Methods for Teaching General English and Teaching English for Specific Purposes: For Developing Critical Reading Skills

Section A-Research

Methods for Teaching General English and Teaching English for Specific Purposes: For Developing Critical Reading Skills

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Abstract

The main aim of the paper is to focus on that between the general reading and specific reading, there is an academic reading which will set the things to comprehend specific assignments with critical skills. The significance of the study is this procedure can't be adopted in overnight. It has to be nurtured from childhood to think critically. And the research method is taking the sample of the class which the researcher taught them for seventy classes. The main finding of the study is in spite of a lot of encouragement and motivation, the **corona** batch students, still lag behind in the areas of innovative thinking; academic study; extensive reading; and lateral thinking. The findings of the study reveal that there is an urgent need to engage students in practical work. When they don't want to study, they are to be involved in practical work (creating proto types) where they have to read, observe, concentrate, notice the results, and evaluate which will all lead to creativity and innovation.

Keywords: reading, general reading, academic reading, specific reading, critical reading, practically working

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Introduction

Among the goals of language learning four primary skills are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing which are known for acting language functions. There are many methods for learning these language skills. When 'method is used it means that a coherent set of links between the action of teacher in the classroom and the thoughts that underlie the actions' (Diane Larsen- Freeman and Marti Anderson, 2011). Hence, there are methods in learning sub-skills of Speaking, and Writing which are called Productive skills. And also there are other skills such as Listening and Reading, which are called Receptive skills. Listening is considered a prerequisite to speaking vocabulary is considered a prerequisite to Reading. In Reading skills, there are phases such as General reading, Academic Reading and Technical Reading. Reading requires a technique. A technique is defined as a teacher's actions in the classroom which is a medium as a tool.

It is imperative that General Reading will not pave the way directly to Specific Reading. There is Academic Reading with Critical Reading is present between General Reading and Specific Reading.

Literature Review

The first half of the twentieth century was a landmark for reforming English language teaching as it got an 'autonomous profession.' This change happened because of 'the perception of the role of English in colonial and post-colonial societies. Later in the twentieth century, English came to be adopted, as a need-based practical language in the realms of 'intra-national medium of official communication in multi-lingual societies because of its use in imaginative and creative concepts (Kachru, 1986)'.

The very purpose of using the methods is: 'Methods serve as a foil for reflection that can aid teachers in bringing to conscience awareness the thinking that underlies their actions.'(Diane Larsen- Freeman and Marti Anderson, 2011).

Joseph Priestley's "Rudiments of English Grammar" written in the late eighteenth century (1761) is a typical example of the Catechistic technique. In this technique, the content or the text is divided into indigestible chunks which can be 'learned byheart' (N. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnasamy 2005).

An American Applied Linguist, Edward Anthony proposed that 'a method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material'.

Hence the method is as important as the topics in a syllabus. In designing the syllabus, topics are to be selected depending on the gradation. This involves the principles of selection that ultimately shape the syllabus. **Depending on the topic the method can be chosen by the teachers.** Language learning principles come into exercise or existence based on the research. The teachers and students can learn a language using these principles. In a course, the instructional materials are prepared based on the gradation, together with the principles of gradation the method adopts.

The aims of a method are primarily defined in the classroom, and instructions either in the product or process, teaching is specifically explained. Different methods will manifest themselves depending on the level of the learning and teaching activities in the classroom.

Accepted teaching and learning methods in the English language include being:

i) Direct Method;
ii) Grammar-Translation Method;
iii) The Organized Method;
iv) Structural and Situational Methods;
v) Lecture Method; and
vi) Dr. West Method

i) Direct Method

The direct method or immersion method was born at the start of the 20th century. In this method, the principle of teaching in the Mother Tongue (MT) is completely avoided. The learners are exposed to models and objects to introduce the new language. Predominately, the learners' five sense organs (smelling, touching, listening seeing and tasting) give firsthand information to understand the language. Then

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the learner can translate the thought, concept, idea, word, or object fully into the senses, hence, the result is grasping the language.

At the very beginning of the class in this method, 'auditory impressions and motor activities' play crucial roles in picking up language skills. Oral work is very helpful to the student in the form of dialogues; order execution; and conversation.

In a classroom scenario the class practices sentences individually and as a group. There should not be a word practice. A complete idea of a sentence is given in 'the best possible way.'

In the case of vocabulary learning in the direct method graded and controlled or guided vocabulary can be practiced in a classroom.

