ENGAGED READING: MOVING FROM THEORY TO IMPLICATION FOR L2 LEARNERS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History *Received: June 2022* *Revised: June 2022* *Published: July 2022* *Keywords* *Engaged reading;* *Implementation;* *Reading interest;* *Reading motivation;* *Instruction strategy;*	*There have been a good number of research studies on 'engaged reading' in general but not much literature is known about the 'engaged reading' that makes connections between theory and practice with special reference to ESL/EFL teachers. Hence, this paper aims to examine the efficacy of engaged reading and shows how it can be facilitated through mass awareness among the ESL or EFL teachers. Teachers' adequate knowledge and perception about engaged reading can only ensure the implementation of it as a means of learning by owning the language thus creating a real attachment to it. This article uses a qualitative research method that exclusively uses the relevant secondary references/works available on the topic. The literature revealed that attitudes and strategy instruction of teachers in the classroom play a significant role in terms of increasing the learners' motivation for reading with interest and their reading engagement for better academic achievement. The paper finally demonstrates how teachers with the best of their potential and concentration can immensely contribute to the growth of a reader to be an engaged reader.*

INTRODUCTION

In an EFL or ESL teaching/learning context, most of the teachers and learners teach/learn the language (English) as only an academic subject like all other subjects and tend to ignore the basic purpose of teaching/learning a language - to be able to communicate. As a result, most learners lose the intrinsic motivational spirit to learn the language and more precisely, lose the interest for reading in that language. (O'Brien, Beach & Scharber, 2007). So, when an EFL or ESL reader has to interact with more challenging and complicated texts and tasks which are largely uninteresting, those texts and tasks often seem constricting and tenuous for the learners. In addition, due to the lack of linguistic, cultural, content and strategic knowledge, the learners fail to comprehend the full meaning of the text, and in most cases, remain passive in social interaction about their reading which could have led them to engagement. Furthermore, the assessment-based learning criteria do not allow them to be guided only by their interests; instead, they force them to focus only on exam grades. Consequently, in such a learning context, they do not feel encouraged to participate in academic discussions either with the peers or with the more capable others (interlocutors) like teachers, parents, seniors in the academic arena, family or society regarding their reading.

This article thus attempts to conceptualize 'reading' and 'engaged reading' with special reference to the relation between L1 and L2 reading. While providing the definition and dimensions of engaged reading, we have tried to review the major components of engaged reading and hence, explore its strategies that are suitable both in classrooms and out of classrooms. This article also aims to illustrate some related theories in order to validate the necessity of engaged reading for making greater achievements in and creating attachment to the language. This article finally sheds some light on the teachers' responsibility, focusing on why and how to help English language learners (ELLs) attain this quality (reading with engagement) which ultimately would help the ELLs to make connections with the language they study and the language they use as a means of study.

RESEARCH METHOD

Using the qualitative research method, this review article uses already available materials and looks for dominant themes or recurring ideas and tries to find new research directions. The primary objective of qualitative research is to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings from the existing literature (Patton, 2002). Thus, this research reinforces support for prevalent theories, adds knowledge to current literature on this research topic and provides an excellent overview of the current literature on the topic.

Based on the secondary sources of data and information, this study incorporates relevant articles and books to re-analyze, interpret, or review the available data in this area. As this is a small-scale study, all the materials available on the subject of the present research are not included. However, we attempt to find such literature that fits the topic and follows a particular set of inclusion and exclusion criteria while selecting the research materials for review. Although we found that studies on 'Engaged Reading' with special reference to L2 are scarce at any level of education, the review for this paper focused only on the studies at university level. For studying the theoretical background of relevant theories and research, peer-reviewed journal articles and books, which got published during the last couple of decades, were reviewed.

This paper also used University library databases, Google Scholar, and online peer-reviewed journals as data sources. To gather data, this study searched articles with keywords such as 'Engaged Reading, 'theories connected to Engaged Reading', 'Implementation of Engaged Reading', and 'teachers' and students' perceptions of it'. To find additional supporting information for the review purpose, a reference list of selected articles- both conceptual and empirical was meticulously chosen for dealing with the research topic. All findings and relevant information were recorded with specific reference and then a general synthesis of the arguments was drawn to look for coherence among concepts or themes.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the field of ELT, reading as a construct refers to the ability to read the language efficiently, and more importantly effectively for academic purposes in order to extract, or build meaning from a text. In other words, it is said to be the interaction process between a reader and a text. Precisely this ability includes recognizing words rapidly and efficiently by developing and using large vocabulary, deriving meaning from sentences, deploying strategies to unfold the cognitive skills to interpret meaning in relation to schema and getting them aligned with the goals and purposes of reading (Grabe,2009). Kern (2000) has depicted it beautifully by saying that reading is not only an act of absorbing information but also a communicative act that engages in making discourse from a text. Reading has got both individualistic and social nature where it deploys the strategies, skills, and knowledge of the individuals to interpret the meaning of the text being read within specific cultural and historical contexts (Smagorinsky, 2001). Thus, reading is partially a cultural activity held in a

