

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter deals with the literature and theory relevant to basics of teaching young children how to spell and read. The review of related literature addresses the following aspects of method:

1. Different models of reading
2. The definition and aspects of phonics approach
3. The definition and aspects of word recognition (sight word) approach

2.1 DIFFERENT MODELS OF READING

According to Anderson (1999), reading is an active process where the reader is involved with his reading material to accomplish meaning. Reading comprehension occurs when the printed words, the background knowledge and past experience of a reader is combined. Moreover, while the reader is reading, he/she reads through the text with a specific purpose in his/her mind to reach his/her specific goals.

In addition, Dechant (1991) believes that reading process can be completed only if a reader has a full comprehension of the text and the critical element is that the reader reconstructs the message encoded in the written language. However, unlike Anderson, Dechant doesn't touch on the readers' background knowledge and its importance in the process of comprehension.

Moreover, as discussed by Anderson (1999), teaching reading to an ESL or an EFL student is more challenging. The aim is not only to develop the student's comprehension skill but also his/her reading rate, vocabulary skills and the use of different strategies.

As mentioned by Alderson (1984), L2 learners need a minimum threshold level of general L2 language competence before they can read as well as when they are reading text in L1. Therefore, reading is linked with the spoken language;

students who are able to speak and understand the L2 may develop a good reading and spelling ability at a faster rate.

Many researchers have focused on understanding the process of reading. According to Anderson (1999), there are altogether three major types of models: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model.

2.1.1 Bottom-up Approach

This is an approach where the reader decodes the text from the smallest units to a larger unit. According to Nunan (1998), the central notion behind the bottom-up approach is that reading is a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents. This means that young learners need to recognize the letters in order to be able sound out the letters and then the letters are grouped up to form words with meanings.

Cambourne (discussed in Nunan 1998), who calls the same kind of approach an “*outside-in*” approach, showed the illustration below of how the process works.

Print → Every letter discriminated → Phonemes and graphemes
 matched → Blending → Pronunciation → Meaning

According to the process motioned above, the reader processes every word as it is encountered. Then the graphemes or letters are matched with phonemes or an individual unit of sound in a language. Finally, the coming of meaning is the end of the process.

2.1.2 Top-down Approach

For this type of approach, the reader brings a substantial amount of background knowledge, expectation, assumptions and questions to the text. With only the basic understanding of the vocabulary, the reader continues to read as long as

the text confirms his expectations (Goodman, 1967). In contrast to the bottom-up approach, the top-down processing begins with the generation of predictions about the material by the reader, with the visual cues in the material being used to test these predictions as necessary (Walberg, Hare, and Pulliam, 1981).

Goodman (1973) sees the reader as processing a store of knowledge about the world, about the language and about the print. He believes that the reader uses this knowledge to predict what the printed page contains and to confirm or disprove the predictions. In contrast to the bottom-up approach, according to Goodman, reading the exact words on the page is less important than understanding the message.

2.1.3 Interactive Approach

The Interactive Approach is currently accepted as the most comprehensive description of the reading process (Anderson, 1999). In this approach, the combination of both bottom-up and top-down approach is used. According to Gove (1983), an interactive approach assumes parallel processing of information from print, and information from background knowledge. The recognition and comprehension of printed words and ideas are the results of using both types of information.

Rumelhart (discussed in Harris & Sipay, 1985) confirms that comprehension depends on both graphic information and the information in the reader's mind.

2.2 A PHONICS APPROACH

A phonics approach is a teaching approach that promotes phonemic awareness which is sensitivity to the functions of each sound of each letter which can be grouped into words. A phonics approach generally emphasises teaching the children to match the letters with their sounds. This is how the children sound out the unfamiliar or new words independently. In this approach, the children are explicitly trained to depict the sound symbol patterns. As young children learn to talk, they develop the ability to string together the basic speech sound into words. When they speak words, their goal is to make themselves understood to others. For students to use reading and writing

skills, they must first develop their phonological awareness (Adams, 2001).

According to Reutzel and Cooter (2003), phonemic awareness can be defined both conceptually and in terms of performance. Conceptually, phonemic awareness is an understanding that spoken language and words are made up of individual sounds. In terms of performance, the phonemic awareness is defined as the ability to pick out and manipulate sounds in spoken words and language. Moreover, Britton says speech has an important role in the mastery of written language (Roberts, 1989, p. 49). Therefore, in order to be able to read and spell words correctly, the first stage is to have the students get involved in as much spoken language as they can, so that it can act as, and build on, the background knowledge of the students.

According to Adams (2001), the ability to perform phonemic awareness tasks develops from the least difficult to more difficult tasks. The following are the stages of the development of the tasks:

1. Rhyming sounds.
2. Hearing sounds in words (same or different).
3. Counting syllables & sounds.
4. Isolating beginning, ending & middle sounds in words.
5. Substituting & deleting sounds in words and syllables.
6. Blending syllables, onset & rimes and sounds into words.
7. Segmenting words into syllables, onset rimes and sounds.
8. Representing sounds in language & words with symbols in spelling and writing.

Moreover, Blevins (1996) states that Phonics is an extremely important element of reading instruction. In the context of great literature and varied language experiences, children can learn to read with the aid of strong phonics.

Phonics instruction is often categorized as explicit or implicit. According to McCormick (1999), explicit phonics is a method based on the bottom-up approach of

learning, indicating that readers mentally process information letter by letter, word by word and sentence by sentence until comprehension occurs, and an explicit phonics or synthetic phonics teaches letter-sound relationships by articulating the sound in isolation. On the other hand, an implicit phonics teaches students to decode unfamiliar words using their knowledge of sound symbols clues from known words.

