

Reading Out of Curiosity: Making Undergraduates Competent in English

Authors : Ruwan Gunawardane

Abstract : Second language teaching and learning is a complex process in which various factors are identified as having a negative impact on the competency in English among undergraduates of Sri Lanka. One such issue is the lack of intrinsic motivation among them to learn English despite the fact that they all know the importance of English. This study attempted to ascertain how the intrinsic motivation of undergraduates to learn English can be improved through reading out of curiosity. Humans are curious by nature, and cognitive psychology says that curiosity facilitates learning, memory, and motivation. The researcher carried out this study during the closure of universities due to the outbreak of the coronavirus through 'Online Reading Café', an online reading programme introduced by himself. He invited 1166 students of the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, to read 50 articles taken from CNN and the BBC and posted at least two to three articles on the LMS of the faculty almost every day over a period of 23 days. The themes of the articles were based on the universe, exploration of planets, scientific experiments, evolution, etc., and the students were encouraged to collect as many words, phrases, and sentence structures as possible while reading and to form meaningful sentences using them. The data obtained through the students' feedback was qualitatively analyzed. It was found that these undergraduates were interested in reading something out of curiosity, due to which intrinsic motivation is enhanced, and it facilitates competence in L2.

Keywords : English, competence, reading, curiosity

Conference Title : ICKLL 2021 : International Conference on Knowledge and Language Learning

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 29-30, 2021