

ON LINE READING RESOURCES IN READING CLASS

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Abstract

Internet has become an inseparable part of the life of most university students nowadays. They can access internet through cellular phone or wireless facility around campus area. Internet is a source of potential benefit in language classroom; provided that the availability of free teaching and learning resources that can be used in Reading class. FL readers have a more limited opportunity to develop automaticity in Reading since classroom is the only meaningful place where they are exposed to reading. Automatic process in reading is the outcome of thousands of hours of meaningful input. It is something natural that most of FL readers are struggling and consider reading is difficult and also frustrating to most of them considering the amount of time they spend reading. It will be beneficial that teachers are able to explore free online reading resources as an interesting and accessible tool to provide input and eventually help students to read with better comprehension. This article will, therefore, discuss theoretical background on using on line teaching resources, how and what on line resources are available.

Key Words: On Line Reading Resources, Reading Class

Introduction

Most Reading class in University level with students learning English as foreign language lasts for approximately 100 minutes in a week. In those classes, students normally work with short text with close guidance from teachers. Teachers design reading class in such a way that they need to allocate time to activate students' background knowledge, to ask students to read the text, and they also need time for several other activities related to comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and other skills like speaking or writing. When we examine closely, the actual time that students spend reading is not more than 30 minutes in a week. The limited amount of time that students spend in the classroom to read has lead me to encourage my students to read as much as possible outside of the classroom when they want to be fluent readers. Fluency is related to automaticity in reading. Automatic process in reading happens as a result of thousands of hours that someone spends in reading. Thus, relying only on classroom reading will not be sufficient when someone wishes to be fluent readers. On line reading resources is a mean to facilitate students to be better readers and eventually to be fluent readers since it provides numerous graded reading resources followed with several activities accompanied with individualized feedback on students' performance. When reading resources in the library is limited and Wi-Fi facility is available around campus, it is possible for teacher to use online reading resources as a means to help students to be better readers. This article will, therefore, discuss theoretical background on using on line teaching resources, how and what on line resources are available.

Review Of Related Theories

One obvious difference between L1, L2 and FL is the amount of time devoted to reading in each setting. L1 readers read many different texts with different purposes in a very natural ways. Reading will eventually become an automatic process as the result of a lot of time devoted to unlimited amount of reading. L2 readers, as compared to FL, have more opportunity to read since they will be able to find reasons to read outside the classroom as a means to develop automaticity in reading. FL readers have a limited opportunity to develop automaticity since classroom the only meaningful opportunity where they are exposed to reading. Grabe (2010: 28) stated that automatic process in reading is the outcome of thousands of hours of meaningful input. It is something natural that most of FL readers are struggling and consider reading is difficult and frustrating to most of them considering the amount of time they spend reading. FL readers may not have the same recourses outside the classroom to develop their reading skill; consequently their reading development in general may unfold more slowly Hedgecock (2009:52).

One direct implication for teaching is that it is of an utmost important that students are provided with opportunity to read not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. It is also necessary that students are provided with activities or tasks to read outside classroom as a means of practice to develop reading abilities. Students should also be encourage to read as often as possible extensively and intensively. Harmer (2007:101). On line reading resources can be used to help students to read intensively and extensively.

On line Reading Resources

On line is the condition of being connected to a network of computers or other devices. The term is basically used to describe someone who is currently connected to the internet. On line reading resources is reading material you find online. It can be an online newspaper, magazine or television website such as NBC or CNN. Peer-reviewed journals, WebPages, forums and blogs are also online reading resources. Therefore, using online reading resources is using internet in language classroom.

The use of internet had been proven effective in language classroom. There is a need in the field of language teaching to adapt and renew itself to the globalized world where people all over the world connect and access information through internet. The internet users in Indonesia according to the Ministry of Communication and Information has reached the number of 150 million people (Korninfo :2015). And some of the users are collage students. The fact that most college students are using internet, is a source of potential benefit in language classroom. Internet is beneficial in language classroom provided that it offers a wealth of resources for students to become active learners, Isjsag (2012: 235).

Internet, when used in language class, has a number of features that are suitable for growing proficiency in the language. It provide a rich database of authentic materials, offers tools for interactive learning, provide context for collaborative material development, it is conducive to language learning and the material stored in the Web can reach a large audience with relatively low cost, Li and Hart in Richard and Renandya (2002:362)

Reading resource in the internet as part of language learning sites has a number of advantages according to Nunan (2003: 257). First it provide the opportunity for students to have "patients tutor" where they can repeat exercises as often as possible to gain mastery. Students can also gain instant, individualized feedback on their performance. The feedback is accompanied with diagnostic report on where additional practice is needed. Finally, it has the advantages of providing the students with "private space" for further practicing. Reading resources also as part of language learning site can also be used as a way to train students to continue learning without the present of a teacher, Harmer (2010: 407). Training students to continue learning is important since learning is not only limited to the classroom teaching with the presence of teacher. Thus it is important to provide students with the tool and resources for learning.

