensive and intensive reading.

- Skimming involves quickly running one's eye over at text to get the risk of it.
- Scanning involves quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information.
- Extensive reading is nothing but reading longer text usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluent activity, mainly involving global understanding.
- Intensive reading involves reading shorter texts to extracts specific information.

This kind of reading is otherwise known as reading for details.



Type	Advantages	Drawbacks
<b>Reading Aloud</b> Teacher reads aloud to students	Access to books that students could not read themselves. Teacher models fluent reading. Opportunities to model reading. Develops a community of readers.	No opportunity for students themselves to read. Text may not appropriate for all students. Students may not be interested in the text.
<b>Shared Reading</b> Teacher reads aloud while students follow along using individual copies of book, a class chart, or a big book.	Use when only one copy of text is available. Access to books that students could not read themselves. Teacher model's fluent reading. Opportunities to model reading strategies. Students practice fluent reading.	Multiple copies, a class chart, or a big book needed. Text may not appropriate for all students. Students may not be interested in the text.
<b>Buddy Reading</b> Two students read a text together.	Develops a community of readers. Collaboration between students. Students assist each other. Use to reread familiar text. Students talk and share Interpretations.	Less teacher involvement and control.
<b>Guided Reading</b> Teacher use the prediction cycle to guide students as they read a text.	Practice the prediction cycle. Teacher provides scaffolding. Opportunities to model reading strategies. Use with unfamiliar texts.	Multiple copies of text needed. Teacher controls the reading experience.

Type	Advantages	Drawbacks
<b>Independent Reading</b> Students read a text independently and often choose the text themselves.	Develops responsibility and ownership. Self-selection of texts. Experience is more authentic.	Some students may not be interested in the text. Students may need assistance to read the text. Little teacher involvement and control.

### 3.17 Science of Reading

Reading is a fairly new science, much of the research in reading has been done in the past years unlike other sciences which have a long heritage of research. The first study of how people learn to read was done by JAVAL in 1879. He studied the eye-movements in reading. He discovered that unlike reading, the eyes move in discrete jumps across the line of print. The eye does not sweep across the page smoothly. Rather it moves and stops, then moves and stops. That is, the eyes focus and stop, see what they stop on, and then move to the next word or words and stop again. The eyes move and stop as many as five or six or seven times across a line of print. Then there is a return sweep. Then the eyes do it all over again. There is also a duration of fixation - That is, the time the eyes stay still during a fixation. The eyes must remain stationary in order to record words. Then they jump to the next point and then there is another duration of fixation and so on. The average length of fixation, when the words are seen is from 1/8 to 1/4 second.

### 3.18 Effective Reading

The reader's proficiency depends upon his linguistic competence, background knowledge about the subject and the words employed in the text.

A successful reader is a person who can handle large amount of written material. The following are the characteristics of a successful or effective reader (Berg, 1971:7-8).

A reader is one who

- has purpose
- can concentrate
- comprehend what he reads
- remembers what he reads
- has a good vocabulary, and
- can read rapidly, but with rate depending on the material.

Further, he says that knowing how to select the right combination of skill for a particular purpose - to change the rate of reading in a co-ordinated reaction to purpose and difficulty is the mark of the effective reader. This skill is called flexibility.

The flexible reader is a purposeful reader. He knows how to skim for previewing an article before reading, and he knows how to scan for specific information in a selection. He learns from his preview skimming, to know whether to read the selection rapidly, at an average rate, or slowly.

Effective reading is based on the reader's proficiency and the nature of the reading material. Not all the readers always comprehend all the textual information clearly. The factors that characterize effective reading are the context of writing, the words employed in the text, the reader's knowledge, his personal interest and his reading ability. It also focuses on the vocabulary, years/incidents, achievements and innovative ideas used by the author in his work or his essay. In this age of explosion of knowledge, the skill of reading plays the pivotal role in the life of every educated man.

### **3.19 Ability of a Reader**

Like other language skill, reading is also complex skill involving a number of simultaneous operations. So far very little about the complex mental process is associated with the learning and the use of language.

A person who comprehends the reading skill can

- Read an essay at normal speed.
- Understands the lexical and structural meaning of the words, phrases and sentences.
- Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context.
- Locate the topic sentence of the important points.
- Infer the mood the writer.

