



Role of Technical Tools to Enhance Reading Abilities of UG Engineering Students during COVID 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Technology plays a vital role in many fields and saves a lot of time and energy, especially during pandemic situation, All the Educational institutions depended more on technology to offer courses to their students through online mode. Initially Students felt some difficulty in Online teaching because they are addicted and habituated for traditional way of teaching using chalk and talk by their faculty members. Later they felt online teaching is an alternate source of teaching during Covid19 pandemic, because staff and students do not get an opportunity to be in physical class room due to lock down effect. This paper deals with the technical tools like Reading Rockets, Rewordify, Immersive Reader, etc to enhance reading skills of UG Engineering students. This paper also discusses the assessed reading abilities and the feedback of student s in a nut shell.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that, Language skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing helps the students to get command on language. But getting mastery over these skills is a challenge for them. Reading is a Receptive skill because it involves in receiving information. Even though, Teachers are struggling a lot to improve this reading skill in the students, they show more interest on other skills like Writing, Listening and Speaking. Research suggests that people who keep their brains active by playing chess or reading are 2.5 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than those who engaged in other activities. Reading is not just simply reading the text which is there on paper or screen, while reading learner has to get complete comprehension over it. It's better to keep a dictionary beside them while reading; it helps them to get the meaning of the difficult words in the text. It also helps you to improve their knowledge on Language Learning. paran views reading Comprehension as "an activity that involves constant guesses which are later rejected or confirmed. This means that one does not read all the

sentences but relies on a number of words - or clues - to get an idea of what kind of sentence (e.g. An explanation is likely to follow." (1996, P.25).

Reading is a complex, multi- faced activity involving a combination of both text - processing skills and lexical that are widely recognized as being interactive. Reading has various types like, Skimming which helps to get a idea on broad area and saves a lot of time to complete reading process for example, This technique is useful while reading only headlines of the Newspaper. Scanning helps to get comprehension on the selected text that which is reading. For example if you read the specific content excluding all the other content in the Newspaper. Extensive Reading creates a passion and pleasure in the learner. For example while reading the favorite book or novel purchased at exhibition, they did not get bored or deviated from reading whereas Intensive Reading is a pressure reading because learner has to read the content for the sake of marks or appreciation from the people. Critical Reading has a unique way that facts and information are tested for accuracy. Learner has to look many ideas until

they reach a conclusion. Reading comprehension was assessed with two texts, the first narrative and the other informative, taken from Italian batteries for the assessment of reading (Cornoldi and Carretti, 2016; Cornoldi et al., 2017).

1. English Dictionary - Offline: This is an excellent application to enhance vocabulary to decode the new words because majority of the people may not carry a hard copy of dictionary all the time. So it's better to download this English Dictionary offline application for the sake of immediate response of word search. While reading if learner find any new word it is very hard to get understanding of the text without knowing the meaning of the new word. This application enables the users to know word of the day. It also helps the user to search a word in this dictionary, In this application we can get pronunciation, Etymology, Example sentence and how it works as parts of speech in the sentence. Hence it is an offline application; it does not require internet connection to use. It also helps the user to get proper pronunciation of the word by simply clicking on the speaker symbol. It will pronounce the sound.

2. Reading Rockets: This is the best website for the people who want to enhance Reading Skills. It provides a lot of sources like Teaching Reading, Helping Struggling Readers, Reading Topics A-Z, Children's Books and Authors. It also provides videos and blogs to develop Reading and its Strategies. Users can get complete knowledge on content related to Reading. It provides classroom strategies to the teachers to teach Reading at their work place. It provides Authors interviews which creates a passion and curiosity in the minds of the people to read the books more and more to attain knowledge in their field. This source will help the people who are preparing for competitive exams to overcome the questions related to Reading.

3. Amazon Kindle: It is an E- Book reader application which allows the user to read the text through online mode on electrical gadgets like Mobile Phone, Tab, Computers, etc. Users need to take subscription on Amazon to enjoy the services provided by the Amazon Kindle. People find it is very interesting because they can read the desired book any time without carrying hard copies all the time which is very weight. The Kindle also has several functions that they may find helpful while reading. User can bookmark a page, highlight a selection of text, type notes or look up words in the dictionary as you read. It helps the user to get full command on the text what he is reading in the kindle. The advanced features in kindle like zoom the content which is not possible in hard copy of the text book that

creates a passion and interest in the students to develop reading skill.

4. Rewordify.com: It is powerful, free, online software that improves reading, learning, and teaching. Users can get access to this Rewordify.com by simply copying the targeted text and paste it in the dialogue box provided in the website. After that click on Rewordify Text then it will highlight the difficult words and replace with simple words. If user clicks on the highlighted text made by Rewordify.com, It will provide meaning as well Pronunciation which helps the people to identify the exact pronunciation. It also helps them to get the stat data of selected text like word count, sentence count. It can generate Vocabulary list and also identifies parts of speech. If user register online in this website means they can enjoy furthermore privileges like sharing the content, getting the required data with printing option. It offers learning activities like word bank, matching, quiz which helps the user to get complete command on the given text.

5. Read Speaker: It works like text to speech software which helps the students to paste the selected text in the dialogue box for pronunciation. It will read out the text placed in the box. It provides an option to the user to listen to the text either in Male version or Female version based on their interest and level of understanding. It also works like an assistive technological tool for the people who have blindness.

