
UNIT 3 TEACHING READING STRATEGIES-2

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Teaching Whole Word Identification

3.2.1 Association of Words to Meaning Method

3.2.2 Simultaneous Response and Multiple Input Method

3.3 Teaching Syllabic Cues

3.3.1 Auditory Concept of a Syllable

3.3.2 Visual Clues for Syllable Division

3.3.3 Discovery Method

3.4 Word Identification in Meaningful Contexts

3.4.1 Semantic Cue Strategies

3.4.2 Syntactic Cue Strategies

3.4.3 Syntactic, Semantic, Graphic and Phonic Cues

3.4.4 Cloze Methods

3.5 Let Us Sum Up

3.6 Suggested Readings

3.7 Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit continues to illustrate the application of the principles of teaching reading which you studied in the previous unit. This unit also has activities to illustrate teaching reading techniques for young learners which will help them to acquire reading skills step by step. As we know that reading is a complex cognitive process, it becomes important to understand different methods and strategies that help teachers to make their reading classes interesting and efficient. This unit will therefore aim at introducing you with strategies to make your reading classes informative, interesting and useful.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we discussed some strategies of reading and in this unit we will continue to do the same. In the last unit we acquainted you with strategies involving sounds and spelling, however, this unit deals with strategies involving words rather than mere sounds and the context in which words are used and how they combine to make meaning of what is read.

3.2 TEACHING WHOLE WORD IDENTIFICATION

The methods for teaching children to read whole words is especially useful at the beginning stages of reading. This can be done directly or indirectly. An **indirect**

method of whole word learning is listening to a story and following the words in the book as you read it aloud many times. Another indirect method is allowing children to listen to a pre-recorded text and then to encourage them to read along with the recording. After reading along with the recording once or twice, children can then try to read it by themselves.

In the **direct method** of teaching, whole word identification is taught in decontextualised settings first, i.e. as a group of sounds and not as an element conveying meaning in a sentence, a story etc. After that, children practice reading the words in context. There are many ways to practice whole word recognition in context. Getting another child to monitor a student's attempts to say words and to pronounce unknown words while reading aloud is often enough to help the student to identify whole words accurately and automatically. Games provide another source for reading such words in context, which have been initially taught directly by the teacher.

The method of teaching whole-word identification in de-contextualized settings is useful but teachers need to be cautious about using these methods repeatedly in the classroom. They should use other methods also to avoid monotony. Coming back to the direct method, it is important that the method should be followed immediately by practicing identifying words in context. The kind of words that require to be taught through whole-word identification instruction are the structure words such as articles, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs. These words are important because they weave words together to make grammatical and meaningful sentences. They signal how words are ordered in phrases or sentences. Besides they cannot be brought within phonic instruction because they have irregular sound correspondences. The words most frequently found in first grade readers are: *a, above, across, after, again, and, as, at, before, but, can, could, down, still, than, that, the, there, these, they, under, up, very, was, we, well, what, when, where, why, with, yet, you, your.*

What are the other occasions when whole word identification instruction is useful? There are some children who cannot grasp the principle involved in the phonics approach. In such cases whole word identification followed by a lot of practice in reading words in context can be very helpful to the students. Besides it is simply quicker and more desirable to teach one or more words occurring often in a story or selection through whole word identification methods, because the phonic or spelling pattern rules do not always apply to the words.

3.2.1 Association of Words to Meaning Method

The following steps illustrate the method by which words are associated with their meanings:

Using a Picture:

Step-1: A picture is first shown. Then the word which it represents is shown. You pronounce the word aloud. Then ask the children to say what the word is.

Step-2: If the child's response is correct, put aside the picture and the word on the table. If the child's response is wrong, then repeat Step-1.

Step-3: More words may be taught in the same way.

Step-4: Alternatively, children may be asked to hold up the picture for the word uttered by you. The pictures and words are placed on the table.