However, the Inductive Method' of grammar teaching is suitable for the learner in Direct Method. The aim of teaching functional grammar is 'it enters the minds of the students through back door' by 'correcting the sentences' in their usage.

And drill and practicing the sentences in Direct Method 'builds the confidence of the student'. The students get proficient in spoken and written English.

In the Direct method, as the teacher is obviously from English-speaking countries where English is their native language or L1. In that situation, the learners have the leverage of learning the right pronunciation without any deviations.

Even today, the "Immersion Method" is used in European countries. It is a method called teaching a foreign language to children of primary and secondary schools. This is more or less the "Direct Method".

ii) Translation-Grammar Method

This method is created by the mental act of emphasis on writing, especially the writings of the best authors in the target language; and, its aim is to achieve accuracy of writing. For accuracy in writing usage of grammatical knowledge of the target language is required. So, the teaching and learning process begins with the explicit teaching of grammar and its rules. Vocabulary is learned by rote and memorization methods or synonyms, antonyms,

word formation, ladder technique, and so on. Through these methods, the learners follow translate a content or text passage from English into their LI or mother tongue. Grammar rules are presented with examples. The characteristics of the method as identified by Prator (1979):

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue with little active use of the target language.

2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words.

3. Grammar provided the rules for putting words together and instructions recur on the form and inflection of words.

Hence, the Grammar-Translation method, though being followed in actual practice, at one of the other stages it is very much criticized, due to its free and ample use of the mother tongue.

'Presenting it as follows, it can follow the implications:

$$F\text{-}MT\text{-}C$$

F is a foreign word, MT is the Mother Tongue and C is a concept (meaning)'Limitations of the method

1. This method does nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the language

2. As foreign language learning is looked at as an experience of memorizing lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and producing translations of literary proses, the method may become a tedious experience to a learner.

3. As written activities are emphasized more, the method does not encourage oral fluency and spontaneity.

Michael West, a renowned language exponent stressed the preparation of materials for the classroom activity and also the planning of graded vocabulary. These approaches applied in any one of the methods could prove more successful in English Language Training. **Cultivating the reading is the need of the hour hence this method is more suitable.**

iii)The Organized Method

This method is an improvised version of the Direct Method and Translation- Grammar

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Method. Dr. West suggested this method. This method is for more Graded Readers. The teacher in the classroom has the liberty to lay down the priorities according to the needs of the students. For example, Project work for professionals is also an organized method.

iv) Structural- cum- Situational Method

Palmer and L. Bloomfield and C.C. Fries' contribution to Structural method. The structural method is also called the 'oral method' where oral fluency in the expression of the language takes place.The method connects experience and expression. A language can be learned in the best way when it is connected to real-life situations. The theory behind this method is 'each structure must be presented in meaningful expression.'

Moreover, the situations can be simulated versions or improvised versions. Appropriate versions can be created as per the level of the students.

iv) Lecture Method

This lecture method is for students who are proficient in English. In other words, the lecture method in English is for advanced classes. The lecture method can be incorporated into a flipped classroom. So that the teachers give the students well in advance about the content and what are the points they will be taking up in the class. Therefore, linguistic awareness is a prerequisite for Lecture Method.

V)Dr. Wests' Method

'This method lays more emphasis on reading'. According to Dr. West, a bilingual child does not need much to speak, in a second language. He only requires reading ability. When the student reads for pleasure or enjoys reading, before paying attention to the speech, he would develop a sense of language.

Procedure to Nurture General Reading

In General Reading in the very first session, the children are shown colorful pictures; in the second session the class is divided into groups and the 'group discussion helps the children to put their voices. In the 'third session, comic pictures portraying the family on the

beach can be given to the students'. In the fourth session, **'stories are supplied to them' to develop critical Reading and thinking skills.**

The students who are exposed to General Reading skill based on a skill-based orientation are more exposed to language skills; in the long run of their education their comprehension levels are high so they can concentrate on the content; the readers of General English vocabulary is apt in their written and spoken expressions; readers' perception of lives is completely different as they have read many characters in different story books and novels; reading is a pleasure for the readers.

General Reading paves the road to academic reading which is for study purposes or for literary reading. Predicting: Once the student reads the title, sub-title, pictures and diagrams, glossary, and comprehension questions, the reader must be able to speculate the writer's attitude or forms an opinion what the author's expression. Predictive skills rule engineering students' careers.