6. Immersive Reader: This is a Digital Learning Tool from Microsoft Education which enables to improve reading and writing for all learners- regardless of age or ability- with proven techniques from Micro Soft Education Tools. When the user places the text in Microsoft Word, It helps them to get text in big screen when they press View option. Immersive Reader highlights each and every word and starts pronouncing it with good voice. They can control the reading speed and also enlarge the text. They can change the background of the text for the sake of their convenience. Grammar option helps the user to identify the parts of speech in the mentioned text. Reading Preferences include Picture Dictionary, Line focus, and ability to translate text into other languages. If user places a cursor on selected text (hard word) then it displays a picture description along with audio. This helps them to learn more vocabulary to enhance their language skills.

Enhancing Reading Skills using Smart Phone: Smart Phone became a part and parcel in every one's life. Reading can be enhanced by downloading the applications like Word Search, Word Puzzle, Word Shatter, and Spelling Quiz from Google Play Store. These applications help the user to identify the miss placed letters to complete the word. While doing this users can come to know new

vocabulary which helps them to use while communicating or writing. Spelling quiz plays a major role in assessing the students' command on vocabulary. It provides different levels to the students to answer, if they win one level they will move to another advanced level. If they failed to answer or felt difficult while answering it will show the answers.

Assessment Tools to check Reading Abilities in the students of ESL Classroom

Assessment plays a pivotal role in the field of Education. It helps the student to assess his/ her knowledge on the concepts which they learn and it also helps the teachers to know how far their students know the concepts. Online assessing gives the accurate results so that student can understand the reality of his knowledge. There will be no scope of manipulations and influence in online tests. Students can see the immediate result after completion of the test. Ofra Korat has been conducting experimental studies with e-reading tools that can build both procedural skills (such as phonological Technology can be more than a tool for drilling students on skills; it can be a tool for acquiring the vocabulary and background knowledge essential to becoming a skilled reader (Ofra Korat., 2010, p. 24-31). Some of the online assessing tools are mentioned below,

A. English Club: Teachers can test their student's level of Reading using English Club website. It helps the ESL students to get command on Language. This free test evaluates how well they understand what they read in English. It is strictly called a Written Comprehension Test because it shows how well they comprehend what somebody writes. After reading the text for 15 minutes they need to take the text and attempt all the questions. Based on their score the level in reading will be decided which is shown below for your reference.

Sno	If student SCORE was	Their LEVEL in Reading (written comprehension) is:
1	20-35%	Level 1 Elementary
2	40-45%	Level 2 Lower Intermediate
3	50-65%	Level 3 Upper Intermediate
4	70-85%	Level 4 Lower Advanced
5	100%	Level 5 Upper Advanced

The data mentioned in the above table helps to identify student's level in Reading or written comprehension based on their score. So that Teacher can get accurate results of

their student's standards. It also helps the Teachers to group them based on their level of understanding and answering the questions. So that teacher can assist them in a better way to overcome the problems faced by the students while attempting. This type of assessment surely helps the students to know their standards. Because the results generated here were free on influence or mercy. Hence it is a free platform students can assess their knowledge by taking tests number of times using this English Club Website. If the student finds his score in between 20-35%, Then he/she should work a lot to improve their standards and should reach further levels by doing hard work and understanding the concepts.

B. Free Online Test: This website helps the students to assess their reading abilities and reading comprehension. The major advantage of this website is to provide the online Tests for the aspirants who are preparing for the competitive exams. It provides an online test with a time duration of 30 minutes. There will be 20 questions; each question carries 1 mark and negative mark for wrong attempt is 0.25 marks. They can check their level of understanding of the concepts by attempting these tests in Free Online Test.

C. Oxford Online English: This is one of the best websites to assess the reading level of the student. There will be different levels in assessing the student knowledge. It provides 20 multiple choice questions, Student has to answer all the questions without using dictionary. It will display the results based on the response given by the student. It helps the student to identify his/ her standards, and then they can work hard to get good marks in another test.

II. CONCLUSION

Technology influence on mankind is inevitable in today's world. Everyone is simply depending on technical tools to work smarter. Students are showing a lot of interest when teachers introduce technical tools while teaching, Teachers can easily grab the attention of the majority of the students when they use technical tools in ESL Classroom. Teachers should offer hands on experience to the students, So that they can come to know the usage of these technical applications for the sake of their enhancement of Reading. Majority of the students are not able to understand the question properly because of their fear, nervousness, anxiety while reading the text they skip some words. Even at the time of placement exams, if they twist the question, some of the students may find it is difficult even though they studied it earlier, because they failed to understand the context clues to answer the questions. "Context clues are very important for broadly comprehending text as well

as for specifically learning new words” (Flanigan & Greenwood, 2007, p. 249)

But the technology alone did not give full-fledged knowledge to the students, So Teacher itself act as a technical tool while teaching. There will be some drawbacks while using with Technology because some of the applications and websites require good internet connections. To use technology in a broad way to learn means good smart phone is needed to support all applications to run. Hence, It is concluding that blending of Teacher’s teaching with technology helps the students to get command on subjects very easily because student who does not have a sound knowledge on use of these technical tools can approach their teachers for solving their queries. Teachers acts like a guiding force to the students to overcome their difficulties in understanding the technical terms and its usage.

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