Step-5: The pictures are randomly ordered. Ask the child to pick the word that corresponds to one of the pictures. If the child makes a mistake, place the picture beside the correct word and ask the child to try again. You can say the word if the child still makes a mistake.

Step-6: Remove the pictures and shuffle the word cards. Ask the child to touch each word that you say. This is continued until all the words are correctly identified.

Step-7: Flash each word card rapidly and ask the children to say the word.

The association method is useful for content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) as content words have meanings or can be represented through pictures but most structure words cannot be pictorially represented. This method is best for kindergarten children or at the beginning of the first standard.

3.2.2 Simultaneous Response and Multiple Input Method

Compared with the association of words to meaning method, this method is smoother to operate and allows both structure and content words to be learned in the same lesson. It is best used with a group rather than with just one child at a time. Besides it combines decontextualised and contextualized information for learning sight words.

Normally, there are nine steps in this method. But the number of steps you may have to use depends on how quickly the students learn the words and whether they need to be part of active vocabulary of the learner or the passive vocabulary. For this, teachers need to give enough time to the learner for the new words to sink in and enough practice if the words need to be in active use for production. It also depends upon how much time is available for teaching the words and how general or useful the words are. Quite often teachers do not spend enough time to prepare children to accurately and automatically learn pre-primer and primer words before requiring them to read the stories. They also do not provide for oral reading interaction to make sure that the story can be read fluently. At least in the very beginning of the reading programme all the nine steps should be used to teach the story vocabulary before it is read. For this method to be successful, it is important to set up a crisp pace during the presentation of each step of the lesson. For example, if you want to teach **seven** words to be read in a pre-primer i.e. the, boy, is, Raja, a, happy, always, you should first prepare a set of 2" x 5" cards for each child and a set of 5" X 10" cards for yourself. It is important to have bigger cards for yourself so that the entire class is able to see it when you want to show to them.

The steps:

Step 1: Give each child a word card. Tell them to put their fingers on the word 'the'. Ask them if they can use the word in a sentence. If no one responds, say the word aloud enough for everyone to hear and use it in a sentence. Repeat this exercise for all the **seven** words.

Step 2: Show them a word on one of your big cards. Ask the students to put their finger on the word that you have in your hands. Do this quickly for all the **seven** word cards in random order repeatedly. Hold the card so that each child can see it clearly.

Step 3: Now say the word '**boy**' and ask them to show the card that has this word. Repeat the procedure a second time but a bit faster than the first time.

Step 4: Now say a word that begins with the same sound as one of these words. Ask them to point at one of the words that begins with the same sound as the word given out by you. This task can be viewed by saying "...ends with the same sound" or "...has the same sound in the middle of the word". The position solely depends on phonics emphasis. If there is none, simply use the initial sound.

Step 5: Arrange your cards in a particular order. Ask the students to arrange their cards in the same order. After they have done this, ask them to close their eyes, quickly mix up your cards and remove one of the words from the stack. Tell them to open their eyes and ask them to identify the word that is missing from your list. After they have identified, they must raise the card of the word they have identified. This is repeated until all the words have been used several times. If all the children can do this task correctly and rapidly, then each one must have each word in memory.

Step 6: Show your cards very quickly and ask them to say the word quietly to themselves when you are displaying the cards. Do this several times in random order.

Step 7: Give each one a sheet with eight sentences on it. Ask them to look at sentence number one and see that it has a blank space. Tell them to select from their cards the one that has a word which makes sense in that blank space. Suppose the sentence "If _____ boy worked hard..." After the students have made their choice, show the correct word (the) filled in and read it. This continues until all the sentences are read.

Step 8: Take away the sentences and write one sentence at a time on the board and ask them to show the word that should go into each sentence. Do not read the sentence aloud this time, if the students already know the words in the sentence. However, read the words if the sentences contain unfamiliar words.

