



IIT Madras

BSc Degree

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English – 1 Basic English
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Reading

(Refer Slide Time: 00:14)



Welcome to the class. Today, we will look at how to read. We are going to look at reading as an important part for learning the language. We have been talking about several aspects of language, and we want to underline again today that we are going to specifically look at how we read things, what are the things that we can keep in mind while learning to read at the same time as I keep mentioning as part of the larger goal for learning language, learning English in this case, learning to speak English.

We are going to see how an effort in learning to read can help us build overall capacity in the language. So, we are going to work on it, and we are going to see the way it works, and then we will help you with a little bit of tips on that. So, we go back to the stories that we have been discussing. So, we take a couple of passages from our old-time story Swami and Friends. So, we have specifically picked a couple of passages, and while reading, I also want to underline that think about a couple of these questions.

These two passages are talking about grandparents, particularly grandmother. So, what you can allow yourself to do is to run a stream of thoughts in your mind about your grandmother in particular, have you ever lived with your grandparents and particularly with your grandmother? What do you like in them, what do you like most about them? How do you remember your grandparents? Not many of us are fortunate to have this experience, but this is one of the most amazing and wonderful experiences that we can have in our lives.

So, it gives us a holistic picture about a lot; it helps you learn history, it helps you learn sociology, it helps you learn culture like I said it is a composite whole, it is a school in itself and so leaving aside the advantages of living with grandparents, talking to them, learning from them, we are going to see how these pieces help us learn English. So, and then we will also look at some of the activities and we will learn, we will see what all we learn from this.

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Read out aloud at a slow tempo

In the ill-ventilated dark passage between the front hall and the dining-room, Swaminathan's grandmother lived with all her belongings, which consisted of an elaborate bed made of five carpets, three bed sheets, and five pillows, a square box made of jute fibre, and a small wooden box containing copper coins, cardamoms, cloves, and areca-nut. After the night meal, with his head on his granny's lap, nestling close to her, Swaminathan felt very snug and safe in the faint atmosphere of cardamom and cloves. 'Oh, granny!' he cried ecstatically, 'you don't know what a great fellow Rajan is.' He told her the story of the first enmity between Rajan and Mami and the subsequent friendship. 'You know, he has a real police dress,' said Swaminathan. 'Is it? What does he want a police dress for?' asked granny. 'His father is the Police Superintendent. He is the master of every policeman here,' Granny was impressed. She said that it must be a tremendous office indeed. She then recounted the days when her husband, Swaminathan's grandfather, was a powerful Sub-Magistrate, in which office he made the police force tremble before him, and the fiercest dacoits of the place flee. Swaminathan waited impatiently for her to finish the story. But she went on, rambled, confused, mixed up various incidents that took place at different times.



So, we have picked this very short passage for you to look at and read this passage couple of times and most important part of reading is to read and then try to understand what you have read. So, to allow yourself to understand and to allow this process to work what we need to do particularly while we are learning the language is we learn we read slow. Reading fast comes when we acquire a certain stage, certain competence in that language.

But my point to underline here is to reach that competence where you can read fast we need to read slow, and at times we need to read aloud. Sometimes it is important to hear yourself when you read and that helps you improve several other components of reading such as pronunciation, not just pronunciation, but also punctuations, pauses, breaks as you know they play an important role in not just communication, not just reading, but it helps these pauses and your punctuations help listeners understand you faster. They help them read what you mean.

Therefore, we would request you to read this slow and aloud, particularly if you are at a very beginning level in learning. So, let me read this for you and then I request when I am done you pause, keep this passage on your screen and try to read it a couple of times aloud for yourself. So, here we go.

“In the ill-ventilated dark passage between the front hall and the dining room, Swaminathan's grandmother lived with all her belongings which consisted of an elaborate bed made of 5 carpets, three bedsheets and five pillows. A square box made of jute fibre and a small wooden

box containing copper coins, cardamom, cloves and areca nut. After the night meal with his head on his granny's lap, nestling close to her. Swaminathan felt very snug and safe in a faint atmosphere of cardamom and cloves.

Oh, granny, he cried ecstatically you do not know what a great fellow Rajam is. He told her the story of the first enmity between Rajam and Mani and the subsequent friendship; you know he has a real police dress said, Swaminathan. Is it? What does he want a police dress for? Asked granny. His father is a police superintendent. He is the master of every policemen here.

Granny was impressed. She said that it must be a tremendous office, indeed. She then recounted the days when her husband Swaminathan's grandfather was a powerful sub-magistrate in which office he made the police force tremble before him and the fiercest dacoits of the place flee. Swaminathan waited impatiently for her to finish the story. But she went on rambled, confused, mixed up various incidents that took place at different times."

Now, when you read this passage, you can look at several of these things and feel that these things happen to you as well. So, what caught my attention first and I am sure it would have caught your attention as well is when Rajam, when Swaminathan started talking about the story between Rajam and Mani, their enmity, their friendship, his grandmother in whose company Swaminathan is very happy, very comfortable, very peaceful as you can see.

So, the moment she starts the story of her husband who is Swaminathan grandfather she goes on and on about it and Swaminathan is becoming impatient because he wants his grandmother to listen to his story and then she goes on. And therefore, this last line I must underline you read it one more time that she went on rambled, confused, mixed up various incidents that took place at different times. This, in itself is a description of an elderly grandmother.