cultural context based on what Elley (1992) terms as 'the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/ or valued by the individual'.

Relation between L1 and L2 Reading

Reading in L2 is more complicated than that in L1 as "it involves not only the ability to read but also the knowledge of and the ability to use the second or foreign language" (Alderson, Haapakangas, Huhta, Nieminen, and Ullakonoja, 2015). Even though the underlying cognitive processes related to L1 and L2 reading are of the same nature and both cognitive and linguistic component skills for L1 and L2 reading abilities manifest sheer similarities, linguistic resources or issues like poor foundations of L2 linguistic knowledge and less reading exposure in the L2, distinct social and cultural assumptions, different content schema (how the world works) and separate cognitive processes for two different language systems make the L2 reading difficult to its readers. For the particular aspect of L2 reading where the cultural components remain absent or ignored in the reading text for the L2 readers, Jimenez et.al., (1999) raised a big question whether it would be appropriate to adopt the L1 literacy (reading) instructions in the realm of L2 reading. L2 reading ability is considered a dual language processing system which integrates L1 language resources too. It is claimed that major differences between the L1 and L2 reading center around three aspects: linguistic and processing differences, educational and developmental differences, and institutional and sociocultural differences (Grabe, 2009).

What is Engaged Reading?

The concept of engaged reading as a construct is new in the domain of reading. It is an effective procedure involving or actuating motivation, building conceptual knowledge, and utilizing cognitive strategy while reading (Guthrie & Wigfield,2000) in which conceptual knowledge is gained constantly through motivation and cognitive strategies. A reader engaged in a certain task refers to the state of "flow" that makes him totally absorbed – mentally, emotionally and even physically in the process which also can alternatively be described as consistent commitment to creating comprehension of what he/she reads (Kelly & Grace,2009). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also depicted engagement as being in a zone when a reader loses track of time and place to accomplish a task with intense attention. Therefore, it can be claimed that engagement mediates learning and achievement. Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi (2009) have depicted 'engaged reading' as composed of three dimensions-interest, enjoyment & concentration which are so intricately related to each other that without any of them, engagement would not be established.

Lutz, Guthrie & Davis (2006) have illustrated 'engagement' as a multidimensional construct both at community and classroom level, diversified in emotional, behavioral, cognitive and social engagements. Engagement has got an essentially dynamic quality which can be oscillating over time even within a single lesson, a learner, and an interaction, though initially a reader might be engaged but the engagement may wane overtime or the reverse happens due to the reader's attributes (i.e., comprehension skills), text properties (i.e., text type, topic), reading goals, and classroom situations (i.e., teacher instructions, learner autonomy). Engagement at its highest level leads the reader to enjoy reading through intrinsic motivation and therefore, a more engaged reader is often found demonstrating the higher level of achievement than the less engaged reader.

'Engaged reading' is not only about the interactions held among the students or students with other people at school, home or in the society but also between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1983). It elicits awareness with and for the characters of the text (Ivey & Johnston,2013). McCarthy, Hoffman, & Galda (1999) also refer to engagement as a social process and say that "reading does not occur just within a child's head, but rather through interactions with particular texts and other people" (p.60) which is similar to the view of

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) when they define engaged readers as "socially interactive while reading".

Characteristics of an Engaged Reader

In light of the above discussion regarding 'engaged reading', an engaged reader can be identified as motivated, knowledgeable, and socially interactive who tend to value learning highly as it makes them more meditative (reflective) and self- reliant in their reading tasks. Engaged readers must enjoy reading the text and have strong desire and curiosity to earn knowledge (Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, & Rice, 1996). In addition, reading based tasks and activities always let the readers get engaged. In this regard, it is contended that the complexity of tasks (highly challenging tasks) ensures and increases engagement gains and comprehension even for low-capacity students. Finally, engaged readers also share their reading comprehension and experience in a social manner (Guthrie, McGough et. al., 1996).