### **3.20 Poor Reading**

One's reading capacity normally fails due to his inability of recognizing words and deducing its meanings. Apart from word recognition, the knowledge about the subject of the written matter also controls the reading ability of the reader. Berg, 1971:5-7) says that the following are the causes of poor reading habits:

- lack of effective techniques
- lack of effective practice
- not a direct translation between word symbol and comprehension; word is compared to one in the more common spoken language
- insufficient background
- technical details which demand a slower reading and
- visual problems.

### **3.21 Testing Reading Comprehension**

To test the reading comprehension ability of the students, ten test items were given. The items were in incomplete sentences, narrative, tabular, passage, word and telegraphic form. Broadly two types of questions were asked. They were text based questions and knowledge or competence based questions. Text based questions expected from the students' answers of different types:

- selection of appropriate answers from the given answers,
- deciding the statements given are true or false,
- getting the answers from the text.

Knowledge based questions required the subjects to recognize the parts of the sentences, to complete the incomplete sentences and recalling vocabularies and grammatical information from their memory.

### **3.22 Aesthetic and Efferent Reading**

Readers read for different purposes, and the way they approach the reading process varies according to their purpose. Often they read for enjoyment, but at times, they read to carry away information. When reading for enjoyment or entertainment, readers assume an aesthetic stance and focus on the lived-through experience of reading. They concentrate on the thoughts, images, feelings and associations evoked during reading. Readers also respond to these thoughts, images, feelings and associations. When reading to carry away information, readers assume an efferent stance. They concentrate on the public, common referents of the words and symbols in the text.

Almost every reading experience calls for a balance between aesthetic and efferent reading. During both aesthetic and efferent reading, readers move through the five stages of the reading process. The stages are preparing to read, reading, responding, exploring the text and extending the interpretation.

#### **3.22.1 Stage 1: Preparing to Read**

- Spend more time activating prior knowledge and building the background.
- Use concrete experiences, audio-visual presentations and photos.
- Introduce important vocabulary related to the topic, but not necessarily the vocabulary in the text.

#### **3.22.2 Stage 2: Reading**

- Reading books aloud.
- Use shared reading or buddy reading.
- Have students listen to the book at the listening center.
- Use easy – to read or predictable books on the same topic.
- Break the reading time into smaller chunks.
- Provide more challenging alternative texts.

#### **3.22.3 Stage 3: Responding**

- have students draw responses in reading logs.
- Take time in grand conversations to clarify misconceptions.

#### **3.22.4 Stage 4: Exploring the Text**

- Role – play important events in the book.
- Reread the text with a buddy.
- Teach mini lessons to individual students and small group of students.

### **3.22.5 Stage 5:Extending the Interpretation**

- Encourage students to create art projects.
- Encourage students to produce dramatic productions.
- Set out clear expectations about the projects students develop.
- Encourage students to pursue projects that they are interested in and that challenge them.

### **3.23 First Language Reading Vs. Second Language Reading**

The mention of assessing reading in a second language inevitably brings us to the question of the nature of reading in a second or foreign language. The question is whether the ability to read transfers across languages; is a good first language reader also a good second language reader?

The issue usually poses itself somewhat differently, as an assertion: many second-language teachers believe that poor second language reading is due to a lack of good reading abilities / skill / habits in the first language. Alderson (1948) addresses this issue and reviews much of the research published at that time, to conclude that there is likely to be a language threshold beyond which second language readers have to progress before their first language usage reading abilities can transfer to the second language situation.

Cummins (1979, 1991) has advocated the hypothesis of linguistic interdependence, suggesting that linguistic proficiency has two basic components: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS) and Cognitive / Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). In more recent writings this has been formulated as conversational vs. academic language proficiency. He argues that, when asked to perform school reading tasks in two languages, bilingual pupils seem to be able to draw on the same knowledge base-

academic language proficiency – which, he posits, underlies either language. This means that once reading ability has been acquired in the first language, it is available for use in the second as subsequent languages also.

However, as Cummins points out, the evidence shows that in practice transfer occurs from minority language to majority language, for socio linguistic and socio political reasons. Thus if one wishes minority language pupils to learn to read in both the majority and minority languages, instruction should be given in the minority language, not the majority language.

### **3.24 Methods of Teaching Reading**

Reading is a good source of self-education for by reading a person can keep himself informed all the news and knowledge, literature and science of the world.

The reading skill consists of three important components:

1. Recognition of the graphic marks.
2. Correlation of the graphic marks with formal linguistic elements.
3. Correlation of the above with meanings.