Surveying skills: Another area of academic reading skills is surveying skills which means observing the text cover over the text to see; how it is divided into sections such as an abstract, introduction, graphs, data, conclusion, reference lists, and further reading. Surveying skills help the student to develop observation skills.

Text genre recognition: Depending upon the need of the student, the student searches for the book to the type of text is it. For example, 'Case study, SWOT analysis, report, and argument, an overview of recent and past findings. And so on '

Skimming and Scanning: These are the sub-skills of the major skill of Reading. The students have to be trained on how to skim and what to skim and scan by providing the relevant texts to them .

Guessing unknown words: The reader need not go to the dictionary frequently to know the unfamiliar word. Depending on the context, the reader can derive the meaning of the word.

Reading for detail: It is also called scanning. What is the topic and how the topic is

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supported with relevant themes? The examples provided are facts or the writer's opinion.

Summarizing: The students have to be given exercises to prepare a summary from the original text. And the student has to learn the difference between summary and paraphrase.

English for Specific Purpose (ESP): A Necessity for Engineering Students

ESP is an acronym. It means English for Specific Purpose. Research into ELT has matured into a separate discipline of English for Specific Purpose (ESP). The new scenario in the discipline of Teaching English happened in 1960.

The abilities/ skills the students require would include the following:

Search skills involve the skills in using the internet to support learning the topic. Once the keywords are planned that is 'the departure point'; bookmarking or Creating links is also to be in the back of the mind of the student so that whenever necessary the student can go back to the content; downloading the content or the PDF or the file is the information for the future purposes; at the time of the downloading the student keeps the complete protection of virus of the file.

To understand the complex concept, communicative language ability is required to summarize what is explained in the class. It also includes the background knowledge of the students in specific fields of interest. The aim is to 'work toward a clearer understanding of the construct of specific purpose language ability'.

Engineering students must be promising and progressive participants and they must have passionate about the technical subject they have chosen in engineering. To become professionals in a specific domain they have to cultivate attitudes toward empathy, define, ideate, prototype, and test areas. When they are reading the specific content they have to feel the movement in the cardiac area. Thoughts pump from the frontal lobe of the brain which is responsible for thinking; planning; memory, and judgment.

As a student of engineering the student has to cultivate to write articles in their specific domain. The engineering courses are to resolve

the issues in society as an ethical and moral responsibility of a citizen. They must know how to describe an object in their experiment or description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Most *ex post facto (having retrospective effect or force) research* projects are available and the researcher cannot control the variables e.g, : Examining the fluctuations of U. S. international trade balance during 1974-1995 is an example of descriptive research. They see everything through the lens of analytical perceptive; apply the segmental study to the fundamental concept; the concept must always be taken the form of a prototype that can be tested.

There are other specific fields such as medicine, business, engineering, law, academics, technical, para-medical, hospitality, hotel management, etc., which also fall under the category of ESP. As different methods play an important role in enhancing the language skills in the Second Language (L2) learning and teaching the paper supports the point that the technical or professional student needs a different range of vocabulary skills, the research may be useful in the present ELT situation of India. English at the under-graduation level should help the technical students to gain proficiency in their subjects; particularly for students from regional media backgrounds, specific jargon is a challenging problem for them.

General Reading Skills in English for Technical Students after they develop Academic Reading

General Reading has to be cultivated in children from their childhood. So they read for pleasure not with pain. Reading improves cognitive processes of decoding. It employs the visual sense while listening utilizes the auditory sense of modality. As it is a 'solitary experience'. Moreover 'guided reading also can be conducted among the students as a group. The goal in General Reading is for the student 'read comfortably'. That follows academic Reading which is a study skill. It is more theory-oriented than practical. The professionals have to read voluminous books by both national and

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international authors so they have to develop speed and critical reading.

Method / Type of Research
Objective of Research

- To gain a deeper understanding of whether the students' progress is there in the analysis of the content
- To portray graphically how far the students understood the critical reading of the content
- To suggest remedies to the existing problem

The present research is Descriptive and also analytical: Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present.

The researcher has taken the same class at least for seventy three classes. The duration of the class is fifty minutes. After so many sessions about different topics based on the textbook *Road to Essential English.* One of the topics is *Toasted English* which is written by R.K. Narayan, the Indian writer. And after reading and explaining the lesson the researcher wanted the students to answer the questionnaire.

The researchers followed quantitative research approach in which 'generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal fashion' (C. R. Kothari, 2004) Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques.