Step 9: The lesson should conclude by giving directions for most of the steps. For example ask them to show the word that (1) means, or (2) says or (3) is like the word shown by you, or (4) makes sense in this sentence or (5) begins with the same sound as the word uttered by you. When the children give correct words, put away each word card in the envelope. In this procedure, the ultimate goal is to make children recognize words in context accurately and automatically. Learners should get plenty of opportunities for contextualized practice which is best done by encouraging students to read simple texts.

Check Your Progress 1

Answer these questions:

1. What is the basic difference between the phonic method and the whole word identification method?

.....
.....
.....

2. What are the advantages of using a visual aid for denoting a word?

.....
.....
.....

3. In some story books, pictures instead of the actual words will be given in the sentence itself, for example the picture of an orange, king, arrow, box etc. instead of the word. How useful is this method of teaching whole words?

.....
.....
.....

4. Take another look at the nine steps proposed in the simultaneous response and multiple input method and work out the purpose underlying each activity.

.....
.....
.....

3.3 TEACHING SYLLABIC CUES

The knowledge of syllable structure in a particular language helps the reading process very much. This is usually helpful when the children come across a word of two or more syllables (also called polysyllabic words) that cannot be automatically decoded by them. In such cases the children must have some form of consistent procedure to organize the grapheme-phoneme correspondences into sequential units which are close to the printed word's oral pronunciation. But this dependence on a common set of rules has its problems when used for primary stage teachers because most of these rules work with two syllable words and have many exceptions when it comes to polysyllabic words. However for students learning to read, knowledge of the structure of the syllable can be useful to establish whether or not the printed word is a part of their oral/aural vocabulary. Also, knowledge of structure of syllable is useful to determine whether it can be associated with the oral vocabulary they already possess so that pronunciation of the new word can be attempted especially when the vocabulary possessed and the one attempted have similar pronunciation, for example 'easily', can be associated with 'easy'.

When the children encounter a polysyllabic word which they have not heard or seen in print before, then they have no meaning to associate with it and no information to adjust its pronunciation. In this case only the possible pronunciation and the possible meaning from the surrounding context can be established. Another possibility to establish meaning of the word is doing a morphological analysis which helps them to go to the root word for meaning of the new word. In this situation the dictionary also becomes a useful tool. However, the reader must still develop a basic understanding of what syllables are and what syllable divisions of words are acceptable. In class three or four, direct training in syllable division may be useful for some children. After this stage, it is useful as a remedial measure. The following didactic methods teach the auditory concept of a syllable unit and then the visual cues to identify the syllable unit in a word.

3.3.1 Auditory Concept of a Syllable

The auditory realization of a syllable can be easily taught and should begin early in the primary school. Before teaching the visual cues of a syllable, the following two principles should be explained clearly.

1. Syllables are parts of words :

Children will have to understand and also experience how the mouth moves twice when they say a word that has two parts. Ask them to say the word **blackbird** and realize that they would have moved their mouths two times. Give them some more words which have two syllables – paddy, crafty, money – ask them to say these words and find out how many parts each word has. This procedure can be repeated with examples of words of one, two or three syllables.

2. The Syllables in any word can be counted:

The children should be given practice in hearing and identifying the number of syllables in words. They can be asked to clap their hands as you say the word. In the case of three syllable or longer words the children can be asked to say the word after you have said it and simultaneously clap their hands as they say it to themselves. Give them an activity of counting syllables. Give them different words and ask them to count the number of syllables and also identify the division of syllables in these questions such as ‘How many syllables does girls have?’ Do ‘coffee’ and ‘pink’ have the same number of syllables? can help children to discriminate between different words having one, two, three or more syllables such as ‘elephant’, ‘brother’, ‘dogs’, ‘umbrella’, ‘beautiful’, ‘milk’, ‘cow’, ‘banana’.