The learning of reading is a conscious process which is taught to learn deliberately. However, reading is taught by adopting different methods in school curriculum which are categorized (Yadov, 2002) as:

#### **3.24.1 Alphabetic Method**

It is called the ‘ABC’ or spelling method. The name of the letters is taught to the student in alphabetic order. In this method, the student has a clear visual image of the



words and this enables him to learn correct spelling. However, this is a lengthy and difficult method. It is dull and monotonous, non psychological and it does not expand the eye-span. It neglects conceptual and perceptual learning.

### **3.24.2 Syllabic Method**

The unit of teaching is the syllable and not the letter. Syllables are used directly and words and sentences are framed by combining syllables. This method helps the student to read syllables and vowels correctly. Though the emphasis is on memorizing the syllable structures, they are felt to be difficult to learn, since syllables do not carry meaning.

### **3.24.3 Word Method**

The word is the unit of teaching. Whole words are presented with the help of audio-visual aids. The students learn the word in association with the pictures. This method is also called as 'Look and Say method' or 'See and Say method'.

### **3.24.4 Phrase Method**

This method is based on the assumptions that phrases are more interesting than words. Phrases convey meaning and that the human eye recognizes a group of words and not a single word each time. The teacher writes a phrase on the blackboard and asks the student to look at the phrase attentively. The teacher reads the phrase and the student repeats it several times. New phrases are compared with the phrases that are already taught.

### **3.24.5 Sentence Method**

In this method the unit of speech and reading is the sentence. The teacher selects a sentence and teaches it by conversation. More reading facility is made by selecting words

from the sentence. This method starts with sentences; break then into phrases, then breaks the phrases into words and the words into letters.

#### **3.24.6 Story Method**

The student is told a story in four or five sentences which are illustrated with pictures. The student recognizes sentences, and then words. This method creates interest in reading in the student and provides a complete unit of thought. However, it encourages guessing by the student and fails to develop a habit of reading accurately.

#### **3.24.7 Phonic Method**

This method is based on phonology and is used in combination with the Alphabetic method. The unit of teaching is ‘sounds of letter’. It is assumed that since words are produced by sounds and not by letters, sounds should be taught first. After learning the sounds, they are combined to form syllables, words and sentences.

### **3.25 Teaching / Learning Reading**

One cannot become an effective or fluent reader as soon as he enters into the school. He has to pass through several stages to become an effective reader. Generally, the stages of learning of reading are categorized that at the first stage, the learner learns to read the alphabetic orders ABC up to XYZ. Then he learns to read its combinations. In the third stage, the learner leads to read the words and its combination with other words in a sentence and understand its meaning. In the fourth stage he extent his reading ability at the sentence level. In the fifth stage, he began to comprehend the discourses. Only at this stage, he uses his both linguistic and socio linguistic knowledge for complete understanding of the text.

### **3.26 Dimensions of Reading Skill**

Reading is a complex system for deriving meaning from print that requires the following: Research identifies six specific dimensions of reading (National Research Council, National Reading Panel, 2000).

#### **3.26.1 Phonological Skill**

Skill and knowledge to understand how phonemes or speech sounds are connected to print.

#### **3.26.2 Alphabetic Knowledge**

The ability to decode unfamiliar words.

#### **3.26.3 Fluency**

The ability to read fluently.

#### **3.26.4 Vocabulary**

Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.

#### **3.26.5 Comprehension**

The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.

#### **3.26.6 Motivation**

The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose for reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension. A research on reading shows that good readers -

- ❖ Read extensively
- ❖ Integrate information in the text with existing knowledge
- ❖ Have a flexible reading style, depending on what they are reading
- ❖ Be motivated
- ❖ Rely on different skill interacting: perceptual processing, phonemic processing, recall
- ❖ Read for a purpose; reading serves a function

### **3.27 Reading Strategies**

Reading is also an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The reader uses knowledge, skill and strategies to determine what that meaning is. The skill of the reader's knowledge and strategies include -

#### **3.27.1 Linguistic competence**

The ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences.

#### **3.27.2 Discourse competence**

Knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another.

#### **3.27.3 Sociolinguistic competence**

Knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content.

#### **3.27.4 Strategic competence**

The ability to use top-down strategies.

