|  |
| --- |
| 1- Approaches to Teaching Reading  |

Based on "Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading"
Edited by Carrell, Devine, & Eskey (1988) patient
(All the pages referred to are in this book)

"The ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills, if not more important." (Eskey 1970) (p. 1)

Reading research is just a little more than a hundred years old. Serious attempts at building explicit models of the reading process have a history of a little more than forty years. (Samuels & Kamil, p. 22)

That reading is not a passive, but rather an active, and in fact an interactive, process has been recognized for some time in native language reading but it is only recently that second/foreign language reading has been viewed as an active rather than a passive process.
Early working second language reading assumed a rather passive, bottom-up, view of second language reading. It was viewed primarily as a decoding process of reconstructing the author's intended meaning via recognizing the printed letters and words, and building up a meaning for a text from the smallest textual units at the bottom (letters and words) to larger units at the top (phrases, clauses, links). Problems of SL reading and [reading comprehension](http://www.nadasisland.com/reading/) were viewed as being essentially decoding problems, deriving meaning from [print](http://www.nadasisland.com/reading/).

In the early seventies, Goodman's psycholinguistic model of reading (later named the top-down or concept-driven model) began to have an impact on views of second language reading. In this model the reader is active, makes predictions, processes information, and reconstruct a message encoded by a writer.

The top-down processing perspective into SL reading had a profound impact on the field, to an extent that it was viewed as a substitute for the bottom-up perspective, rather than its complement.

However, as schema theory research has attempted to make clear, efficient and effective reading (in L1 and L2) requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively => Interactive model (Rumelhart 1977). Both top-down and bottom-up processes, functioning interactively, are necessary to an adequate understanding of second language reading and reading comprehension. (Carrell, 1988- pp. 1-4)

A- The Top Down (Concept-Driven) Approach (Knowledge/background/schemata-based)- (Goodman, Smith)
(Overreliance on top-down or knowledge-based processing => schema interference)

The "top down" approach emphasizes readers bringing meaning to text based on their experiential background and interpreting text based on their prior knowledge (whole language).
Top = higher order mental concepts such as the knowledge and expectations of the reader.
Bottom = the physical text on the page.
<=> The top-down model of reading focuses on what the readers bring to the process (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1971,1982). The readers sample the text for information and contrast it with their world knowledge, helping to make sense of what is written. The focus here is on the readers as they interact with the text.

\*\* This model starts with the hypotheses and predictions then attempts to verify them by working down to the printed stimuli. This view of reading was called the psycholinguistic guessing game.

\*\* According to Goodman, readers employ 5 processes in reading: (p. 16)
1- Recognition-initiation
2- Prediction
3- Confirmation
4- Correction
5- Termination

Insights that are foundational to this top-down model: (pp. 12-14)
1- Language, reading included, must be seen in its social context.
2- Competence must be separated from Performance:
Competence = what readers are capable of doing. It results in the reader's control of and flexibility in using the reading process
Performance = what we observe them to do. It is the observable result of the competence.
=> Researchers would be committing a serious error if they equated what readers do with what they are capable of doing.
3- Language must be studied in process.
4- Language must be studied in its human context.

Impact of Goodman's model: (pp. 3, 23, 240)
This model which has recently been characterized as a concept-driven, top-down pattern had the greatest impact on conceptions about native and second language reading instruction: it made the reader an active participant in the reading process => From earlier views of SL reading as a passive linguistic decoding process to more contemporary views of SL reading as an active predictive process.

Problems: (Stanovich, 1980)
1- For many texts, the reader has little knowledge of the topic and cannot generate predictions.
2- Even if a skilled reader can generate predictions, this would take much longer than it would to recognize the words.

Limitations of top-down models: (Eskey, 1988)
They tend to emphasize higher level skills as the prediction of meaning by means of context clues or background knowledge at the expense of lower skills like the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms.
In making the perfectly valid point that fluent reading is primarily a cognitive process, they tend to deemphasize the perceptual and decoding dimensions of that process.
This model is good for the skillful, fluent reader for whom perception and decoding have become automatic, not for the less proficient, developing reader.
Good reading is a more language-structured affair than the guessing-game metaphor seems to imply.