3.3.2 Visual Clues for Syllable Division

The following five basic principles should be taught through simple and easily manageable steps to help children to separate a word visually into syllable units. They are:

1. A written syllable must contain a single vowel sound or vowel cluster (a diphthong). For example, ‘man’ /mæn/ has a single vowel and ‘pain’ /peɪn/ has a vowel cluster.
2. A written syllable contains a vowel or a vowel cluster which is preceded or followed by a single consonant or consonant cluster as in throw, slow, pot, other.
3. Counting the number of vowel units (a single vowel or vowel cluster) in a printed word will normally help us to identify the number of syllable divisions in its spoken form. The degree of error is very minimal. For example, in ‘photography’, there are four vowels and so four syllables.
4. Knowing the expected number of divisions shows the way to check whether one has pronounced the word correctly with right stress. It also reduces wild-guessing.
5. Knowing which consonant letters cannot be divided in pronouncing a word shows the most likely points for dividing a word into written syllable divisions. Consonant clusters (pl-, fl-, gl-, br-, cr-, fr-, gr-, pr-, tr-, sc-, sl-, sm-, sn-, ser-, sp-, st-, sw-) and consonant digraphs (ph-, sh-, th-, ch-, wh-, -ng, -gn, -nd) are not divided. On the other hand, two like consonant letters or two unlike consonant letters occurring side by side and which are not consonant clusters or consonant digraphs, can be divided for example ‘has-sle’ and ‘hap-pen’.

You can demonstrate how the five principles are used in visually dividing words into syllables. Read the following sentences aloud to the students:

Girija saw the **photograph** on the table.

Teacher: “I don’t know how to say the long word in the sentence. Anyway I’ll try. There are three single vowel letters in the word and so it should generally have three parts. When I say it, I will move my mouth three times.”

Such modeling will be helpful to the children because the procedure is given to them as a series of steps. It is also important to mention here that the teacher may also give example of words which have vowel letter ‘e’ in the final position which is silent and does not count towards increase in syllable but it changes the sound quality of the other vowel in the letter. Example ‘mad’ has one syllable, and ‘made’ also has one syllable but with addition ‘e’ the sound of ‘a’ becomes /eɪ/ instead of /æ/.

3.3.3 Discovery Method

In teaching children how to go about with the segmentation of polysyllabic words, the compare/contrast method can be used. In this procedure children search through their available store of familiar words to compare with the unknown word. Sometimes some units of the unknown word may be compared with the units already known to the children. When a match is found between a familiar word or word fragments whose sounds are known, then each one is recombined to arrive at the possible meaning and pronunciation of the unknown word. This is mainly based on the familiarity that children read with root words and the word fragments.

Step 1: The first thing to do is to familiarize children with the idea of matching familiar words in print to their graphic equivalents in unknown words. Each child is provided with **an index card** on which are written some familiar words like he, her, can, fit and car. Then they are given a **list of fifteen two syllable words** which have at least one word fragment that is similar to one of the words on the index card. For example for the word ‘her’, the words ‘hermit’, ‘defer’ and ‘merger’ have one part that is an exact match- (hermit-her) or an approximate one (mer-her), i.e. the sound of ‘er’ is the same.

Step-2: The children are asked to find for each two syllable word, the two index cards that match parts of it. They are placed indirectly under the word in the list. When each word is correctly matched, the students pronounce the two matching words (for *hermit* they would say *her-mit* taking the first part from *her* and second part from *mit*) and then the polysyllabic word (hermit).

Step-3: This procedure is repeated, but give them five more new words printed on index cards so that the children now have ten sight words to match with a list of two syllable words and the number of words is increased gradually.

The students should learn how to use only that part of the familiar word that matches with the unfamiliar word and to recognize the sound of the consonants in the original words which do not match with the new word.

Step-4: In order to emphasize the accuracy of substitution, ask the students first to think of words that will match with the largest manageable unit of words on the list, for example ‘subject’ matches with ‘object’. After this, children may be asked to write their words on the index cards and match them physically to the appropriate words in the list. To begin with, the words on the list may have a hyphen or a forward slash drawn between the syllables to show the syllable division. After sufficient practice, this visual cue for division of syllables can be removed. Finally, the polysyllabic words are presented in sentence contexts, in order to initiate the students to check whether the pronunciation assigned to a word sense in the context.

