Teaching Reading
in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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I. Introduction

Among four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), reading may be one of the most controversial areas in the present E.S.L. or E.F.L. teaching.

Recently a new body of theories and pedagogies has developed. Listening and speaking skills have been focused in these pedagogies which emphasize the communicative function of a language. However, reading skill is not much explored in these new pedagogies. Consequently, students are encourged to react instantly and properly in the target language when stimuli in tightly controlled situations are given in language teaching.

Yet, sufficient attention has not been paid to developing reading materials to enhance students' reading skills and, thereby, refining their minds through reading. Some teachers gloomily predict future graduates of foreign-language classes will be fluent chatterboxes who can produce rapid-fire utterances in a foreign language in a kind of stimulusresponse fashion but that they will have nothing worthwhile to say because they have never been given the opportunity to appreciate the great minds of another culture and to widen their knowledge and understanding.[1]

Unfortunately, the major trend in E.S.L. or E.F.L. teaching is still for developing listening and speaking competence. Nevertheless, cool consideration of reality in most E.F.L. teaching is now necessary in devloping pedagogies.

Most foreign students may not travel to the countries where the target language is used; they may have few opportunities to converse with native speakers. The chief aim of their language learning lies in reading books (literature, periodicals, scientific and technical journals etc.) written in the target language to broaden their knowledge in their major fields and "of language itself."[2]

Consequently, proper training and guidance for enhancing reading skill is one of the crucial points in E.F.L. teaching. Moreover, reading skill which undoubtedly presupposes practice and guidance, once developed, is the one which can be most easily maintained at a high level by the student himself without further help from his teacher.

However, reading skill is not easily developed as most lay people suppose. Reading skill is usually developed at the advanced level of instruction just as in case of writing skill. It is not too much to say that the two skills depend to a great extent on a solid foundation in listening and speaking skills.[3] Competence in reading skill cannot be easily defined. Deciphering letters is only the beginning stage of reading skill. Comprehension and interpretation should be included in considering reading skill. Providing suitable reading materials for students in various levels of language learning is not an easy work. Especially in our country where acquiring advanced knowledge and technology from English-speaking countries is urgently needed, developing reading skill in teaching English at various levels of school deserves our due attention.

This paper is an effort to call English language teachers' attention to the importance of reading.

II. Definition of Reading

Reading is a process that involves perception. So it is very difficult to say exactly how the process operates. Robinett reports Ronald Wardhaugh's following description of reading:

"When a person reads a text, he is attempting to discover the meaning of what he is reading by using the visual clues of spelling, his knowledge of probabilities of occurrence, his syntactic and semantic competence to give a meaningful interpretation to the text. Reading is not a passive process, in which a reader takes something out of the text without any effort or merely recognizes what is on the page and then interprets it, a process in which a stage of decoding precedes a stage of involvement with meaning. There is little reason to suppose that there are two such discrete, non-overlapping stages. Reading is instead an active process, in which the reader must make on active contribution by drawing upon and using concurrently various abilities that he has acquired."[4]

According to Wardough, "The visual clues of spelling" means the relationships between the sound system and the orthographic systems;

"The probabilities of occurrence" means syntactic signals of subject-verb word order, nouns following prepositions, nouns following determiners, and the like; and

"The contextual-pragmatic knowledge" means a kind of cultural reading readiness and

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3) Kenneth Croft, "Reading and Writing" in *Readings on English as a Second Language: For Teachers and Teacher Trainees*, ed. Kenneth Croft (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers Inc., 1980), p. 339.

4) Betty Wallace Robinett reports this in "Reading English as a Second Language" (1976), in *Readings on E.S.L.* p. 355. from Ronald Wordough's *Reading: A Linguistic Perspective* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World,1969)

the practical knowledge of context.

Wardhaugh's long description of reading in other words, means that readers must attain some level of competence in these various areas, and it also means that a lack of competence in any area could reasonably be expected to present an obstacle to effective reading.[5]

Reading, in short, starts when the learner searches for meaning from the written language that he encounters. It involves guessing and hypothesizing; it further develops into confirmation or revision. The later stage also involves various levels: the letter-sound correspondence level, the phrase or sentence structure level, and the level of the meaning of larger units, that is, paragraphs, chapters, and beyond.[6]

Reading can be classified into several kinds as intensive reading and extensive reading, or oral reading and silent reading. Intensive reading and extensive reading will be dealt later when we consider stages of reading training and teaching method.

Let us here think over oral reading and silent reading to determine which one is most effective and efficient in assisting the learner to comprehend.