According to Weber (1984), a top-down model of reading is essentially a model of the fluent reader and does not account for all the needs of students who are acquiring reading skills.

Top-Down Applications: (Eskey & Grabe, pp. 229-231)
The content and quantity of texts that second language students are asked to read may be the most important determinants of whether, and to what degree, such students develop top-down reading skills.
The materials should be interesting for the students; it should be assigned in substantial amounts over considerable periods of time.
Two approaches:
- The reading lab approach: students make their own choices of reading material from among a wide selection of appropriate texts. This approach allows each student to progress at his own rate, to develop schemata in some area of interest, and to compile a personal record of reading. Disadvantage: it limits group work and isolates reading from other parts of the curriculum.
- The content-centered approach: the teacher provides for interesting reading in sufficient quantity; a lot of information on a subject for the class as a whole to explore at some depth.
        - pre- and postreading work (introductory lectures, films, discussions, oral/written presentations.
        - student interest is stimulated
        - natural blending of skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
        - the students collectively pursue a common goal
        - reading is no longer isolated
        - reading is no longer taught as an end in itself but as a means to an end
        Disadvantage: loss of individual choice.

These 2 approaches may be combined within a single program.

Search this Site with Google:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Google |  |
|   |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Web | www.nadasisland.com |

 |

B- The Bottom Up (Serial) Approach
(Text-based) (LaBerge & Samuels, MacWorth)
(Overreliance on bottom-up or text-based processing => text-boundedness)

The "bottom up" approach stipulates that the meaning of any text must be "decoded" by the reader and that students are "reading" when they can "sound out" words on a page. (Phonics)
<=> It emphasizes the ability to de-code or put into sound what is seen in a text. It ignores helping emerging readers to recognize what they, as readers, bring to the information on the page.
\*\* This model starts with the printed stimuli and works its way up to the higher level stages. The sequence of processing proceeds from the incoming data to higher level encodings.
Problems: (Stanovich, 1980)
- This model has a tendency to depict the information flow in a series of discrete stages, with each stage transforming the input and then passing the recorded information on to the next higher stage.
- An important shortcoming of this model is the fact that it is difficult to account for sentence-context effects and the role of prior knowledge of text topic as facilitating variables in word recognition and comprehension (because of lack of feedback).

- According to Eskey (1973), the decoding model is inadequate because it underestimates the contribution of the reader who makes predictions and processes information. It fails to recognize that students utilize their expectations about the text, based on their knowledge of language and how it works. (p. 3)

Bottom-Up Applications: (Eskey & Grabe, pp. 231-236)
Teaching key vocabulary items and, in the area of grammar, teaching various cohesive devices.
Two areas of concern:
- Simply knowing the meanings of some set number of words does not ensure that a reader will be able, while reading, to process those words both rapidly and accurately. => teachers must help students develop identification skills (exercises for rapid recognition: word recognition and phrase identification + extensive reading over time).
- Rate building: good readers read fast; they do not, like many SL readers, try to read word by word, which destroys their chances of comprehending very much of the text. => The major bottom-up skill that readers of second language must acquire is the skill of reading fast. (paced and timed reading exercises: formal rate-building work should be limited to a few minutes per class). Major increases in reading rate can only follow from extensive reading in the language over time.

    Footnote: If a text contains too many difficult words, no strategy (top down or bottom up) can make such a text accessible to the reader. However, second language readers do of course encounter some unknown words in most texts. This is the best means of increasing their control of English vocabulary. SL readers, however, are frequently panicked by unknown words, so they stop reading to look them up in dictionaries, thereby interrupting the normal reading process. In response to this problem, many SL texts recommend various strategies for guessing the meaning of unknown words from context, by using semantic and syntactic clues or even morphological analysis.
In order to develop good reading habits, the best strategy for dealing with an unknown word may well be to keep reading until the meaning of that word begins to make itself plain in relation to the larger context provided.

Central to all these bottom-up concerns is the concept of automaticity (LaBerge & Samuels 1974). Good readers process language in the written form of written text without thinking consciously about it, and good SL readers must learn to do so. It is only this kind of automatic processing which allows the good reader to think instead about the larger meaning of the discourse, which allows for global reading with true comprehension.