Step-5: This procedure is repeated with three and more syllable words. If students show considerable progress in this activity, test its transferability by giving them words they cannot recognize easily and then ask them to guess their pronunciation using the comparison/contrast method.

Check Your Progress 2

1. To what extent is the visual clue for identifying syllables helpful?
.....
.....
.....
2. How does knowledge of the syllabication cue help the learner to manage unknown polysyllabic words?
.....
.....
.....

3.4 WORD IDENTIFICATION IN MEANINGFUL CONTEXTS

When we teach word identification cues, it is very important to teach strategies for word identification in meaningful contexts. That is, we teach them ways of combining word level cues with contextual cues to identify/guess the meaning of a word during reading without referring to the dictionary.

If you are using a lesson from a published reading series, you may provide simple contextual exercises for some of the new words used in the story. Sometimes phonics exercises that are given in these lessons may need to be supplemented with short exercises where the sound-symbol correspondences taught are placed in meaningful sentences or short passages.

Now, what do we mean by a meaningful context? A meaningful context would be a text of at least two sentences in which the majority of the words are familiar to the child and we can be sure that s/he will be able to identify the words that form the context of the new word. The child should be able to identify the syntactic function and also different semantic levels of the new word. For this, each word to be identified should be placed in a two to three sentence context as it is the context before and after the target word that gives the semantic clues to the word and helps the child guess the meaning of the word without referring to the dictionary (dictionary reference is important, but while reading, it is more important to be able to guess the meanings from the context) as referring to the dictionary every now and then slows down the reading and makes it a tiresome process. It is also helpful to provide contextual exercises in which a number of grapho-phonemic correspondences and spelling patterns previously taught are revised and practiced once again.

It should now be clear that the primary purpose of providing children with practice in decoding words in meaningful contexts is to teach the strategies of how to combine phonics, spelling patterns, syllable and the whole word cues with syntactic and semantic cues to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Now we come to a pertinent issue i.e. is there any harm in:

- teaching graph-phoneme correspondence in isolation
- asking the children to use this knowledge when they come across these graphemes in the reading passage, and decode the meaning of each word during oral reading.

If this is done, then students will get the impression that reading is merely saying the words on the page. Equally dangerous will be the tendency of some children to read word by word, even though they are capable of decoding all or most of the words in the passage. When children get into such habit of reading word by word rather than reading by sense groups, the links between the meanings of the text they are accumulating in their memory and those they have already stored in their memory tend to get lost. This stage of affairs can be easily proved. For example, if a child stops at a particular word in a sentence and tries to piece out its pronunciation or simply pauses for fifteen to thirty seconds without saying anything it will not be possible for him/her to recall what s/he has read before. If we ask the child a question based on that sentence which has troubled him/her, s/he will not be generally able to answer the question because s/he has lost the link between the meaning of that sentence and the previous sentence that has been processed. If that happens too frequently when the child is reading a text or a story, the reader can become so confused and even frustrated that the total meaning of the message may be lost.

If we look at this problem from another angle we shall realize that when a child reads word by word he/she focuses attention only on the grapho phoneme information in a message and pays less attention to storing meaning. Secondly, s/he focuses only on one word at a time which does not let the child look at the text holistically and s/he loses the link of the word from its context and is therefore not able to understand the meaning in the context. Consequently, the child cannot use meaning as the basis for predicting what will come next. Even though you may have come across some children who do get some meaning when they read word by word, it must be remembered that this is a circuitous, laborious and risky way of learning to get meaning of the reading text. In the long run, the child will come to think of reading as a chore to be completed rather than an experience to be enjoyed. By learning to use grapho phoneme correspondences in relation to syntactic and semantic cues, the learner can learn to use the multiple sources of information available in a text as well as to check his/her own uncertainties in reading. Let us now look at a few methods of teaching elementary stage readers to combine grapho phoneme correspondences with syntactic and semantic cues.