1. Oral Reading

Oral reading refers to the process of changing the printed symbols (graphic input) into spoken language.[7]

Four important goals are involved in oral reading. The reader must (1) understand the author's intended meaning; (2) sense the mood the author intended to produce; (3) convey the author's meaning to the listener; and (4) convey the author's mood and feeling.[8]

In order to implement these goals the student must (1) reflect correct pronunciation of the words; (2) make delivery in a proper speech manner; (3) conmmunicate with the listerners; and (4) make proper use of pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm, and enunication.[9] The teacher benefits from oral readings because (1) it gives the teacher a quick and valid way to evalute program in important reading skill, particularly those of word recognition and phasing and (2) it provides a medium in which the teacher, by wise guidance, can work to improve the social adjustment of the children, particulary those who are shy and retiring.

2. Silent Reading

Silent reading refers to the process by which a reader seeks to understand the printed

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5) Çroft, p. 355.
6) Donald Knapp, "Developing Reading Comprehension Skills" (1977) in *Readings on E.S.L.* p. 347.
7) Hugh Wallace Glenn, *The Effect of Silent and Oral Reading on Literal Comprehension and Oral performance* (1971), p. 5.
8) William S. Gray, "Characteristics of Effective Oral Reading," in *Oral Aspects of Reading*, Supplementary Education Monographs, 82 (Dec. 1955), p. 8.
9) George D. Spache and Evely B. Spache, *Reading in the Elementary School*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 254.

message of a writer. For most readers, this process includes an oral or mental pronunciation of the graphic input prior to understanding.[10]

Silent reading training is intended to produce; (1) adequate comprehension; (2) an integration of the reader's background of information with the content of the reading; (3) a rate of reading comparable to the reader's capacity for speed in associating ideas; (4) an intelligent use of the context to help derive the meanings of new or difficult words; and (5) successful use of a variety of methods of word analysis resulting in the deduction of word meanings (not necessarily their pronunciation) silent reading must involve the skipping of words, the omissions of unimportant words, and an emphasis upon the basic ideas of the sentence or the paragraph.[11]

Probably a proper balance should be maintained between these two kinds in relation to the contents of reading materials and the various stages of students.

III. Stages of Reading Training

We feel wide-ranging needs in reading skill. One might divide these needs into word reading, phrase and sentence reading, paragraph reading, and advanced reading.[12]

Wilga M. Rivers' six stages of foreign language Reading Skill training to meet these needs are as follows:

1. Stage One

It is proposed that the memorizing of basic sentences used in dialogues should precede memorizing sentences in graphic form. This should be at first be choral. First, the class should read after the teacher or model; then comes unison reading in smaller groups. After a successful period of unison reading, individuals may be called upon to read. The teacher may ascertain whether students are reading, rather than reciting, by pointing to particular words. The student must become familiar with the conventional representation of the phonemes of the foreign language in graphic form. At the same time, he should study all the important sound-symbol combinations in the order of frequency of occurrence rather than in some artificial, albeit systematic, fashion.[13]

2. Stage Two

The students may practice the pattern drills which have been developed from dialogue materials, or recombination narratives and conversations. They must be taught to read in word groups. This means thinking in word groups. Nida has called it "meaningful

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10) Gray, p. 7.
11) Spache, p. 254.
12) Evelyn Hatch, "Reading a Second Language" in *Teaching E.S. or F.L.* p. 141.
13) Rivers, pp. 221~223.

mouthfuls." Students should not be presented with a reading material which is other than a clever recombination of known elements, but which has only a few easily identifiable novelties, until the teacher is reasonably confident that their knowledge of the language is sufficient for them to read most of it without recourse to a dictionary.[14]

3. Stage Three

The students may be introduced to more sustained reading under the guidance of the teacher. They will be introduced to the pleasure of reading simple narratives and conversational materials which develop uncomplicated but entertaining themes. The students need practice in recognizing structure clues quickly. As they try to read in word groups without translation, they must develop the art of distinguishing signs of tense, affirmation, negation, question, and exclamation. They must be able to recognize words which modify the meanings of other words, decipher relationships of cause and effect, and recognize conditional statements. The class may reread the complete story silently as the teacher reads it aloud; the class may listen, with books closed, to a rereading of the story by the teacher; or the students may be encouraged to reread the story silently in a certain space of time to encourage them to concentrate on the flow of the narrative. The development of good reading habits depends much on the teacher's ability to select good readers which are easy and readable for the students but the content of which is interesting and instructive.[15]