Participants
The participants are I year B. Tech students of 2022-23 and who have undergone taking the English lessons (Theory) from the researchers. The very purpose of doing engineering is to help them and to resolve the societal problems. The participants are both girls and boys. They are 68 in total. The boys' are 35 and the girls are 33 in number. The percentages are boys 51.4% and girls 48.5% in participation. They are active in listening the explanation. The participants age, sex and how much they scored the marks out of twenty five are recorded and attached as an appendix-A. Survey Link is: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAlpQLSct U7NqoZrooA-AbkrlS3ADf-LKD0Ayi1QxMENoEQQPSMrpww/viewform

Instruments
Instruments are survey link, questionnaire, observation, other relared artcles, the Internet, content, documentation and field notes. Human instruments are students.

Procedure
The researchers aim was to develop critical reading skills among the B. Tech students. Hence the researcher took the same sample for seventy two periods (fifty minutes of each period) and offered the link after explaining the text piece *The Toasted English*.
Type of the questionnaire
The survey link shows the twenty questions of multiple choice questions.
Sample of the participants
The sample participants are I year. B. Tech students of Malla Reddy Engineering College (A), Maisammaguda, Secunderabad, Telangana State.

The students' responses are recorded here:

Students Responses - Survey on Critical Reading

Name	Gender	Age	Score out of 25
Student1	Female	17	12
Student2	Male	18	14
Student3	Female	18	14
Student4	Female	19	13
Student5	Female	18	17
Student6	Female	18	16

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Student7	Male	18	**16**
Student8	Female	17	**17**
Student9	Female	18	**17**
Student 10	Male	18	**14**
Student11	Male	20	**14**
Student12	Female	18	**13**
Student13	Female	17	**16**
Student14	Female	19	**14**
Student15	Female	18	**14**
Student16	Female	18	**16**
Student17	Female	17	**17**
Student18	Female	18	**17**
Student19	Female	18	**16**
Student20	Female	18	**16**
Student21	Female	18	**14**
Student22	Male	17	**13**
Student23	Male	16	**16**
Student24	Male	18	**16**
Student25	Male	18	**15**
Student26	Male	18	**15**
Student27	Female	17	**16**
Student28	Male	18	**17**
Student29	Male	17	**17**
Student30	Female	19	**12**
Student31	Male	17	**8**
Student32	Female	18	**14**
Student33	Female	18	**12**
Student34	Male	18	**13**
Student35	Male	18	**13**
Student36	Male	17	**13**
Student37	Female	18	**15**
Student38	Male	18	**13**
Student39	Male	18	**13**
Student40	Female	17	**16**
Student41	Male	19	**15**
Student42	Male	19	**16**
Student43	Male	18	**11**
Student44	Male	18	**17**
Student45	Male	20	**17**
Student46	Male	18	**14**

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Student47	Female	18	**12**
Student48	Male	18	**14**
Student49	Male	19	**13**
Student50	Female	17	**16**
Student51	Male	18	**8**
Student52	Male	18	**16**
Student53	Female	18	**13**
Student54	Female	17	**16**
Student55	Female	19	**16**
Student56	Male	18	**11**
Student57	Female	18	**13**
Student58	Male	18	**14**
Student59	Male	18	**16**
Student60	Male	18	**14**
Student61	Female	19	**16**
Student62	Female	17	**16**
Student63	Female	17	**16**
Student64	Female	17	**18**
Student65	Male	18	**14**
Student66	Female	18	**17**
Student67	Male	19	**10**
Student68	Male	18	**13**
Student69	Male	20	**13**

Percentage of Correct Answers

Questions	Percentage of correct answers
1. Why are you reading this text? What is your purpose?	68.12
2. What is your purpose of reading the text?	95.65
3. What type of text is it ?	85.51
4. What do know about the subject of the text?	84.06
5. What else has been written on the subject of the text?	43.48
1. Who is the author?	100.00
2. What do you know about the author?	20.29
3. Who is the intended audience?	78.26
4. What is the author's purpose?	91.30
5. What is the writer's attitude towards the topics?	50.72
1. Is there clear distinction between fact and opinion?	94.20
2. Is evidence used to support the argument?	94.20
3. How does the writer use other texts and other people's ideas?	17.39

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4. Are there any unsupported points?	81.16
5. Are the writer's conclusions reasonable in the light of the evidence presented?	92.75
1. What assumption the writer made?	68.12
2. Are the writers beliefs and values explicit?	88.41
3. Look for hedges: Possible, might , perhaps	72.46
4. How else could the text have been written?	39.13
5. Look for emphatic words such as it is obvious, definitely and of course	82.61