The purpose for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skill and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skill and strategies are appropriate for the type of text and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

***“The writer creates half the text; the reader creates the other half”***

This is true, man has learnt by various sources and means such as by observation, conversation, experience and reading. Right from the stage of Stone Age to the Modern Age the man has evolved himself by reading the scripts which he himself has created and passed on the baton to his next generation. No one knows how one reads within himself because he feels himself and understands within himself. Everyone has unique way of reading and yet a few styles which are common among all human beings. The different dimensions of reading skill indicate connectivity of many things during the reading process.

### **3.28 Techniques of Reading**

Although there are number of tools and techniques in reading, there are a few tools by which reading skill can be improved – Scanning, Skimming and Concept Mapping. These can be deployed depending upon the context and also on the purpose of reading. Initially it is better to have primary look on the contents by scanning and then switch over to skim the contents by skimming strategy and at last read by applying the techniques of concept mapping. Concept mapping is nothing but drawing a two dimensional picture of a concept either mentally or physically. It is very important technique for noting information and connecting ideas. Since concept maps are pictures they can be easily retained in the memory.

SQRRR is another technique which is the acronym for Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review. According to this, while reading one has to examine and then question himself for the contents that are read. Whatever has been read is to be recalled within the mind and ultimately the contents are to be reviewed. The layered method of reading is yet another approach towards reading which is accepted and adopted by the majority of readers. The entire material must be overviewed very fast and form an opinion on it. Subsequently it is necessary to focus little more on the important portions which deserve to be addressed such as introduction, headings and summary. It is a prelude to read the book and hence it is called as preview. It provides proper judgment and direction whether to go ahead with reading or not. After passing through this phase if the book or the material is worth to be read, it can be read. It is in fact this is the semi final. And the final phase is the review. Whatever has been read has to be reviewed for better comprehension and for effective memory retention.

### **3.28.1 Previewing**

Reviewing titles, section headings and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection.

### **3.28.2 Predicting**

Using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension; using knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; using knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary and content.

### **3.28.3 Skimming and Scanning**

Using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions.

### **3.28.4 Guessing from Context**

Using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up.

### **3.28.5 Paraphrasing**

Stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text.

## **3.29 Tips for Effective Reading**

- ❖ Find out what you want to know and for that you need to cut through the clutter. At the same time assess what is to be skipped from reading.
- ❖ Question yourself whether you are reading for any specific purpose or for pleasure because at times intention is more important than action.
- ❖ Always lay emphasis on contents and contexts but not on the style or flow or delivery of the material.
- ❖ It is always important to stress on qualitative not quantitative reading.
- ❖ Cultivate positive attitude towards reading. Nancy Collin aptly said, “The only way to improve reading skill is to read”.
- ❖ Before you read, find out 2 Ws i.e. why you are reading and what you are reading.
- ❖ Check your biological clock and read so that the degree of absorbability and assimilation of the material is higher.

- ❖ Keep the dictionary beside when you go for reading. If the meaning of a word is not known it will help you to know instantly.
- ❖ In every sentence there are key words to be focused. When the meaning of the key words is known then it becomes easier to understand and memorize the material.
- ❖ If you get boredom, give a break and restart reading so that you can grasp better.
- ❖ Surround yourself with various kinds of books.
- ❖ Learn to underline the key parts/words/concepts for further references.
- ❖ Develop the habit of paraphrasing the contents.
- ❖ Transfer the material from text book to note book so that the best part of the material is with you. By this, you can separate chaff from the grain. And when you write then, the degree of retentivity is higher.
- ❖ Create your own short hand stuff from the material.
- ❖ While reading, new ideas and concepts will flash in the mind and the same may be added on the margin side of book. Failure to do will lead to missing the beautiful ideas.
- ❖ Don't focus on filler words in the sentences. The words like 'is' and 'the' can be avoided while reading as it takes longer time and not of much significance for understanding the contents.
- ❖ Try to recall the contents repeatedly which are in third person's mind and summarize the same and write down either on the margin of the text book or in the note book. If he/she is able to generate a few examples from the text book in a



given context it will help he/she to enhance retentivity. And also link the contents of the material with real life events, examples and accidents.