Bottom-Up Implications for the SL Classroom: (Carrell p. 240-244)
- Grammatical skills: cohesive devices are very important.
- Vocabulary development:
    Vocabulary development and word recognition have long been recognized as crucial to successful bottom-up decoding skills. However, schema theory has shed new light on the complex nature of the interrelationship of schemata, context, and vocabulary knowledge. UNLIKE traditional views of vocabulary, current thinking converges on the notion that a given word does not have a fixed meaning, but rather a variety of meanings that interact with context and background knowledge.
Knowledge of individual word meanings is strongly associated with conceptual knowledge -- that is, learning vocabulary is also learning the conceptual knowledge associated with the word. On the one hand, an important part of teaching background knowledge is teaching the vocabulary related to it and, conversely, teaching vocabulary may mean teaching new concepts, new knowledge. Knowledge of vocabulary entails knowledge of the schemata in which a concept participates, knowledge of the networks in which that word participates, as well as any associated words and concepts (=> structural analysis).

Teachers must become aware of the cross-cultural differences in vocabulary and how meaning may be represented differently in the lexicons of various languages.

Several characteristics seem to distinguish effective from ineffective teaching programs. Preteaching vocabulary in order to increase learning from text will be more successful
- if the words to be taught are key words in the target passages
- if the words are taught in semantically and topically related sets so that word meanings and background knowledge improve concurrently
- if the words are taught and learned thoroughly
- if both definitional and contextual information are involved
- if students engage in deeper processing of word meanings
- if only a few words are taught per lesson and per week.

Research specific to SL reading has shown that merely presenting a list of new or unfamiliar vocabulary items to be encountered in a text, even with definitions appropriate to their use in that text, does not guarantee the learning of the word or the concept behind the word, or of improved reading comprehension on the text passage (Hudson 1982).

To be effective, an extensive and long-term vocabulary development program accompanying a parallel schemata or background-knowledge-development program is probably called for. Instead of preteaching vocabulary for single reading passages, teachers should teach vocabulary and background knowledge concurrently for sets of passages to be read at some later time.
Every SL curriculum should have a general program of parallel concept/background knowledge development and vocabulary development.

C- The Interactive Approach (Rumelhart, Stanovich, Eskey)

For those reading theorists who recognized the importance of both the text and the reader in the reading process, an amalgamation of the two emerged the interactive approach. Reading here is the process of combining textual information with the information the reader brings to a text.
The interactive model (Rumelhart 1977; Stanovich 1980) stresses both what is on the written page and what a reader brings to it using both top-down and bottom-up skills. It views reading is the interaction between reader and text.
The overreliance on either mode of processing to the neglect of the other mode has been found to cause reading difficulties for SL learners (Carrell 1988, p. 239)
The interactive models of reading assume that skills at all levels are interactively available to process and interpret the text (Grabe 1988).
In this model, good readers are both good decoders and good interpreters of text, their decoding skills becoming more automatic but no less important as their reading skill develops (Eskey 1988).

According to Rumelhart's interactive model:
1- linear models which pass information only in one direction and which do not permit the information contained in a higher stage to influence the processing of a lower stage contain a serious deficiency. Hence the need for an interactive model which permits the information contained in a higher stage of processing to influence the analysis that occurs at a lower stage.
2- when an error in word recognition is made, the word substitution will maintain the same part of speech as the word for which it was substituted, which will make it difficult for the reader to understand. (orthographic knowledge)
3- semantic knowledge influences word perception. (semantic knowledge)
4- perception of syntax for a given word depends upon the context in which the word is embedded. (syntactic knowledge)
5- our interpretation of what we read depends upon the context in which a text segment is embedded. (lexical knowledge)

All the aforementioned knowledge sources provide input simultaneously. These sources need to communicate and interact with each other, and the higher-order stages should be able to influence the processing of lower-order stages.

According to Stanovich's interactive-compensatory model:
\* Top-down processing may be easier for the poor reader who may be slow at word recognition but has knowledge of the text topic.
\* Bottom-up processing may be easier for the reader who is skilled at word recognition but does not know much about the text topic.
=> Stanovich's model states, then, that any stage may communicate with any other and any reader may rely on better developed knowledge sources when other sources are temporarily weak.