Major Factors Related to Engaged Reading
Motivation

Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie (2000) assert that cognition, motivation, and social interaction are closely associated to establish engagement in reading. Among these three components, motivation has been the most focused area of research studies to discover different facets of it. Guthrie (2011) defines motivation as "the values, the beliefs, and behaviors surrounding reading", while engagement is referred to the "behavioral displays of effort, time, and persistence in attaining desired outcomes". Eccles and Wang (2012) posit that motivation promotes engagement by increasing time, effort and amount of reading and thus engagement facilitates achievement. Contrarily, learners with low motivation grow as disengaged readers with regard to effort, attention, and persistence and subsequently show low achievement.

Interest

Though, to many researchers, interest is synonymous to intrinsic motivation, it is essentially different. Being a multidimensional motivational construct (Schraw & Lehman, 2001), interest is a quality that leads a reader to try harder by drawing optimum effort to be involved with a text in order to be a ludic reader, not a coerced reader. Researchers have posited two forms of interest: situational and personal interest, the latter one follows the first one though their being of opposite attributes. Originated by the external stimuli (i.e., initial classroom opening activities), the situational interest, spontaneous in nature, is transient and context dependent. On the other hand, the personal interest, also named as topic interest, is grounded on schema (previous knowledge, exposure, preferences and emotions) and explicated as stable, content specific and less spontaneous in nature (Flowerday et.al.,2004). In a classroom context where a teacher has to 'catch and hold' a learner's interest, the situational interest refers to 'catch' and personal interest refers to 'hold' (Bergin, 1999). Therefore, to create, nourish and nurture this interest and convert it gradually to involvement and engagement. Hidi and Renninger (2006) propounded a four-phase-model including: Phase1:Triggered Situational interest, Phase 2: Maintained Situational interest, Phase 3: Emerging Individual interest, and Phase 4: Well-developed Individual interest.

Parental influences

Family involvement in literacy and more specifically in reading engagement has got substantial importance to the researchers and subsequently is well documented. This influence as explicated by the researchers has concentrated much on the environment at home offering the learner both instrumental and integrative motivation to read even when family members are not avid readers. In the study of Loera et.al., 2011, parental involvement in various motivational activities, like listening children to read, reading to children, allowing the

children to read according to their choice, helping them in the reading process and so on are mentioned. Also, in the collective case study of Martinez (2011), parents and caregivers have been regarded as the most important factor by the learners in their literacy growth which similarly reflects the contribution of the parents in determining reading as a leisure activity or a voluntary activity. Parents' contribution in enhancing the children's interest and motivation to acquire the necessary skills for reading, even to ensure the growth to be engaged readers is found in many researchers' studies regardless of family socioeconomic status, gender and age (Volk,1994). In different contexts around the globe, studies on reading activities at home are found to lay the foundation of readers' achievement, attitude towards reading, interest in classroom reading (Moll & Gonzalez,1994).

Strategies for Engaged Reading

Strategies used in engaged reading are very closely connected to reading motivation. Various goals for reading may set off different types of engagement which again warrant diverse sets of strategies. While reading, for different readers, using suitable strategies is one of the key skills of engaged readers. Allowing and motivating students to raise questions is one of the basic strategies to engage learners in their reading. Visualization or imagery has been considered another important strategy which can bring the text-worlds in the mind of the readers and thus helps them see the text worlds. In order to develop this strategic skill required for engagement, the learners should be given scopes to draw, go through picture books and many other activities (Guthrie and Anderson, 1999). Another engagement strategy could be the literature circles in which learners can participate in conversation or discuss with teachers or peers so that different perspectives can be developed among themselves, and their reading becomes purposeful and reflective. In this way, the learners can be inquisitive enough to question that would lead them to comprehension. Almasi & McKewon (1996) in their findings also showed that readers if shared what they read are more likely to be engaged in reading.

Farnan and Kelly (1993), in order to increase engagement, suggest establishing connections between the readers and the text by ascertaining responses from the learners. This very ascertaining of responses incorporates three components - perception, affect and association through which22 the readers in their reading process observe important, interesting, ambiguous aspects under the shade of perception. Long & Gove (2003) have mentioned a few other strategies to improve engagement and participation of students, like asking open-ended questions, listening to, honoring, and responding to students and encouraging students to read between the lines of the text and inviting students to investigate and find out about explicit or implicit text information to dig a little deeper into the text's meaning. Ultimately these instructional practices being mediated by student engagement affirm student achievement.