3.4.1 Semantic Cues Strategies

The child is asked to guess what word comes next on the basis of a text. It is easier to guess an unfamiliar word when one has already read two or more sentences as opposed to one or two words. Obviously more content gives more context to arrive at the meaning. For example, in which of the following two contexts is it easier for you to guess the word omitted in the text?

A: The piggy went to the market.

B: The three pigs went to the city. The big pig went to a zoo. The _____ pigs went to the market.

Obviously, it is easier to guess the word 'little' in B than in A because of the context provided. A word at the end of the sentence than at the beginning is again easier to guess.

Let us also look at the following

- a. C _____ is the most popular game in India?
- b. The most popular game in India is C _____.

In the first sentence, the child can simply guess the word and in fact the child may be quite right even without reading the rest of the sentence. But s/he can be sure only once they have read the word game. It is as good as the word being on the flash card. However in the second sentence the child is exposed to some semantic information before reading the word required to complete the sentence. More information is necessary than just the initial consonant to reduce the possibility. We can get quite a lot of information from the preceding or following sentence. If we look at the following sentences, we see that there are certain cues given in both the sentences that can help the child to fill in the information gap.

- a. People like t _____ in the morning.
- b. I like t _____ with a lot of milk in it.

The first sentence may seem a little baffling but when it is taken along with the second, it is easy to reduce the possibilities to 'tea' because of semantic cues provided in the two sentences. Now, to work out how this is to be done, try substituting 'tennis' for the blank to see as to what extent it is acceptable or unacceptable. The moment we write 'tennis', we understand that 'milk' does not go with it. Substituting it with something to be eaten like 'tikki', 'toast', and 'tomato' is also possible if the first sentence is taken in isolation. However the context in the second sentence reveals that all the three words suggested cannot go in the second sentence.

3.4.2 Syntactic Cue Strategies

The second strategy is to teach children to self-monitor their guesses for the words they are uncertain about by asking such questions as "Does it sound correct?" and then "Does it make sense?" In the initial stages, teachers should offer a lot of help to the children in deciding the answers to these questions.

3.4.3 Syntactic, Semantic, Graphic and Phonic Cues

Till now we have considered the various cues that help a beginner, separately, in order to highlight what is actually involved in each one of these cues. However, when we read we do not select only one of them. We actually use and process all the cues simultaneously while reading a text. It will be a good idea to consider some exercises which can be helpful to the reader. These exercises should be done often under the direct supervision of the teacher as well as in small groups.

When the teacher gives a passage for reading with the purpose of teaching word identification strategies and the child has some difficulty in doing the exercise, the teacher should not straight away give the correct answer. Instead lead the child to the strategies of

- guessing the word
- reading to the end of the sentence or the next sentence
- re-reading to revise the initial guess, with added grapho-phoneme combined with surrounding contextual meaning and

- self monitoring by checking whether the guessed sounds like language and makes sense. For this, the teacher will have to be pro-active and should intervene by prompting the child to look for significant cues and features. A secondary outcome of this exercise is that it gives clear information to the teacher about who needs further instruction in sound-symbol correspondence, spelling patterns, etc.

3.4.4 Cloze Methods

The successive cloze method

In this method different degrees of grapho-phoneme information is offered to the child to decode a word. It is best to use nouns, adjectives and verbs as phonics applies mostly to content words. These words should be selected from lessons previously taught. Let us now look at a format to teach children how to combine syntactic and semantic cues with CVC spelling pattern cues.

- The horse ate ____.
- The horse ate __ ai ____.
- The horse ate gr ____ n.
- The horse ate grai ____.
- The horse ate ____ ain
- The horse ate grain

In the first sentence there is blank for whole word and the child has to guess for the syntactic and semantic context i.e. what part of speech is the word – a noun or a verb, and what word would complete the meaning of the sentence. In the other sentences the same context words are given along with the various combinations of vowels and consonants. Now look at sentences 2-6 carefully and work out what combinations of vowels and consonants are given in each sentence. Doing this exercise will give you insight into what words the child may think of initially and how the child will arrive at the word that is to be filled in the blank.