To properly achieve fluency and accuracy, developing readers must work at perfecting both their bottom-up recognition skills and their top-down interpretation strategies. Good reading (that is fluent and accurate reading) can result only from a constant interaction between these processes.
=> Fluent reading entails both skillful decoding and relating information to prior knowledge (Eskey, 1988).

<=> Reading is a bi-directional process that concerns both

the Reader & the Text.

The level of reader comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader variables (interest level in the text, purpose for reading the text, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process, and level of
willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables (text type, structure, syntax, and vocabulary) (Hosenfeld, 1979).

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/fieldnotes/vol10/f02abrah.htm>

According to Joanne Devine (1988), one thing needs to be taken into consideration: readers' internalized models of the reading process are extremely important. There is convincing evidence that readers do indeed have internalized models of the reading process that they bring to bear when they read.
Sound- or word-centered readers, those who equated good reading with sound identification or good pronunciation focused their attention on the graphic information in the text and failed to understand or recall what they had read.
Meaning-centered readers demonstrated good to excellent recall and comprehension of text.
=> a reader's theoretical orientations toward reading may determine the degree to which low proficiency in the language restricts second language reading ability.
=> the models that readers hold may be of critical importance in allowing them to strike a successful balance between bottom-up and top-down processing necessary for the interpretation of a text.

ESL researchers should be interested in interactive models for several reasons: (p. 59)
1- several studies note that linguistic deficiencies are inhibiting factors in reading (Clarke, 1979; Singer, 1981; Carrell, 1988).
2- there is a need for extensive vocabulary for reading (Alderson and Urquhart, 1984; Singer, 1981)
3- there is a need to account for poor readers who do guess extensively.
4- good readers are not good simply because they are better predictors, or make better use of context.

Implications of interactive models for ESL reading: (Grabe p. 63)
1- Higher level processing abilities play a significant role in reading.
2- Many lower-level processing skills are basic to good reading. => methods of instruction for rapid visual recognition, for extensive vocabulary development, and for syntactic pattern recognition should become major pedagogical concerns.
Suggestions for recognition and vocabulary instruction can be found in Stoller (1984, 1986), McKeown et al. (1985), and Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985).
3- There is a need for a massive receptive vocabulary that is rapidly, accurately, and automatically accessed -- a fact that may be the greatest single impediment to fluent reading by ESL students.
4- Students may overcompensate (overrely on text or on context) for a lack of relevant schemata; Simple analyses of student difficulties which explain all problems as word-boundedness, or as unwillingness to guess or take chances, are not justified by the range of empirical studies in the literature.
5- The development of reading abilities may be viewed more profitably if seen in terms of stages of skills development.

Some implications of the interactive model of reading for ESL: (Eskey & Grabe, p. 225)
- contextual interpretation of lexical items is only a part of the vocabulary skills needed for fluent reading, and may actually interfere if a student overrelies on this strategy (Stanovich 1980).
- certain kinds of "phonics" exercises may be helpful to students (Beck 1981).
- basic recognition exercises to improve speed and accuracy of perception may constitute an important component of an effective second language reading program (Stoller 1984).

Some general implications for the teaching of second language reading: (Eskey & Grabe, p. 227)
1- Some time must be devoted in the reading class to bottom-up concerns such as the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms. Even students who have developed strong top-down skills in their native languages may not be able to transfer these higher-level skills to a SL context until they have developed a stronger bottom-up foundation of basic identification skills.
2- Some time must also be devoted in the reading class to top-down concerns such as
        - reading for global meaning (as opposed to mere decoding),
        - developing a willingness to take chances
        - developing appropriate schemata for the proper interpretation of texts.
Reading of any kind of text must be treated as real reading, that is, reading for meaning. No student should ever be forced or encouraged to limit him/herself to decoding skills.

In short, for second language readers, especially, both top-down and bottom-up skills and strategies must be developed conjointly since both contribute directly to the successful comprehension of text.

