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## Utilizing Newspapers to facilitate Reading skills of ESL learners at Tertiary level

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### Abstract:

The present article entitled “Utilizing Newspapers to facilitate Reading skills of ESL learners at Tertiary Level” tries to give an account of the importance of using Newspapers as an authentic and reliable material to teach reading skill to ESL learners and especially at tertiary level. The work is based on the research carried out with a view to prepare tasks using newspapers and teaching it to improve reading skills of the learners. As, every coin has an another side, there must be a few drawbacks in using newspapers for teaching purpose but here the researcher has tried to be more convincing for utilizing newspapers as good tool for teaching purpose that would certainly encourage and motivate the learners.

**Keywords:** Newspapers, Reading skills, ESL learners, Tertiary level

### Introduction:

*“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, teach.” - Anonymous*

Today is an era of creating Association among thing that has no or very little relevance and this statement is proved much more applicable when it comes to one of the most creative arts prevailing in the present world called ‘Teaching’. A Teacher must attain and bring in Creativity in classroom and this can be possible only if the teacher has an art of creating Associations. Now days, the use of authentic materials available in various forms has a niche in the area of language learning and teaching. One of these authentic materials which is easily available is *Newspaper* and it is being used in considerable amount at all the grades from the past many years. The initiative, famous as ‘Newspapers in Education’ (NIE) popularized its use as an educational tool and additional teaching material (Newton, 1985). According to Hermann (1981: as cited in Aiex 1988), newspapers are also designed and prepared for both Kids and their Parents. Newspapers contain many unique features namely creative ideas to help kids, improve their reading skills, writing, social studies, math, and science skills.

## Why should we use newspaper?

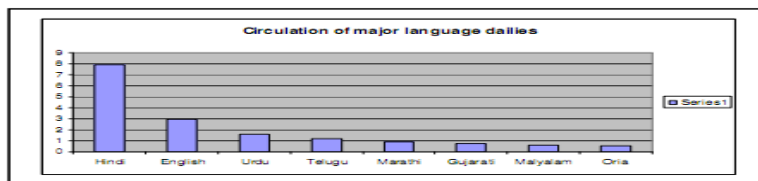
With a view to justify the posed question, it becomes extremely necessary to talk and discuss a few numerical data. As part of the statistical report of *The Registrar of the Newspapers of India* (RNI), the numerical data of registered newspapers of year 2010-11 is shared where in the newspapers registered in English language stands at the second position just after the number of newspapers registered in Hindi language. The table (2.1, RNI report) is as following:

**Table 2.1: Highlights of the India Press in 2010-11** (As on 31st March 2011)

1	The total number of registered newspapers	82,222
2	The number of new newspapers registered during 2010-2011	4,853
3	Percentage of growth of total registered publications over the previous year	6.25 %
4	The largest number of newspapers & periodicals registered in any Indian language (Hindi)	32,793
5	The second largest number of newspapers & periodicals registered in any Indian language (English)	11,478
6	The state with the largest number of registered newspapers (Uttar Pradesh)	13,065
7	The state with the second largest number of registered newspapers (Delhi)	10,606
8	The total circulation of newspapers	32,92,04,841
9	The largest circulated daily (single edition): Enadu, Telugu, Hyderabad	16,74,305
10	The second largest circulated daily (single edition): The Hindu, English, Chennai	14,82,658
11	The third largest circulated daily (single edition): Ananda Bazar Patrika, Bengali, Kolkata	12,08,682
12	The largest circulated multi-edition daily: The Times of India, English	37,46,929
13	The second largest circulated multi-edition daily: Enadu, Telugu	29,55,300
14	The largest circulated periodical: The Hindu Weekly, English, Chennai	13,48,160
15	Number of papers ceased publications	15

(Source: RNI, Press in India, 2010-2011)

The claimed circulation of dailies in the period increased by 8.23% to 17,56,65,243 (17.6 crore) copies. The number of Hindi dailies in this period was 2098 and their claimed circulation was 7.91 crore copies (45.03%), while 403 English dailies claimed circulation of 2.43 crore copies (13.83%). (RNI, 2010-11).



