



## **INNOVATIVE AND MODERN APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING READING SKILLS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS**

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### **Introduction**

Reading comprehension is one of the most crucial skills that English learners need to acquire because it directly impacts academic success and communication skills of them. Reading is a complex process which involves cognition, decoding and analyzing texts critically. Many researchers have worked on exploring essential skills which are required in reading comprehension. One of them is Kintsch (1998), his construction-integration model highlights the importance of text coherence and working memory in comprehension. What is more, Anderson and Pearson (1984) have explained the important role of prior knowledge and scheme theory, emphasizing that readers interpret texts according to their experiences and background knowledge.

Traditional methods in teaching such as grammar translation and vocabulary instruction have been widely used for decades in classrooms. However, these methods are failing to engage learners in lessons and gathering students' attention is becoming harder these days. Currently we are living in cyber era and this may



be the reason for these failures. In Grabe and Stoller's (2011) opinion, various approaches and strategies should be integrated to achieve effective reading lessons that promote engagement, motivation and comprehension among language learners.

With the help of researchers and advancements in technology, new approaches to teaching reading have emerged. Task -based learning, technology-enhanced practices, gamification, extensive and intensive reading and scaffolding can be good examples of these approaches. Contemporary scholars like Nation (2009) emphasize the importance of both explicit and implicit instruction in developing reading fluency and comprehension. Additionally, Krashen's (2004) input hypothesis suggests that learners acquire language more effectively through exposure to comprehensible input, reinforcing the value of extensive reading practices.

Given the increasing demand for digital literacy, modern educators are incorporating innovative tools such as artificial intelligence, audiobooks and interactive e-books to support reading development. This article explores these contemporary methodologies, shedding light on how educators can enhance reading comprehension through evidence-based and technology-driven strategies.

- **Task-based learning (TBL)**

Task-based learning is a communicative approach which emphasizes that reading should be taught connectively with meaningful and real-life tasks. Using this approach rejects passively receiving knowledge and require students engage in tasks that require problem-solving, critical thinking and collaboration. Willis (1996) introduced a structured framework for TBL, consisting of three phases: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. Ellis (2003) further explored how TBL facilitates second language acquisition by providing authentic language input and promoting active engagement. Reading and summarizing news articles to prepare for a class debate or reading travel guides to plan an itinerary can be good examples of this approach.





- **Technology-Enhanced reading practices**

These days the vast majority of students, especially at a language university, competently use modern information technology. In addition, they like this form of work so much that they spend a lot of time “strolling” through the network. The interest of the teacher is involved in the learning process. Moreover, there are a lot of resources on the Internet in different areas of education (Moydinova, 2024; 200).

With the rapid growth of digital tools, reading instruction has evolved to incorporate interactive and personalized learning experience.

- **Artificial Intelligence Applications:**

McCarthy (2016) discusses how AI-powered platforms like Grammarly, ReadTheory and Newsela personalize reading materials based on learners' proficiency levels.

- **Audiobooks and Text-to-Speech Software:**

Chang ang Millett (2015) found that listening to audiobooks while reading improved pronunciation and fluency.

- **Interactive E-books and Hypertext Reading**

Research by Reinking (1998) suggests that hypertext environments improve comprehension by offering multimodal resources like embedded dictionaries and visual annotations.

- **Gamification in Reading Instruction**

Gamification applies game-based elements to enhance engagement and motivation in reading. Deterding et al. (2011) define gamification as integrating reward-based mechanics into educational contexts.

- **Reading Challenges and Badges:** Learners earn points for reading and completing quizzes ( Werbach and Hunter,2012).

- **Escape Room Activities:** Students decode texts and solve puzzles to “escape” a virtual room, increasing motivation ( Bosse and Wuyts, 2019).



•Digital Storytelling: Wang and Zhan (2010) highlight that creating interactive narratives improves comprehension and language retention.

### • Scaffolding and Differentiated Instruction

Scaffolding provides structured support to learners as they develop reading skills. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), suggesting that learners progress best when given the right level of support before becoming independent.

Key scaffolding techniques:

• Pre-reading Activities: Activating background knowledge through brainstorming and visuals (Graves, 1986)

• Guided Reading: Small-group reading with teacher support (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996)

• Post-Reading Strategies: Concept mapping and summarization (Kintsch, 1998)

### • Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL involves teaching language through subject-specific content, promoting contextual reading comprehension. Marsh (2002) explains that CLIL enhances reading skills by exposing learners to authentic texts in science, history or business.

### • Collaborative and Social Reading Approaches

Collaborative learning fosters peer interaction and discussion, leading to deeper comprehension.

•Literature Circles: Daniels (1994) describes literature circles as student-led discussion groups where learners take on specific roles while analyzing texts.

•Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies(PALS): Fuchs (2005) found that peer-assisted learning improved reading fluency and comprehension.

•Online Discussion Forums: Zorko (2009) highlights how online platforms facilitate deeper textual engagement through asynchronous discussions.

### •Visual and Multimodal Approaches





Multimodal approaches use visuals, videos and interactive materials to support comprehension.

- Graphic Novels and Comics: Cary (2004) found that visual storytelling aids struggling readers.

- Video-Based Reading Activities: Studies by Mayer (2009) support the use of Multimedia to enhance text comprehension.

- **Extensive and Intensive Reading**

Both extensive and intensive reading play essential roles in language learning.

Extensive Reading: Day and Bamford (1998) argue that reading large amounts of text at an appropriate difficulty level helps improve fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation. Nation and Wang (1999) found that extensive reading enhances learners' ability to process texts more efficiently over time.

Intensive Reading: This involves a close analysis of shorter texts, focusing on comprehension strategies such as inference, summarization, and questioning. Brown (2007) highlights that intensive reading activities should include vocabulary work, discussion, and text structure analysis to maximize comprehension.

### **Conclusion**

Modern reading instruction should integrate evidence-based strategies, including technology, gamification, scaffolding, and social learning. By leveraging these approaches, educators can create dynamic and engaging reading experiences for English learners, fostering deeper comprehension and motivation. Research by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) has shown that motivation plays a crucial role in reading comprehension, emphasizing that students who are engaged in meaningful reading activities demonstrate higher levels of comprehension and retention. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2002) advocate for a balanced approach that combines explicit instruction with opportunities for independent reading,



reinforcing the importance of both strategy instruction and extensive reading practices. Additionally, Snow (2002) highlights the cognitive and linguistic challenges that English learners face in reading comprehension and recommends scaffolded support and differentiated instruction as essential components of effective reading programs. Recent studies, such as those by Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2015), emphasize the role of collaborative reading strategies in improving comprehension among diverse student populations. The integration of digital tools in reading instruction is also supported by research. Leu et al. (2013) argue that online reading comprehension requires distinct skills beyond traditional literacy, such as critical evaluation of digital sources and multimodal literacy. This reinforces the need for educators to incorporate technology-enhanced reading activities that mirror the complexities of digital information processing. In conclusion, innovative and modern approaches to teaching reading comprehension must be adaptable, interactive, and student-centered. As research continues to evolve, educators should remain informed about the latest developments in pedagogy and technology to ensure that their reading instruction meets the diverse needs of English learners. By applying a combination of task-based learning, extensive and intensive reading, technology-enhanced practices, gamification, scaffolding, and collaborative learning, teachers can cultivate a more effective and engaging reading environment that supports long-term language development.

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