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Reading strategies used by adolescent: An exploratory study in Golaghat - Assam

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Abstract

Reading strategies and styles have been a topic of educational discussion from a long time. Everyone has their own reading strategy, and no one strategy is better than the other. However, there is no one-size-fits-all reading technique or strategy that works for all reading materials. The materials being read, as well as the reason for reading, will influence the reading strategy used. The present study was an attempt to get insight into what reading strategies adolescents (15 - 19 years) use in reading in Golaghat district of Assam. By using a multi-stage sampling procedure, a sample of 342 numbers of adolescents from eight schools of the East and South educational blocks of Golaghat district were drawn randomly from classes 9 - 12, considering the students from the age group of 15 - 19 years. A self-constructed questionnaire was prepared to collect the required information from all the respondents. The collected data were coded and analysed using IBM SPSS. The results revealed that CV value for intensive reading is 18.6%, which is highest, indicating that the majority of the adolescents use intensive reading strategy, followed by extensive reading (CV = 13.9%), skimming (CV = 9.7%) and scanning (CV = 9.4%).

Keywords: Reading, strategies, adolescent

Introduction

Reading, as Wiener and Bazerman (1994) put it, is not just a skill needed to learn, in order to comprehend textual content; it is also an interactive process that necessitates an ongoing mental exercise that extends beyond recognizing words on a page to what the reader's mind generates and comprehends from the ideas formed by those words. Following the acquisition of basic reading skills, the individual's reading habit is closely related to ensuring that these skills are permanent, sustained throughout life, and the transition to functional and critical literacy.

Reading is an important tool for knowledge transfer and reading as a habit aid in the development of reading strategies for adolescents. Adolescents may choose to read for pleasure or for school in their spare time. Many adolescents are intrinsically motivated to read in their spare time because they enjoy the act of reading (Mokhtari *et al.*, 2009) [7]. Moreover, reading styles differ from person to person, and applying an appropriate and effective reading technique or strategy is one of the most difficult challenges students face at all levels. Academic reading necessitates efficiency on the part of adolescents in order to deal with large amounts of material in their field of study; it is not the same as reading for pleasure or entertainment. There is no single reading technique or strategy that applies to all reading materials. The reading purpose determines the reading strategy required to be successful. As a result, students should select the reading style that best suits their task. According to Grellet (1981) [1], the four major reading strategies are: *Skimming*- running one's eyes quickly over a text to get the gist of it; *Scanning*- going through a text quickly to find a specific piece of information; *Intensive reading* - it usually involves reading thoroughly with specific learning objectives and tasks; *Extensive reading* - it involves learners reading longer texts for enjoyment and to improve their general reading skills.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in the Golaghat district of Assam. A multistage sampling design was used to carry out the study, where a sample of 342 numbers of adolescents from eight schools of the East and South educational blocks of Golaghat district were drawn randomly from classes 9 - 12, considering the students belong to the age group of 15 - 19 years.

Tools used: A self-constructed questionnaire was used to elicit information on the reading habits of adolescents.

Scoring: Mean, Standard deviation and Coefficient of Variation (CV) values was used to measure the areas of perception of reading. Mean, Standard Deviation and CV was calculated by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Distribution of information on reading strategies used by adolescents

Table 1: Distribution of information on reading strategies

Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of variation (CV)
*Skimming	13.898	1.348	9.7%
*Scanning	16.187	2.213	13.7%
*Intensive Reading	16.038	2.990	18.6%
*Extensive Reading	16.295	1.478	9.1%

Table 2: Distribution of information on reading strategies used by adolescents

Strategies	Sl. No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	SA + A (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Skimming	1.	Before reading I usually glance through the text to get a superficial idea.	20.8	58.2	79	16.7	4.4	–
	2.	I pay no heed to the detailed and intentional meaning of the text.	9.1	28.7	37.8	20.8	34.5	7.0
	3.	I always read rapidly to get a general overview of the content, not the minor details.	7.6	27.8	35.4	20.5	39.2	5.0
Scanning	4.	I always tend to specifically read what is important to my purpose.	19.6	57.3	76.9	10.5	12.6	–
	5.	When I have a question in my mind, I quickly read the passage to find its answer, ignoring unrelated information.	30.1	59.9	90	4.1	5.3	0.6
	6.	I mostly try to find specific information such as data, keywords and figures.	24.0	65.8	89.8	6.4	3.8	–
Intensive reading	7.	I always read with full concentration and with a specific learning aim.	23.1	67.3	90.4	4.7	5.0	–
	8.	I always read slowly and precisely in order to get a better and deeper understanding of the concept.	29.8	63.5	93.3	3.8	2.9	–
	9.	If I find a particular part of the text more difficult, I read several times so as to gain clarity.	20.8	62.3	83.1	6.4	10.5	–
Extensive reading	10.	I always read for pleasure and to develop my reading skills.	22.5	50	72.5	21.1	6.4	–
	11.	I read many books even if I don't understand the contents sometime.	18.7	27.3	46	26.7	18.5	8.8
	12.	I read a lot in order to increase my word stock and improve my language.	21.6	46.0	67.6	24.2	8.2	–