Reading Class

In a reading class, several types of reading may occur as suggested by Brown (2001:301). We can encounter intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading is used to teach or practice specific reading strategies or skills. The text is treated as an end in itself. Extensive reading on the other hand, involves reading of large quantities of material, directly and fluently. It is treated as a means to an end. It may include reading simply for pleasure or reading technical, scientific or professional material. In intensive reading, students normally work with short text under the guidance of the teacher. The aim of intensive reading is to help students obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading skills and to enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge. These two approaches in teaching reading should not be regarded as being in opposition. Both should be seen as two things that serve different but complementary purpose, Richard and Renandya (2002:296). The two reading approaches are complementary and serves different purpose

Since intensive and extensive readings are complementary in its purpose, it will not be enough when teacher only facilitate students with intensive reading. Extensive reading should also be encouraged in order to maximize the effort on teaching students to read. Judging from the characteristics of intensive and extensive reading above, we can conclude that what most teacher do in their reading class still focus on the use of intensive reading alone. There are some reasons why teachers aren't using extensive reading in their reading class. Richard and Renandya (2002:300) describe that they don't have enough time to prepare and extensive reading activities due to the limited amount of reading resources available.

On line reading resources can be used as an alternative to help and encourage teacher to reinforce extensive reading in their classroom, Nation (2009:59). The use of on line reading resources fulfils the characteristics of extensive reading, Richard and Renandya (2002:296). They are, first students read a large amount of material. Students are also able to choose what they want to read. The availability of reading materials varies in terms of topic and genre. The materials students read is within their level of comprehension. Finally, students usually take part in post reading activities since there are several reading lesson that provide, pre, while and post reading activities. Not only that it can be used in extensive reading, it can also be used in intensive reading class. With enormous size of reading resources, it is possible for teachers to select which resources are suitable for each type of reading.

Data Analysis and Discussion

After discussing related theory on using online reading resources in reading class, this part of the article will describe what on line reading resources are available that can be accessed for free and can be used in the classroom. They are:

- a) <http://learningenglish.voanews.com>. This links offer news in English which can help anyone who are learning to read in English by providing news with transcript and can be downloaded for free. This links is also equipped with feature in which students can choose news based on their current level of English proficiency.
- b) <http://www.manythings.org/voa/scripts/>. This is also a link that provides news in VOA but this link is especially design for language learning who want to access learning materials which include not only reading, but also listening, speaking and vocabulary. It also includes some of language learning games that can be used both by teacher and students.
- c) <http://www.iei.illinois.edu/current/studyresources/>. It is actually a link that provides study recourses. The Internet offers many resources for those who are studying English, are preparing exams like the TOEFL or GRE or applying to American universities. The Internet resources on this page are divided by area of interest. In many areas, there are two different types of websites. You will find websites with activities and information written for students. You will also find authentic resources where you can practice reading or listening to texts intended for native speakers.
- d) <http://www.esolcourses.com/>. It is an online free English lesson. You can practice your English with free interactive reading lesson, reading exercises, quizzes and games. You can also choose lesson that are suitable with your current English proficiency
- e) <http://www.englishcentral.com>. This links provide reading materials with different range of topics with transcript. The reading materials are usually shorter in length as compared to what is available in VOA. This link will be very beneficial for those who want to improve vocabulary based on the reading materials. Vocabulary exercises are available following comprehension exercise.
- f) <http://www.esl-lab.com/>. It is a link that can be used for free by student with many different topics. Not only that, this link also provide pre-reading exercises, reading exercise, vocabulary and grammar, post reading activities and online investigation. The exercises are also provided with scoring feature where student can check their answer.
- g) Television website like CNN and BBC also provide reading resources as they present news in printed version. It is possible for the students to choose which news that interest them the most

To conclude, it is possible to state several common characteristics of the above links. First, due to the wealth of the reading resources available, they provide the opportunity for students to read what they want to read. On line reading resources provide reading materials ranging from online newspaper, magazine or television website such as VOA, BBC and CNN. Peer-reviewed journals, WebPages, forums and blogs are also part of on line reading resources that can be accessed for free. When students are able to read what is interesting for them and what reading materials are suitable with their proficiency level, it is believed that the reading activity will be done pleasurablely without any pressure and eventually it is expected that students will develop the habit of reading in their free time. When students are already performing reading with pleasure in their free time, it is possible to say that the students are actually providing themselves with an input for language acquisition. They would also be able to enhance their language proficiency level.