Preferred Cloze

This is the same as the previous exercise, but instead of just one sentence, two sentences are used to provide the context. In this exercise only the graph-phonemes taught during the lesson are used and the children get familiar with the sound-symbol combination. Children are expected to use the known words that have been done with them. It is also assumed that using familiar words would be preferable for children. For this reason, this strategy is called ‘preferred cues’. Suppose the consonants blend, bl-, cl- and fl- had been taught in the last class. Then the exercise could be based on the consonant blends. Let us look at the following sentences:

- The girl rode her bl_____ bike. Blue was the color she liked best
- The street was cl_____. It is cleaned every morning.
- The fl_____ was red and black. It waved in the wind.

Notice that the word to be decoded is found in the first and the second sentences both. It is also placed in the middle or at the end of the sentences. Both the sentences offer sufficient semantic and syntactic clues to guess the correct word.

Structure Word Cloze

In this exercise the focus is on structure words. You may remember that in the earlier part of this unit, we discussed how most of these structure words (articles, conjunctions, pronouns, and prepositions) cannot be brought within the rules of phonics as their sound-symbol correspondences are irregular. They have to be taught as whole words. Structure word cloze using binary choice is very useful in teaching whole words usually confused by a child. This method uses simple alternatives for decoding sight words that begin with the same consonant diagraph usually found in first standard text books. They are : (1) **th- series**: ‘the’, ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘these’, ‘those’, ‘them’, ‘there’, ‘their’, ‘through’, and (2) **wh-series**: ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’, ‘which’ and ‘while’. If the child does not focus on their meaning, these words can cause a lot of confusion.

A binary choice response provides two words, one of which doesn’t make sense and the other does. Some of the words look alike and others do not. The aim is to teach the child to trust his/her syntactic knowledge to guess the word correctly. The exercise can be given as soon as two wh-words have been taught in the basic reading lesson. As the number of words increase, the exercise is lengthened and choices are mixed. If we assume that the words ‘this’, ‘they’, ‘the’, ‘why’, and ‘which’ have already been introduced and the exercise on th- and wh- has also been already done. The second exercise would look like:

- Mother said to Babu, “Is **this/they** your bag?” “Yes, mother it’s mine.”
- **They/this** came to play football. We had a good time.
- **Which/Why** does Priya want a new dress? She doesn’t like the pink one.

We could also have three choices for the word to be decoded. One is the correct response, one is not syntactically correct and one is neither semantically nor syntactically correct but uses the same grapho-phoneme correspondences as the correct response. The exercise will be like this:

- The boy ran with his **dog/dot/dug** to the shop.
- The **mane/man/most** at the shop **fed/fat/fan** the dog.
- He fed the dog **bats/bones/begins**. The dog **lived/liked/licked** the bones.

Since all the sentences deal with the same topic, it provides the context within which the choices are to be located. The choice of the correct word depends on combining semantic, syntactic and grapho-phoneme cues. This is a relatively easy exercise, as one of the three choices doesn’t seem like language and does not make sense. Still it is an important exercise because it provides ample opportunity to teachers to discuss the choices made by the students as well as strategies that they should use in order to decide upon the correct answers.

The Passage Length Cloze

In this exercise only one fourth of the sentences are used for deletion. This is to give the readers plenty of semantic information to identify the words. This exercise will look like this.

Babu had a frog. His name was Leap.

Leap liked to sit on a log.

Babu fed fl___ to Leap.

But Leap was sad often.

He wanted a frog friend.

Babu c___ ght one m___ e frog.

Leap was now h___ py.