Moreover, the print medium is also one of the largest media sectors. This can be ascertained by the figures shared as part of 'India Entertainment and Media Outlook' report 2010-11. The data is shared in the following tables (2.7 & 2.9);

**Table 2.7: Segment revenue contribution within E&M industry** (Figures in INR billion)

Segment	2010	2011	Y-o-Y growth	Contribution to industry
Television	294	340	15.7%	42%
Print	178	190	7.2%	24%
Radio	13	14	10.8%	1.7%
Film	88	96	9.4%	12%
Internet access	74	116	57.2%	14%
Internet advertising	8	10	30.9%	1.3%
Out of Home (OOH)	14	16	10.7%	1.9%
Music	10	12	25.0%	1.5%
Gaming	8	11	32.6%	1.4%
Total	685	805	17.5%	-

(Source: PwC, IEMO report 2012)

**Table 2.9: Print Media Market** (in INR billion)

Print media market	2011	2012	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016*	CAGR
<b>English</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
Advertising	57	61	66	72	78	84	8.0%
Circulation	26	27	27	28	28	29	2.0%
<b>Hindi</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
Advertising	41	45	51	58	66	74	12.9%
Circulation	22	23	23	24	25	26	4.0%
<b>Language</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
Advertising	42	48	55	63	71	82	14.5%
Circulation	21	23	24	25	26	27	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>9.1%</b>

(2.9 - Source: FICCI-KPMG, 2012)

Here in the table 2.9 (*India Entertainment and Media Outlook report 2010-11*) it is very likely to see that the status of English language in print media is much more stronger in

comparison to Hindi language or any other regional languages. Hence, as a research scholar, these reasons were quite enough convincing to select Newspapers as one of the tools to help the learners to enhance their reading skills.

### **Importance of using newspaper:**

Looking at the wideness and reach of newspapers to the mass, it becomes important to use the newspapers as a teaching tool. In addition to this, reading newspapers on a daily basis is considered as a good virtue through which learners come across various subjects and learn different discourse for instance social – political, business, sports, entertainment, arts, culture, music, education etc. According to Cheyney (1992), newspapers play the role of ‘the textbook that provides up-to-date information on local, state/provincial national and world affairs.’ It is also considered as an unbound publication issued at regular intervals that seeks to inform, analyze, influence and entertain (Encyclopedia, 1989:171). Moreover, researchers have also found interesting and motivational elements in using newspapers for teaching purpose.

Nola Kortner Aiex (1988) in her work *‘Using Newspapers as Effective Teaching Tools’* shares a few points to answer the question, ‘Why use Newspapers?’ and they are as following;

1. Newspapers are an adult medium that students of all ability levels can be proud to be seen reading.
2. Newspapers deal in what's happening here and now, providing motivation for reading and discussion.
3. Newspapers make learning fun.
4. Newspapers are extremely flexible and adaptable to all curriculum areas and grade levels.
5. Newspapers bridge the gap between the classroom and the "real" world.
6. Newspapers build good reading habits that will last a lifetime.
7. Newspapers can be cut, marked, clipped, pasted, filed, and recycled.
8. Newspapers give everyone something to read -- news, sports, weather, editorials, and comics.
9. Newspapers are a cost-effective way to educate.
10. Newspapers contain practical vocabulary and the best models of clear, concise writing.

In this sense, use of newspapers creative classroom learning centered and alive where students interact with teacher and most important with the text.

## **Newspaper: A reliable tool to teach reading skills:**

Newspapers are in real a reliable tool to teach reading skills for all the students across the levels and the activities series created by Fenholt (1985) is a good example of this wherein he claims that through using newspapers a teacher can not only teach reading skills but also life skills. As part of his materials production, he focused more on adult learners who were in an acute need to learn reading skills with a view to pass Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) test successfully. Fenholt has almost utilized all the different sections of newspapers and provided a wide range of variety of tasks. Hunter and McNearney (1988, as cited in Aiex, 1988) have also prepared a bunch of tasks with twelve lessons using the newspapers with clues to use them and some additional activities.

‘Read Up’, one of the most acclaimed programmes prepared by *The Tusla World* (as cited in Chandler, 1988) focused on teaching adult illiterates and as part of their materials production, they used Newspapers and the programme resulted in acquisition of considerable amount of vocabulary, comprehension, and reading skills.

Monda (1988) suggested using newspapers across the disciplines. Her suggestions are as following;

- 1) using words in grocery ads, sports sections, or comics to teach alphabetizing;
- 2) using news stories to teach grammar;
- 3) having students make charts or collages of words dealing with the five senses;
- 4) ask-ing students to select a picture or photograph and to write their own stories;
- 5) having students make a timeline for current events;
- 6) having students write their own classified ads;
- 7) discussing the key elements of a book or movie review; and
- 8) asking students to design their own newspaper to report events happening in class or in school.

## **Summation:**

Hence, I would like to conclude the discussion by dissolving the confusions, saying that there is nothing to debate on the fact that Reading skills is one of the most important to achieve success in academics and daily life. And if, we, as language teacher, do not utilize the most easily available resource for helping the learners achieve success, it would be extremely unfair to them as we would be depriving them from their rights to learn.

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