Percentage of correct answers
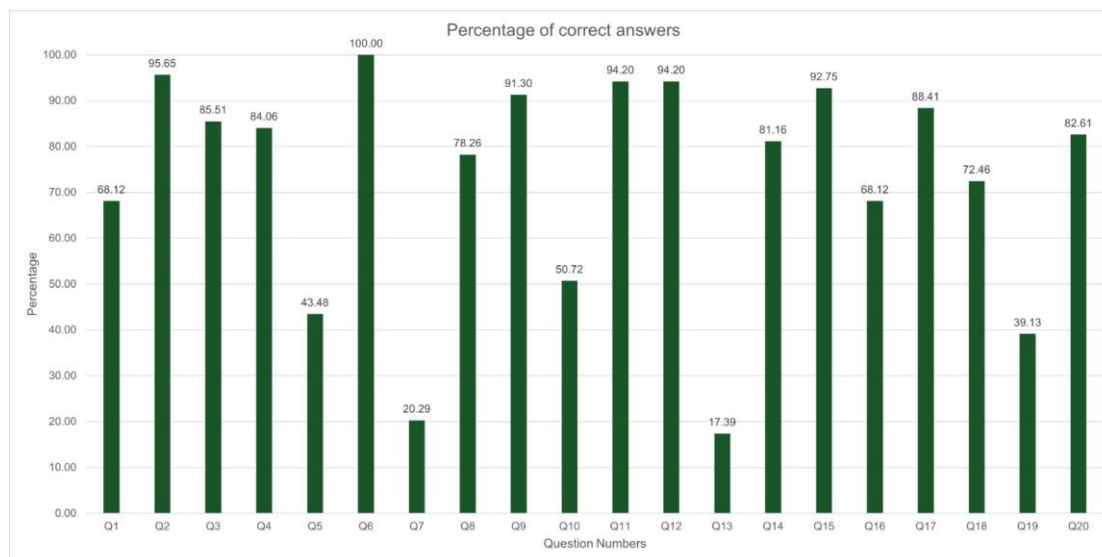
Discussion/Analysis of Percentage of Answers

All the students could identify the author correctly (100%). The inference is they are familiar with the author's name.

The students(17.39%) could not relate the the text to the examples given in the text itself and also the students could not relate how Americans think differently compared to the English which is mentioned in it . It means that the marginal percentage of the students have lesser cognitive reception.

Another area which has to be concentrated by the English teachers is that the students could not mention the other books written by the author or the author place of birth and so on. Hence it is obvious that they don't have the extensive reading habit (20.29%).

The students (43.48%)were not able to Google or do research about other varieties of English in different countries as the author already mentioned variations in expressions by the Americans , the English and Indians in the text. It shows that they are not interested to

know spoken varieties of English language in different countries.

Above 90% of the student could know the purpose of reading the text(95.65%),the purpose of the author(91.30%),the difference between the fact and the opinion(94.20%), how the author showed the evidences to support the argument(94.20%), the author reasonable conclusions(92.75%).

Above 80% students they could identify the type of the text(85.51%),comprehend the subject of the text (84.06%),there were able to recognize that there were no unsupported points in the text (81.16%),they could locate the write the writer's beliefs and values explicitly(88.41%),and they could find the emphatic words in the text(82.61%).

Above 70% students could find the intended audience for this type of the text (78.26%); and they could find the hedges in the text(72.46%). It means that they know English language.

Above 60% students were confused answer why they are reading the text (68.12%) and the could not find out the assumptions of the

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writer(68.12%). Hence it is obvious that they lack speculation or predictive skills.

Approximately slightly above 50% of the students wee unable to extract the author's attitude in writing such type of the text.(50.72%). Hence it is clear that they lack literary interest of the author.

Conclusion

The students are taught language as a skill-based subject. English language has be to complementary their core subjects. The English teachers should have self- reflective analysis of the lesson they teach in the classroom. General reading habits have to be cultivated and nurture from their childhood. In other words, reading for pleasure is to be taught and it paves way for academic reading. The academic texts are of technical in nature for engineering students, so critical reading has to be encourage to them to have leverage over others in this competitive world. This research is taken up keeping in view the abilities of English gained as Second language learners as they aspire to read technical texts for success in the areas of education and employment.

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