4. Stage Four

The students' reading activities are classified into two-intensive and extensive activity. Intensive reading is deeply related to further progress in language learning under the teacher's guidance, while extensive reading is developed at the students' own pace according to Their individual ability. Materials for extensive reading will be selected at a lower standard of difficulty than those for intensive reading. The purpose of the extensive reading program will be to train the students to read directly and fluently in the foreign language for their own enjoyment, without the aid of the teacher. Structures in the text will be already familiar to them and new vocabulary will be introduced slowly in such a way that its meaning can be deduced from the context or quickly ascertained. The student will be encouraged to make intelligent guesses at the meaning of unfamiliar items. The teacher's role at this point is to interest the students in the reading matter and to be available for help and consultation. Tests should be based on the important lines of development in the reading material, not on finicking details which test accuracy of memory rather than comprehension. Students may be encouraged to increase their vocabulary by keeping individual notebooks in which they copy words they intend to remember. These should

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14) Rivers, pp. 223~226.
15) Rivers, pp. 226~229.

always be copied down in complete phrases or sentences so that the students can be continually reminded of the context in which these words are appropriately used.[16]

5. Stage Five

We have already begun to wean the students from depending on the teacher in the area of reading. Teachers must work continually for variety of presentation in the class room, but they should be careful not to destroy any pleasure in the reading assignment. The library should be well stocked with reading materials, with proper consideration of difficulty levels. However, it is recommended that the reading materials should be selected from various subjects. The reading materials for extensive reading would be better if they correspond to the students' individual tastes or interests. At this stage, the material selected should parallel with the types of material that the advanced students would enjoy in their native language. For example, short stories, short novels, plays and poems can be used if the theme is not too much obscured or the subject matter concerns the contemporary life in the country where the foreign language is sopken. Modern authors who are reflecting the strains and conflicts of our complex age will stimulate the students' thinking and make them eager to continue their reading beyond the minimum demands of their school program. The teacher should be careful to keep some record of the list of reading materials read by students for grading purposes so that the students may feel that they are getting some credit for their efforts.[17]

6. Stage Six

At this stage, students should feel confident enough to pick up a book, magazine, or newspaper and read it for his own pleasure and enlightenment, with only occasional resort to a dictionary.[18]

IV. Reading Material and Teaching Method

Some of these are already mentioned when we deal the six stages of Reading Training.
Teachers who create or select reading materials should keep in mind the backgrounds and present knowledge of their students.[19]
Before the text selection, two basic questions must be asked before such text selection:
(1) What are the factors that influence readability of a text?

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16) Rivers, pp. 229~232.
17) Rivers, pp. 232~236.
18) Rivers, p. 237. This paper in dealing the stages of Reading Skill Training is indebted to Rivers because his point is thought to be the most comprehensive of all.
19) Shirley J. Adams, "Scripts and the Recognition of Unfamiliar Vocabulary: Enhancing Second Language Reading Skills." *Modern Language Journal*, 66 (Summer 1982), p. 158.

(2) How can one attempt to measure the relative comprehension difficulty of a text for a particulaur group of students?[20]

The arrangement of reading material as can be seen in *The Riverside Reader*[21] will be helpful to provide college students practical instruction in the processes in both writing and reading. The arrangement is as follows:

Narration (When I was a child by Lillian Smith. etc.)

Description (Mother by Maxine Hong Kingston. etc.)

Process Analysis (The Maker's Eye: Revising Your Own Manuscripts by Donald Murry. etc.)

Comparison and Contrast (Football Red and Baseball Green by Murray Ross. etc.)

Division and Classification (Four Kinds of Chance by James Austin. etc.)

Definition (What is Happiness? by John Ciardi. etc.)

Cause and Effect (On Magic in Medicine by Lewis Thomas. etc.)

Persuasion and Argument (What's Wrong with "Me, Me, Me" by Margaret Harsey, etc.)

Essays for Further Reading.

Essays on Reading and Writing.

The selections have been chosen according to five criteria—length, level, accuracy, variety and liveliness.

Each section starts with the introduction of its definition, purpose, audience and strategies to help students to follow the materials accurately and effectively.

These materials can be taught with some rhetorical point of view. It will give the students some sense of style, cohesion and logic of English. That is to say, students come to understand that the development of English paragraphs may be graphically represented in the following manner:

$$\downarrow$$

(English)[22]

For effective teaching teachers must plan the input thoroughly and find effective ways of involving students actively in their own learning program.

According to the diagnostic-prescriptive method, teachers should also organize the teaching process into six steps: deciding objectives for teaching, pretesting, teaching and learning activities, posttesting, recording and reteaching. This process will help us find out which students have already mastered a specific skill and which ones need further instruction and reinforcement.