Second, on line reading resources improve motivation in reading. The fact that most collage students are already using internet in a daily basis and the fact that internet has become an inseparable part of the life of most collage students can turn reading as an interesting activity when online reading resources are used. The experience that they feel when they read books will be different with the experience that they feel when they access online reading resources which are equipped with interesting colour and sometime related and interesting picture of the text. The availability of games related to the reading material is also something that can motivate students to read. Online reading resources also provides various comprehension activities for the students to choose and what is more interesting is that the activities is followed with feedback on their performance and mostly it is in the form of diagnostic evaluation where students are able to identify which area is problematic for them.

Finally, on line reading resources don't only provide comprehension activities. Other activities related to vocabulary and grammars are also available. A good vocabulary is the base for good listening. Vocabulary, as a matter of fact is the base common problem that most EFL students are dealing with. Most students are having great difficulties in reading because they don't have sufficient vocabulary that will support them. Vocabulary exercises available in online reading recourses are presented in a more interesting way with colour pictures and audio will also be beneficial for students in increasing the number of

vocabulary that they possess. Grammar activities are also available and they are also presented in an interesting and communicative way. When students are willing to sharpen their knowledge on grammar on line reading resources is also beneficial to be used.

As mentioned earlier, online reading resources are not only applicable in extensive reading but also in intensive reading. Intensive Reading occurs when the learner is focused on the language rather than the text. For example, the learner may be answering comprehension questions, learning new vocabulary, studying the grammar and expressions in the text, translating the passage (sometimes called 'careful reading'), or other tasks that involve the student in looking intensively (inside) the text. Most often all the students read the same short text that the teacher decided.

There are several characteristics of intensive reading. They include the fact that intensive reading is usually classroom based. The reader is intensely involved in looking inside the text. Teacher usually instruct students to focus on linguistic or semantic details of a reading; to focus on surface structure details such as grammar and discourse markers; to identify key vocabulary. The aim of the lesson is to build more language knowledge rather than simply practice the skill of reading.

The advantage of intensive reading is that it focuses the learner on certain aspects of the language. However, intensive reading is usually done with difficult texts with many unknown words that require the learner to use a dictionary. This means the reading is slow and that there are few opportunities for the learner to learn to read smoothly, because she has to stop every few seconds to work on something she can't understand. This slows or prevents the development of fluent eye movements that are so necessary to improve one's reading skill. The use of online reading resources will be able to reduce the negative things associated with intensive reading. The availability of many reading resources will help teacher to choose reading materials that are interesting and not difficult for students. Some reading resources even provide glossary of the difficult word that will prevent slow reading.

Most intensive reading is characterized by the following activities. They are first, pre-reading prediction activities: Before reading an article in a magazine or newspaper, you usually form some idea of what it is about from the accompanying photo or headline. So to heighten interest before starting to read a text in class with your students, use the picture or title to brainstorm and elicit possible vocabulary (that you can put on the blackboard) or just to discuss what the article is about: Who exactly is the person jumping off that tower on page 40 of *English in Mind 2* and what does it have to do with *Growing up*? All those activities can be accessed for free in the links provided above. Thus the links prove teachers with different techniques on starting their reading lesson.

Second, reading for gist or 'skimming' for main ideas: Intensive reading texts in *English in Mind* provide tasks or questions to focus students' attention on the main ideas in the text. It is important to teach students to skim which mean locating main ideas in a short period of time. In order to be able to skim for the text students need a lot of practice to skim for texts. The links presented above also provide different kind of skimming activities which will help teaching in designing lesson for teaching skimming to the students.

Third, reading for specific information or 'scanning'. Intensive reading texts in *English in Mind* are usually accompanied by exercises which ask students to read closely to find (only) the information necessary to answer specific questions. This is also called 'scanning' or locating specific information related to the text. The links provided above also provide lots of scanning activities that will be useful for teacher.

Finally, intensive reading is associated with vocabulary and grammar activities as part of the reading lesson. Vocabulary and grammar activities in intensive reading are associated with thorough and rigid activities. When the links above are used in intensive reading, activities related to vocabulary will be more interesting and communicative.

Conclusion And Suggestions

On line reading resources has potential benefits when used in the classroom. Intensive reading as the most type of reading approach that most teachers commonly used can be conducted in a more interesting and communicative way when online reading resources are used. Extensive reading when provided by teachers will make the process of teaching reading more complete. The fact that extensive reading is rarely practiced due to the difficulties to provide reading resources to the students is no longer a problem for teacher. On line reading resources which consist of several links where students and teacher can access free reading resources is an alternative to provide material for extensive reading.

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