Writing as a pre-reading task, when carefully planned to create a platform where the reader's relevant background knowledge and experience can be reflected before reading started, can considerably enhance the understanding of and engagement in the text. By integrating writing with reading, Tierney, et. al., (1995) have proposed a process approach called Reading-Writing Workshop which consists of four elements: a) time to write, b) forums for response, c) conferences with the teacher, and d) mini-lessons. This approach is based on two basic ideas. Firstly, students would choose what to read and decide on what to write and secondly the teachers would remain only as guides and experts rather than judges. Similar to this, there is another approach, incorporating social constructivism and reader response theory, which also has four components: reading, writing, community share and book club. Through different instructional strategies in the classroom like keeping reading journals, writing notebooks, writing reflective comments on the texts, teachers can create scopes after reading tasks to increase engagement in reading. Ivey and Broaddus (2007) have

also mentioned a few other instructional strategies which can increase engagement in reading and writing.The choice of the texts is based on individual academic and cultural complexities, and instead of focusing on low level language skills, the content and concepts of the texts are interesting to the readers.

So, the instructional strategies from the teachers' side to enhance the engagement include (a) conscious understanding of the learning goals, (b) reading topics connected to real life interactions, (c) appealing and engaging texts use for comprehension strategy instruction, (d) promoting learner autonomy, and (e) contributing to learner collaboration (Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa et.al., 2004).

Theories Related To Engaged Reading
Self-Determination Theory

Based on the above discussion, we can refer to a theory regarding reading engagement namely Self-determination Theory, which has been formulated keeping interest as the central theme in it. Deci & Ryan (1985) view that social contexts that satisfy readers' needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (CAR) foster intrinsic motivation which plays the vital role to transform a general reader to an engaged reader- a ludic reader. Intrinsic motivation, again, as a construct, has two powerful components- curiosity and interest where curiosity is believed to be a profound awareness in a specific topic and interest is taken as fascination with that topic. In a classroom context, curiosity when subsequently followed by interest, leads a reader to involvement, and thus with positive reading experience, engages the reader. This concept can be illustrated in the flowchart below

Social contents promoting: CAR→ curiosity→ interest→ involvement→ engaged reader→ ludic reader

Emergent Motivation Theory and Engaged Reading

Though this theory has focused more on learners' engagement with school, a few studies have reflected the pertinence of it with reading engagement, especially regarding the during-reading effect (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) where the central theme is "flow" - a state of high attention, concentration, interest, involvement, and enjoyment. As in reading, people experience flow most frequently, engagement is more likely to occur. Reader's skill, task challenge and personal control are the three conditions based on what the Emergent Motivation theory explains why reading engagement does and does not occur.

According to this theory, in order to experience flow in reading, there needs to be a balanced interaction between challenge and skill (Moneta & Csikzentmihalyi, 1996). With regard to different types of interaction between skills (readers') and challenges (task) due to differing proportions of these two conditions, four possible outcomes are observed: flow, anxiety, boredom or relaxation, and apathy. Firstly, when there is the worst balance between the two (poor skill and low challenge), a reader experiences apathy which causes reduction in motivation, attention, emotional sensitivity, happiness, thought process, interest, and enthusiasm (Paul et.al., 2005). On the other hand, with a high skill and high challenge interaction, the reader exhibits a high level of attention, interest, concentration and satisfaction allowing new things to learn. This high balance is related to flow and subject to a striking balance that ensures increasing competence and engagement. Now, due to an imbalance between skill and challenge anxiety (when poor skill and high challenge interact) and boredom or relaxation (when high skill and poor challenge interact) might be the outcomes wherein both cases engagement appears to be unattainable. Anxiety impedes optimal performance, causes less attention and short-term memory, affects concentration, reduces thinking capacity and ultimately elicits poor reading comprehension (Shany, Wiener, & Feingold, 2011). Similarly, boredom also creates such a negative impact on reading, i.e.

poor motivation, low involvement and gradual waning of skill over time (Larson & Richards, 1991). In relation to students' reading engagement, the skill-challenge relationship has got substantial efficacy either to create flow or optimal states to boredom, anxiety, and apathy in academic settings.