Teachers do not need to follow blindly textbooks or any reading materials. An experienced teacher must know what to choose or discard in a textbook. He recombines,

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20) Renate A. Shulz, "Literature and Readability: Brigding the Gap in Foreign Language Reading" *Modern Language Journal,* 65 (Spring 1981), p. 45.

21) Trimmer Hairston *The Riverside Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981).

22) Robert B. Kaplan, *The Anatomy of Rhetoric: Prolegomena to a Functional Theory of Rhetoric.* (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Center for curriculum Development, 1972), p. 64. For example :

(Oriental)

and supplements the materials from the textbook if necessary.[23]

Some words and sentence patterns are especially difficult to understand. Teachers have to reinforce and discuss about specific syntactic structures which caused specific difficulty in the reading comprehension component. When teaching long complex sentences, teachers may cut them into shorter and lighter segments for better understanding.

In order to save class time, students are told to do their reading at home and be ready to answer the questions. Comprehenision check about what meaning is being conveyed should be needed. Sequential question in narrative passage, details in descriptive passage and feelings in affective passage will be helpful for the reading comprehension.[24]

We finally have to remember the fact that a skilled reader is practiced to grasp larger meaning rather than every detail. In fact, the transition from learning to read to reading to learn is one of the major problems in foreign language pedagogy. When he considers "reading" a foreign language, Renate A. Schulz offers Bruce A. Beatie's definition which calls reading "the ability to deduce the core meaning of a sentence without necessarily knowing the specific meaning of each word." This definition also emphasized "extensive reading" or reading for global comprehension, rather than "intensive reading," where the students are expected to know or translate each word and grammatical sturcture.[25]

In U. S. A., just as Writing Laboratory on campus helps students improve writing skill, Reading Laboratory provides active services to help the students (1) improve reading speed and (2) grasp the key sentence in a paragraph. There are provided various controlled reading materials for various reading levels of students.

This kind of Reading Laboratory system will be to the point and useful for practical teaching in Korea, too.

For practical teaching it may be the best possible way for foreign language learning if we find the trouble spots and get rid of them effectively. As a first step, this paper lists Problems or suggestions related with (1) Vocabulary, (2) Pronunciation and (3) Structure.

1. Vocabulary

Words are the symbols of thought and without them we are handicapped. We can not effectively communicate to others our ideas and personality nor exert the influence necessary to attain our goals.

Just as in First-Language Reading Studies (by F.B. Davis, Anna Fisher Kruse, Jeanne Chall and W. Loban), two studies in Second-Language Reading (by Carlos A. Yurio and June K. Phillips) also point to the importance of vocabulary in the reading process.[26]

As a result, vocabulary building should be one of the most important factors in en-

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23) Rivers, p. 372.
24)　Knapp, p. 353.
25) Shulz, p. 43.
26) Adams, p. 155.

hancing foreign language reading skill.

Words entering the students' reading world are so varied and so many and entirely individual that only a systematic study of roots, prefixes, and suffixes and the presentation of etymological stories will be recommended to capture and retain the interest of students. Words should also be memorized in the context for the right use and for longer memory.

Vocabulary **22000** by Harold Levine or *Advanced English Vocabulary* by Helen Barnard is recommended for college level students.

2. Pronunciation

Sound is the basic element of a language and correct pronunciation is thought to be very important in foreign language learning. Foreign students have to learn the patterns of intonation and of rhythm in English as well as the pronunciation of each individual word. We Koreans should be careful of the fact that English has stress-timed rhythm quite different from syllable-timed rhythm of our language.

This paper indicates some common mistakes in pronunciation of Korean students that they meet through their textbooks.[27]

1) Middle School

(1-1)	(1-2)	(2-1)	(2-2)	(3-1)	(3-2)
early		aunt	autumn	accident	behalf
speak		chalk	capital	captain	bicycle
sports	half	cousin	foreigner	certain	calendar
student	knock	honor	knife	climate	gentleman
study	policeman	knee	mountain	climb	gingerbread
this	singer	listen	shepherd	iron	guard
thank		sky	snowman	ought	handsome
			southern	recital	message
				restaurant	neighbor
					signature

2) High School

(I)	(II)
accurate	awe
bargain	bother
comb	calf
flood	colonel
leisure	dawn

27) Text: *Middle School English.* 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2, 3-1, 3-2, Language Research Center, Seoul National University, 1981. *High School English* I,II by Lee Maengsung and Whang Juckryoon.

postman	debt
souvenir	fault
stock	inexhaustible
surface	learned
	monarch
	nausea
	owl
	phoenix
	Renaissance
	southerly

3) Breath group

Korean students tend to make mistakes in breath group, mainly because of their idiom memorizing process. For example, they usually memorize as "be interested in", "be surprised at" or the like. Accordingly they often make their breath group as follows:

(a) I am interested in/ music. (x)

(b) He was suprised at/ the news. (x)·

They should be as follows:

(a) I am interested/ in music. (o)

(b) He was surprised/ at the news. (o)

3. Structure

The structure of English language is so much different from that of Korean language that Korean students often meet difficulties and are confused in understanding.