Even very good young readers also appear to go through several phases as they develop into fluent readers. In the initial stage, they begin to read in word-groups of two and three words and only occasionally word by word. During this stage most of the children refuse to pronounce or guess a word that they do not know because they know it must be pronounced correctly and must make sense. It is better to notice such situations and not insist too much on their saying such words. The second stage is when they begin to insert structure words to compensate for word grouping predictions that do not sound like language. Do not discourage children from inserting words. They may need to do so in order to preserve the syntactic pattern and to read word-groups or phrases of two or three words. Children who show a tendency to insert words are only indicating that they understand the function of syntax in maintaining word order and content word relationships.

You would have realized that in this section we have moved to the structure of the text and used the existing clues to decode a new word. This makes the child realize that reading is not a mechanical process but involves his/her intelligence and understanding. More importantly, when one reads the text, one is actively involved in working out the meaning of the text. This capacity has to be developed right from the beginning so that the learners benefit in acquiring many ways of knowing how to read efficiently.

Check Your Progress 3

1. What is meant by syntactic and semantic redundancy?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. What are the benefits of relating new information to that already stored in one's mind?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3.5 LET US SUM UP

Word identification involves the linguistic cues within a word and syntactic and semantic cues surrounding a word in a sentence. There are several ways of teaching

whole word, phonic, or orthographic and syllabic cues in isolation as well as in contexts. It is very important to remember that the decontextualized instructional situation should be immediately followed by opportunities to read text in which the cues occur.

In unit 11 and 12, you would have realized that a lot of emphasis has been placed on teaching children how to combine the various cues to arrive at the meaning of a word. In published reading programmes this aspect of word identification strategies is usually omitted. This is a serious gap which teacher can easily overcome by including such exercises as described in this unit in their classroom materials. It will be a good practice if there are at least two strategy lessons a week for beginning readers while word identification cues and sight words are being taught. The more strategies that students can apply spontaneously, the more accurate will they be in their prediction. The result of word identification instruction should be to discourage students from reading words as isolated units but to read them continuously without pausing after every word and accurately in meaningful groups i.e. phrases, sentences and longer texts.

Children cannot become fluent readers possessing adequate comprehension skills, unless they learn to connect linguistic cues within a word with the syntactic and semantic cues beyond the word level. When readers process whole sentences they are able to anticipate the words that follow. The contextual cues are essential parts of the reading process and will have to be used right from the elementary school.

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

Aulls M W, 1982. *Developing Readers in today's Elementary School*, Boston, Ally and bacon Inc.

C Fries: 1967. *Linguistics and Reading*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Gibson E & Levin H: 1975. *The Psychology of Reading*, Cambridge Mass.

Goodman Y M & Burke C: 1980. *Reading Strategies: Focus on Comprehension*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

3.7 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Do it yourself after reading the previous unit.
2. Displaying content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) through pictures helps children associate words to the object which helps in better learning. Moreover, when the teacher says the words aloud, the children pick up the pronunciation as well.
3. Do it yourself
4. Do it yourself

Check Your Progress 2

1. - Generally helps the reading process
- To identify syllables

- Helpful when children come across a word of two or more syllables that cannot be automatically decoded by them.
 - Children can be encouraged to form a consistent procedure to organize the grapheme – phoneme correspondences into sequential units which are close to the printed word(s) oral pronunciation. In other words helps in word recognition and pronunciation.
2. - By the compare/contrast method.
- Children compare what part of the syllable they ‘know’ to what is ‘unknown’ and are able to anticipate the pronunciation based on similarity with what is already known.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Redundancy refers to information that is expressed more than once which enables better understanding. For example, it is easier to guess an unfamiliar word when one has already read two or more sentences which has the same/ similar word, example:

A: The piggy went to the market.

B: The three pigs went to the city. The big pig went to a zoo. The _____ pigs went to the market.

Notice there are several words which are repeated so that students can guess the meaning from the context easily.

For syntactic redundancy, the same method may be used.

2. - discourages the child from reading words as isolated units but to read continuously/ fluently without pausing after every word and read in meaningful groups, i.e. phrases, sentences and longer texts.
- so that the child can use existing clues to decode a new word.
 - makes the child realize that reading is not a mechanical process but involves his/her intelligence and understanding.