- ❖ By using different colored pencils the important level of the contents will be realized for further readings. He/she can keep his/her style based on the degree of significance and the priority levels. Rather he/she can create his/her own mythology, style and coding as per the convenience.
- ❖ There is no fixed formula for reading and the methodology changes when he/she reads text books, newspapers, magazines, journals and more so when he/she surfs online content.
- ❖ Average readers read about 200 to 250 words per minute. And the speed can be enhanced without affecting the quality with faster eye ball movement and with longer breaks and pauses.
- ❖ He/she can make sense of sentence by omitting articles, conjunctions, prepositions, etc., by this he/she can focus more on the contents and also he/she can save him.
- ❖ Try to convert the written information into pictorial formal while reading for effective comprehension of contents.
- ❖ If the meaning of a key word is not clear then try to look at it from different dimensions of the origin of the word to get the closer or accurate meanings. Also if possible look at the prefix or the suffix of the key word for earlier and faster understanding.
- ❖ Daily fix some amount of time exclusively for reading and over a period of time it will become a practice.

- ❖ Train his/her eyes to take in words in larger gulps.
- ❖ Avoid confusing material and don't get stuck. Such contents can be referred later on. Learn to skip unwanted and unproductive stuff. In this context, William James aptly quoted, "The art of becoming wise is the art of knowing what to overlook".

### **3.30 Reading to Learn**

Reading is an essential part of language instruction at every level because it supports learning in multiple ways.

#### **3.30.1 Reading to learn the language**

Reading material is language input. By giving students a variety materials to read, instructors provide multiple opportunities for students to absorb vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and discourse structure as they occur in authentic contexts. Students thus gain a more complete picture of the ways in which the elements of the language work together to convey meaning.

### **3.31 Pre-Reading Activities**

- Using the title, subtitles and divisions within the text to predict content and organization or sequence of information.
- Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams or graphs and their captions.
- Talking about the author's background, writing style and usual topics.
- Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge.
- Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures.
- Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading.

- Constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related).
- Doing guided practice with guessing meaning from context or checking comprehension while reading.

Pre-reading activities are most important at lower levels of language proficiency and at earlier stages of reading instruction. As students become more proficient at using reading strategies, the teacher will be able to reduce the amount of guided pre-reading and allow students to do these activities themselves.

The purpose for reading determines the appropriate type and level of comprehension.

- ✓ When reading for specific information, students need to ask themselves, have I obtained the information I was looking for?
- ✓ When reading for pleasure, students need to ask themselves, Do I understand the story line/sequence of ideas well enough to enjoy reading this?
- ✓ When reading from thorough understanding (intensive reading), students need to ask themselves, Do I understand each main idea and how the author supports it? Does what I'm reading agree with my predictions, and, if not, how does it differ? To check comprehension in this situation, students may
  - ❖ Stop at the end of each section to review and check their predictions, restate the main idea and summarize the section.
  - ❖ Use the comprehension questions as guides to the text, stopping to answer them as they read.

### **3.32 Social Factors That Influence Reading**

One outcome of this explanation of fluent reading processing is the impression that learning to read is an individual process. It is true that at any given moment that a reader engages with a text, reading becomes primarily a cognitive activity, but the longer developmental process cannot be understood without recognizing social influences on reading development. The components of social contexts that influence reading include the home, the school and other institutions, peers, and student – teacher interactions. Much research has shown that home factors in early reading development have a significant and lasting impact. Peer interactions over time and student – teacher interactions also have a major role to play in developing reader’s motivations, attitudes, task successes and reading experiences. Students develop differing proficiencies in reading depending upon school administrations, library resources, class room resources, amount of curricular time set aside specifically for reading development, teacher training, teacher practices and preferences, and teacher’s interest in books and student learning.

### **3.33 Testing of Reading Skill**

Reading as seen earlier is one of the four major language skill and is classified under the receptive skill. This particular skill plays a very important role particularly in the second or foreign language teaching. Reading is a skill that necessitates the learner’s familiarity with structure and vocabulary of target language. The wider the spectrum of structures that a learner processes and the richer his vocabulary is, the easier the reading and understanding of the printed material in the target language would be. Between the two aspects of language, structure and vocabulary, structure is more important from the learners’ point of view as the meaning of unfamiliar words could be found in a

dictionary. Without a proper understanding of the structure it will not be possible for the learner to read the material accurately and to comprehend what the material is about. Therefore, under the testing of reading skill, the two major types of item considered for evaluation would be the vocabulary and structures.

While providing reading test specifications, it is conventional to list the kinds of skill which must be tested. However, it is difficult for item writers to follow such requirements, because it is not easy to know what an item is testing. More reading items test a variety of skill and different readers bring different processes or skill to bear on a text. Although much taxonomy of reading skill have been drawn up over the years, some of which, such as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) and Munby's taxonomy of language skill (1978) have proved influential in the selection of tasks for teaching and testing reading.