The findings showed that the coefficient of variation (CV) value for intensive reading was the highest (18.6 percent), indicating that adolescents were the most likely to use this reading strategy. It was found that the majority (93.3 percent) of the adolescents agreed or strongly agreed that they read with full concentration and with a specific learning aim. It was also found that the majority of the adolescents (90.4 percent) adolescents read slowly and precisely to get a better and deeper understanding of the content. Adolescents are deeply concerned about their academic performance in today's competitive world, and they work hard to achieve academic success by reading intensively. In academic contexts, reading intensively is the greatest requisite for success (Lolino, 2014) [4]. This can be supported by the findings of Poole (2019) [8], which discovered that students agreed that they read slowly and carefully to make sure they understand what they read. Adolescents' vocabulary is also likely to be strengthened as a result of intensive reading because they will focus on new words and learn their meanings. This can be supported by the findings of Khazaal (2019) [2], which confirmed that intensive reading strategy had a positive impact on ESP College students in mastering vocabulary.

The results indicated that scanning was the second most popular strategy used by adolescents while reading, with a coefficient of variation (CV) value of 13.7 percent. It was found that the majority of the adolescents (90 percent) agreed that when they had a question in their mind, they quickly read the passage to find its answer, ignoring unrelated information.

It was revealed that 89.8 percent of the adolescents mostly focused on finding specific information such as data, keywords, and figures. It was also found that 76.9 percent of adolescents tend to read what was important to their purpose. Scanning is the ability to locate specific facts and details quickly (Maxwell, 1972) [5]. Adolescents can obtain information quickly, directly, and specifically by employing this reading strategy. This could be a common reading strategy for adolescents because it allowed them to quickly focus on the specific points of their purpose rather than reading the entire text. Employing the scanning technique while reading is likely to improve adolescents' reading comprehension. This can be supported by the findings of Sinaga (2019) [10], which revealed that teaching reading using scanning techniques to tenth-grade students was effective to improve students' reading comprehension.

The results revealed that the coefficient of variation (CV) value for skimming is 9.7 percent. It was found that the majority of adolescents (79 percent) usually glance through the text intended to read to get a general idea before actually reading. It was also found that 37.8 percent of the adolescents paid no heed to the intentional meaning of the text. Results showed that 35.4 percent of the adolescents read rapidly to get a general overview of the content, and not the minor details. Adolescents may use this technique more frequently while reading on the screen while they scroll and simply glance through the content. This can be supported by the findings of Liu (2005) [3], which showed that screen-based readers spent

more time browsing and skimming, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading selectively, while spending less time in-depth reading and concentrated reading.

The results indicated that the coefficient of variation (CV) value for extensive reading is 9.1 percent. It was found that 72.5 percent of the adolescents read to develop their reading skills. It was also discovered that 67.6 percent of the adolescents read books in order to increase their word stock and improve language. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002) ^[9], extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, increase vocabulary and structure knowledge, and encourage a passion for reading. Although this reading strategy is the least popular when compared to the other reading strategies, adolescents could use it to improve their second language acquisition. Adolescents today are very concerned with improving their English speaking and writing skills because English is the common language of academia, particularly in higher education. This can be supported by the findings of Meng (2009) ^[6], which found that extensive reading is an effective and enjoyable way for undergraduates to learn to read English as a foreign language.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of any reading strategy is determined by the materials read and the goal of reading. Knowing how to apply the best reading strategy for different reading materials will benefit the individual the most. Adolescents should use of the reading strategy that best suits their reading purpose, which differ for both course textbooks and other reading materials.

Limitations and challenges of the study

1. The study was confined to the schools of two educational blocks of Golaghat district only.
2. The results from this study cannot be generalized to the entire adolescent population because the sample size was not big enough.
3. Limited to questionnaire method only.
4. There were limited schools that had classes up to 12th grade, especially private schools in Sarupathar educational block.

Recommendation for future research

1. Similar studies could be conducted on people of different ages.
2. The study can be conducted with a larger number of respondents from various schools across a wider area.
3. Parents and educational institutions should encourage the children to adapt appropriate reading strategy for different study materials.

Implications: Although all the individuals read various books and different articles in their day to day life, and knowingly or unknowingly they adopt various techniques to enhance their reading, but many of them were unaware about the various strategies, therefore when the adolescents were made aware about the different reading strategies they could relate to their style and could identify about the strategies they used mostly when they read any reading materials.

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