Short Circuit Hypothesis:

Goodman, p. 16:
Any reading that does not end with meaning is a short circuit. In general, readers short circuit when
- they cannot get meaning or lose the structure;
- they use non-productive reading strategies;
- they are not permitted to terminate non-productive reading.
List of short circuits:
- letter naming
- recoding
- syntactic nonsense
- partial structures

Clarke p. 120:
The results of some studies conducted suggest that the role of language proficiency may be greater than has previously been assumed: limited control over the language "short circuits" the good reader's system causing him/her to revert to poor reader strategies when confronted with a difficult task in the second language. => This suggests that it may be inaccurate to speak of "good readers" and "poor readers," but of good or poor reading behaviors which characterize most readers at different times. When one is confronted with difficult reading, one is likely to revert to poor reading behaviors.
Some of the implications of the "short circuit hypothesis" for ESL reading teachers:
1- It would seem justifiable to develop reading programs that are characteristic of good readers.
    Among the behaviors that seem to be most productive are:
        - concentrating on passage-level semantic cues
        - formulating hypotheses about the text before reading, then reading to confirm,
           refine or reject those hypotheses
        - deemphasizing graphophonic and syntactic accuracy => developing a tolerance for inexactness,
           a willingness to take chances and make mistakes.
2- The results of these studies stress the importance of language skills for effective reading. This finding supports the activities of "traditional" teachers (Lado, 1964; Finochiaro, 1974) whose approach to teaching reading emphasized grammar lessons and vocabulary instruction; it also supports the recent attempts to integrate reading skills and language development (Eskey, 1973; Baudoin et al, 1977; Silberstein, 1977).
=> ESL teachers need to emphasize the need for guessing and taking chances in addition to helping their students acquire fundamental language skills that would facilitate the process of reading. They should emphasize both the psycho and the linguistic.

The Importance of Vocabulary (Eskey & Grabe, p. 226)
All models of reading recognize the importance of vocabulary, but the interactive model goes further. Not only is a large vocabulary important, it is a prerequisite to fluent reading skills.
Since automatic word recognition is more important to fluent processing of text than context clues as a first strategy, large-scale development of recognition vocabulary is crucial (Perfetti 1985).
The importance of vocabulary is not only related to the number of words, but also to the number of times that these words are encountered and retrieved in texts.

Conclusion (Eskey & Grabe, pp. 228-229)
We must make a clear distinction between the building up of particular skills and strategies, or of relevant knowledge, and reading itself. Both top-down and bottom-up skills can, in the long run, only be developed by extensive reading over time. Classroom work can point the way but cannot substitute for the act itself: people learn to read by reading, not by doing exercises.
What is needed is:
- extensive reading
- appropriate materials (relevant to students' needs and interests)
- sound teacher judgment and approach (the teacher will determine how much and what his/her students read; the teacher must create the world of reading in class; the teacher must stimulate interest in reading; the teacher must project his/her enthusiasm for books; the teacher must help students to see that reading can be of real value to them; the teacher must choose, edit, modify or create materials for students; the teacher must introduce, and provide practice in, useful reading strategies for coping with texts in an unfamiliar language; the teacher must provide students with feedback as needed).

Language Competence & L2 Reading Proficiency (Devine 1988, pp. 266-268)
The general findings of research -- that low reading achievement in a SL is significantly related to low general proficiency in that language and that readers with low L2 language proficiency are especially handicapped in their ability to utilize contextual constraints and cohesive devices when reading in the target language -- have led some researchers to suggest that there is a threshold of linguistic competence necessary for successful L2 reading ("linguistic ceiling" according to Clarke 1980). => L2 readers will not be able to read effectively until they develop some proficiency in the target language (TL).
Grabe (1986) contends that successful L2 reading depends upon the procession of a "critical mass of knowledge" : linguistic knowledge (automatic processing of syntactic patterns and vocabulary) + background knowledge + schematic knowledge (relevant formal and content schemata).

Text-Boundedness & Schema Interference (Carrell, 1988- pp.101-113)

Text-Boundedness = overreliance on text-based or bottom-up processing.
Schema Interference = overreliance on knowledge-based or top-down processing.

What causes such unidirectional biases in text processing, especially in reading in a second language?
Some causes can be hypothesized:
1- Schema availability
2- Schema activation
3- Skill deficiencies (reading skill deficiencies as well as linguistic deficiencies)
4- Misconceptions about reading
5- Individual differences in cognitive styles.