The third condition in the emergent theory of motivation, reader's perception of personal control, in other words the choice of what, when and how to read, is vital in reading engagement (Vieria & Grantham, 2011). Readers display greater engagement when it is felt that they have control over the conditions, i.e., privilege to a wide domain of reading materials, flexibility in choosing the texts, and pleasure reading being the goal, which facilitates active engagement. This control is greatly integrated with anticipation, pleasure, and effort even though the tasks are challenging while anxiety, fear and boredom are the consequences of lack of control (Musher-Eizenman, Nesselroade, & Schmitz, 2002).

Reader-response Theory

As it is claimed that engaged readers are "motivated, knowledgeable and socially interactive", an interactional relationship between the text and the readers are implicitly recognized where the readers are construed as active who connect their experience, knowledge of the textual structure and the world with the text to derive meaning which inculcates inter-textual, interpersonal, and societal understanding of the text. This view regarding reading is supported by Reader-response theorists which basically have shifted the focus from the text as the main determiner of meaning to the reader as an active and the principal participant in the reading process to deduce meaning of the text (Bressler, 1999).

Similar to a reader as depicted by Reader-response theory, an engaged reader, as we think, becomes absorbed to the text and the reading process that he/she tends to be consistently committed to creating comprehension of what he/she reads (Kelly & Grace, 2009). Moreover, Louise Rosenblatt (1983) also posits that in reading, engagement is concentrated not only on apprehension or evaluation of a text but also on experiencing the reading through the experience of the reader. This reading of a text is referred to as 'livewire' between the text and the reader when by being absorbed through memories, sensations, images, and emotional connections to the text, the reader within a social context (zone of proximal development, Vygotsky, 1978) interacts with the 'more capable others' not only to expose his or her comprehension but also to share the interpretation of the text. This kind of engaged reading can be regarded as an aesthetic reading that integrates focus on information, language structure, and evaluative responses.

Though Rosenblatt's Reader-response Theory is considered one of the renowned critical theories related to literature teaching and learning pedagogy, the knowledge and application of this theory is believed to be useful and effective in ESL/EFL classroom context as it promotes aesthetic experience by involving the reader emotionally and intrinsically to the text. By being actively involved in creating meaning, a reader in the Reader-response theory not only gets rid of apathy but also is liberated to be a critical reader which is the pinnacle of the engaged reading process (Tucker, 2000). Gonzalez and Courtland (2009) also hold the similar view based on their empirical study which again is affirmed by Baurain (2007), through his 'multitasking' covering six steps: study, teach, create artistic works, do metacognitive activities, respond and write to increase aesthetic experiences.

CONCLUSION

Though it is generally accepted that engagement in reading facilitates achievement in ESL or EFL reading, there has not been much study on ELLs' engaged reading experiences in or outside classroom contexts. Still, based on the basic concept of engaged reading propounded by Guthrei and Anderson (1999), the prime role of a EFL or ESL teacher is evidently conceived to let the learners attain this quality which is also exquisitely resonated in

the definition of 'engagement' by McMahon (2003) where the teachers are presenters of strategies, facilitators of interests and workers for students to integrate their experiences with reading. Even to sustain the engagement of the learners, the teachers still can play an invaluable role by guiding them through the whole process of understanding and monitoring the progress.

Teachers, well known about the inevitable importance of engagement, should present themselves to the learners as engaged readers and ideal models to motivate them and contrarily should try to avoid the credibility issues by being an appropriate source of book referrals. Time spent in reading printed books and in using computers has got a consistent relationship with pleasure reading and academic achievement. Therefore, especially for the struggling readers at different levels who lack motivation, cognitive competence and confidence and show self-handicapping strategies, the teachers with their best knowledge about engagement strategies can convert them to be avid readers. They can help the learners to set their goals for reading-both short term and long term goals, either in segregation or in integration, which would be intellectually challenging but attainable, to become engaged in reading tasks. In addition, by introducing different types of strategies (mentioned above), they should allow the learners themselves to choose or check the best strategy which benefits them the most and also help them find an alternative if the current chosen one is found ineffective or exacerbating. In short, they would help the learners increase knowledge about what, why, when and how to use any specific strategy in their reading process fluently and effectively. Furthermore, the learners can be introduced to the cognitive apprenticeship in the selection process of the strategies where the teachers by instructing, modeling and scaffolding help students earn expertise in reading and thereby, become engaged readers. With all those efforts, teachers can create a bond between the readers and the texts (language) where it becomes a personalized like 'I-you' relationship instead of a third person relationship, and which also generates a feeling of ownership among the readers for the language of the texts as they by being 'socially interactive' would not merely transact but also interact with the text, others and selves on their way to owning the language.

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