However, at times it is impossible to solely use the phonics approach due to the irregularity of spelling and sound values given to letters in the English language (McKeown, 1974). In the book called *The Teaching of Reading* by Dallmann, Rouch, Chang and Deboer, it states the criticisms levelled against the phonics approach as: “The English language is not based on an easily acquired letter sound relation, for some letters have more than one sound”(p. 108) In addition, “Phonics when used as the initial approach to reading instruction tends to produce slow word-by-word readers”(p. 109) Moreover, “A phonics approach is likely to make learning to read an uninteresting experience” (p. 109)

From the above excerpt, it is clear that a phonics approach is slow and not very efficient. Therefore, it is crucial if learners are to build a vast reading vocabulary in a relatively short period of time, another approach needs to be included in the reading program, that is the word recognition approach.

2.3 A WORD RECOGNITION APPROACH

According to some scholars, the word recognition approach is the foundation of reading and all the processes are dependent on it. This is because, in order to become an independent reader, the child must build certain skills and techniques of word recognition. Word recognition refers to the ability to associate a printed word with its meaning and/or to decode the words they see.

Traditionally seen as an alternative to the phonics approach in the teaching of initial reading are “look-and-say” or “whole-word” methods, where learners are encouraged to acquire a sight vocabulary, largely through memorization (Wallace, 1992).

Different from a phonics approach, the word recognition approach aims at the

comprehension of the text rather than the correct sounding of the words read. According to Griffith and Rasinski (discussed in *Tutoring Adolescence Reader*, 2006), comprehension depends on the rate of reading and the fast enough rate of reading brings forward the comprehension of the reading material, in order to be reading at a fast rate through the recognition of words rather by spending time with decoding word-by-word.

Moreover, Wallace (1992) agrees that an alternative approach to phonics approach is through word recognition, where learners are encouraged to read, mostly through memorization of words. A word recognition approach also helps the children to become independent readers (Bond and Bond, 1996). Beginner readers recognize very few words instantly, but somehow through repeated exposure of the same words the instant recognition of vocabulary grows (Cunningham, 1995).

However, it is impossible to teach the students through only the phonics approach or only the word recognition approach, since both of these approaches are co-related and need to be use interchangeably.

As quoted in *The Teaching of Reading*, written by Dallmann, Rouch, Chang and Deboer, “reading involves much more than word recognition, although the ability to recognize recorded words is basic to reading process”. This clarifies the notion that without the skills of both phonics and word recognition there can be no effectiveness in reading. For a child to be reading fluently, as suggested in the beginning, the child needs to understand that each letter has its sound and each sound can be combined to form a word. The stage of recognition comes after the child has developed the understanding of phonics and then when encountered repeatedly, he will be able to recognize the words, which can lead to fluency and comprehension of the text.

Additionally, knowing phonics enhances automatic word recognition (Stahl, 1992). It is true that the basics of reading comes from sounding out the letters into words and as the word is encountered many times it can then be memorized and every time the same word is encountered, it is easier and faster to read and spell.

2.4 LEARNING STYLES

The desire to read is often fostered in the readiness program and should continue to be fostered throughout the entire elementary school. A child may be expected to continue to read actively when what he is required to do seems useful and vital. According to Bond and Wagner (1970), they believe that, if the child loses the desire because the program is boring and distasteful, little progress can be expected, but if the program is based on material that is interesting in content and style, there will be very little difficulty in making reading pleasant.

Classroom environment also has effects on the learning of children; a classroom that is rich and vital can bring about more growth in reading. The emphasis should not be on the amount of text read but rather the development of the reading ability, attitudes and interests. Generally speaking, there is no one method that is best under all circumstances for all children. (Bond & Wagner, 1970). The teacher has to be able to select appropriate approaches to reading which are best suited for the students.

Learning styles is one of the factors affecting second language learning. According to Reid (1995), different people have different ways of learning and prefer different ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills.

Gardner (discussed in Reid, 1995) suggested that each individual person has a range of distinct intelligence and not just one general intelligence but all the seven intelligences. He introduced the seven intelligences which are:

1. Verbal or Linguistic: are people who are sensitive to meaning and order of words.
2. Logical or Mathematical: are people who have the ability to handle chains of reasoning and to recognize patterns and order.
3. Spatial or Visual: are people who tend to think in pictures and learn best from visual presentations.
4. Musical or Rhythmic: people with this kind of intelligence are sensitive to sound, environmental as well as musical.

5. Bodily or Kinesthetic: people with this kind of intelligence process information through the sensation they feel in their bodies.

6. Interpersonal: are individual who enjoy friend and social activities.

7. Intrapersonal: are individual who show deep awareness of inner feelings.

According to Gardner (discussed in Reid 1995), everybody has all the above mentioned intelligences but with one which is dominant and so, it is the teachers duty to help the students to develop and give them activities which enhance the other intelligences. This is to help the students find the most effective ways in learning. There is no right and wrong, or no preferences of any intelligences for learning of a foreign language, but rather an individual preference to accomplish the learning of a language.

As for young learners, it is the teacher who analyses and introduces all the learning styles to the students. As stated by Burns, Roe, and Ross (1988), some styles and methods of teaching reading work better for some children than for others. Each child is an individual who learns in his/her own way. Some are visual learners, some are auditory learners and some are kinesthetic learners. The teacher should differentiate instructions to fit the diverse needs of children in the class.