John Dawkins enumerates the following difficult syntax that readers are most likely to have trouble in understanding:

1) Sentences using verb markers (modals), especially meanings of should, may, must have, might have been.

2) Varied meanings of inflected forms (present and past participles). When we used to describe a noun, these "ing" and "ed" or "en" endings have very different meanings. For example, the meaning of a "killing" wolf is very different from that of a "killed" wolf.

3) Noun phrases can give a great deal of trouble. For example, in the sectence that: "That the dog slipped his leash is no cause for concern.," using the expletive "there" as the subject helps make it more readable: "There is no cause for concern that the dog slipped his leash."[28] John Dawkins' opinion is on the right track and useful for practical teaching.

In addition, it requires us the secondary tactic to define the process when its grammatical structure contradicts the semantic structure.[29] For example, in the sentence that

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28) See Grayce A. Ransom, *Preparing to Teach Reading* (Boston: Little, Brown 1978), p. 310.
29) Joseph M. Williams, "Defining Complexity", *College English*, vol. 40. No. 6 (Feb. 1979), p. 601.

"John is easy to please.," John is not the agent of "please" but its goal: some unspecified person pleases him. And what is easy is not John but the phrase "to please John". So it means that to please John is easy. It requires us to transform its remote structure one more time. However, in the sentence "John is eager to please.," John is the agent of both "eager" and "please". The grammatical structure corresponds to semantic structure. Some more examples are as follows:

"Christine is easy to influence."
"The Russian is hard to understand."
"Ann is fun to visit."

Moreover, we are often confused who is who and which one is which when we meet some sentences like the followings:

"Mike asked Sam to lend him his car."
"Which picture shows the boy asking the girl what shoes to wear?"[30]

When students read the sentance, "Mike asked Sam to lend him his car.," some students are not sure whether Mike wanted to borrow Sam's car or Sam wanted to borrow Mike's car. In the sentence, "which picture shows the boy asking the girl what shoes to wear.," some students are puzzled whether the boy will wear the shoes or the girl will wear the shoes.

In teaching such confusing sentences, it will help students if the teacher clarifies the subject and object of each sentence and attempts to make different versions of narrotion. For example, the teacher presents the sentence: "Mike asked Sam, 'Would you lend me your car?'"

V. Conclusion

Jarvis states, "Reading may well be the most complex of all human skills which are learned in institutionalized education."[31] In fact, we can not find any magic formulas, any short cuts to the goal of efficient reading. Rather we must remember that any magic formulas for dramatic changes in students' reading skill can not be expected in near future.

Patient and steady effort is the most valuable factor in educational researches. Closely coordinated programs for developing skills are urgently needed in our reality. Brave experiments for developing reading skill should be encouraged. Close attention to the

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30) Alison d'Anglejan and G. Richard Tucker, "The Acquisition of Complex English Structures by Adult Learners," *Language Learning*, Vol. 25 No. 2 (1974~75), pp. 294~295.
31) See Robinett, p. 364.

recent researches in theories and pedagogies in this field both in our country and in foreign countries is necessary to accelerate present effort in our country.

The problem is how we can be conscientious master teachers who can breathe life into any material we are dealing with. The other problem is how students can get good learners' attitude.[32]

VI. Suggestions

1. Teachers should try to be positive and affirmative in their efforts for teaching innovations.
2. Students should admit their present state in foreign language learning, and they should try to approach the target language with an open attitude.
3. Well-trained native speakers working as faculty members will be of great help both for the teachers and the students.
4. Seminars on improving curriculum are recommended.
5. Well-selected supplementary readers will be of great help for the students.
6. Efforts to establish good theories for reading skill and experiments to ascertain their effectiveness are needed.
7. Attentions should be paid to the difficulties students feel in their reading and these difficulties should be analized to define their cause and remedies.

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32) See H.H. Stern, "What Can We Learn from the Good Language Learner?"in *Readings on E.S.L.* pp.54~71.

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