So, she is narrating, she is telling her grandson stories about his grandfather, but she is mixing things up which happened at different times. So, you read this passage one more time you give a small pause at the comma and do stop at the full stop. Pay attention to your own pronunciation when you read it aloud. Reading several passages in this manner will help you improve your pronunciation, will help you think through while you are reading and finally will help you improve your pronunciation as well. These things are embedded that is embedded in the process of learning.

So, I read it one more time for you, and then you read it a couple of times for yourselves and as we have been mentioning with you can allow yourself to read other things as well. In short, cultivate the habit of reading very slowly for better learning of multiple things in this case. The least it helps you with is improve your English. So, one more time.

"In the ill-ventilated dark passage between the front hall and the dining room, Swaminathan's grandmother lived with all her belongings which consisted of an elaborated bed made of 5 carpets, three bedsheets and five pillows. A square box made of jute fibre and the small

wooden box containing copper coins, cardamoms, cloves and areca nut. After the night meal with his head on his granny's lap, nestling close to her Swaminathan felt very snug and safe in the faint atmosphere of cardamoms and cloves. Oh, granny, he cried ecstatically you do not know what a great fellow Rajam is.

He told her the story of the first enmity between Rajam and Mani and the subsequent friendship you know he has a real police dress said, Swaminathan. Is it? What does he want a police dress for? Asked granny? His father is a police superintendent. He is the master of every policemen here. Granny was impressed. She said that it must be a tremendous office, indeed. She then recounted the days of her husband.

Swaminathan's grandfather was a powerful sub magistrate in which office he made the police force trembled before him, and the fiercest dacoits of the place flee. Swaminathan waited impatiently for her mother to finish the story, but she went on trembled, confused, mixed up various incidents that took place at different times." So, thus you read I want you to find out the differences in my reading that I have done twice. If that helps you hear things out that helps you check facts. I leave this point here and wait for you to do that.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:54)


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ACTIVITY

- List the things which Swaminathan's grandmother had in her wooden box. What do you think a grandmother today is likely to have as things of her personal use?
- The table below contains a list of nouns and some adjectives. Use as many adjectives as you can to describe each noun. You might produce some funny descriptions!

Nouns	Adjectives
grandmother, grandfather, rajam, office, box	strict, great, wooden, old, tremendous



On the basis of this, we need to talk about a few things. So, something that you can do having read this passage is the first thing that you do is you list the things which Swaminathan's grandmother had in her wooden box; you list the things that belonged to her which is counted as her belongings. When you think about it, when you think about them, when you think about her belongings, a natural comparison goes in your mind.

And at that point remember this is the story of, this is Swaminathan's story you have looked at the timing of this story, this is of the least you can find out first this is the story of ancient time and that you understand by things that belong to Swaminathan's grandmother. What I

would request you to contrast that with a grandmother in modern time. What do you think she will have as her belongings and where does she keep them.

Think about it you will come up with a list of things which are very different from the things that were around Swaminathan's grandmother and make a list of those things not just in your mind, but on a piece of paper. Now look at the table below that is on this slide it contains a list of nouns on one side and list of adjectives on the other side. Use as many adjectives as you can to describe each noun, you must produce some funny descriptions. You will get some funny descriptions.

So, take any noun and then take any adjective and try to combine them together. In a small phrase, we know that adjectives precede nouns. So, when you have to say grandmother pick grandmother as the noun, and you pick strict, you can say 'strict grandmother'. So, 'strict' becomes an adjective how do we know it is an adjective. Adjectives describe nouns. So, the word 'strict' tells you the quality of the grandmother.

A 'great' we can say 'great grandmother', 'old' we can say 'old grandmother'. We have adjectives like 'wooden' can we say 'wooden grandmother', we have another adjective like 'tremendous' can we say 'tremendous grandmother' think about it. If we can why and if cannot, why not? So, categorically we can say 'wooden grandmother' unless we are talking about a wooden portrait of somebody's grandmother. So, why wooden as an adjective is not allowed with the grandmother as a noun.

Before we get to that and we think about that, I want you to think about one more point, and this will help you learn about nouns and adjectives and particularly these two parts of our speech so well that you can always find a noun or even always identify a noun for an adjective. So, the bottom rule about that is an adjective can only describe a noun. So, if there is an adjective, the following element is nominal. So, and you have to understand this carefully what it means is what is given as one noun can take more than two adjectives also. So, we can say 'old and strict grandmother'.

So, when I say adjectives describe noun and adjective precedes noun so, what we mean is we can use to together they precede the noun grandmother. So, we can use multiple adjectives to describe one noun. At the same time, one noun, one adjective can also describe multiple nouns, one adjective can also describe multiple nouns. This is important information about adjectives to keep in mind. One adjective can describe multiple nouns, and multiple adjectives can also describe just one noun.

In short, adjectives can only precede nominal elements in a sentence. This is a test for identifying nouns and adjectives both in the context of each other. Now we come to the point why do adjectives not, why is there certain restriction, why can we not say 'wooden grandmother? You see there is a restriction on selecting adjectives for nouns and this restriction is not structural. This restriction is semantic, and therefore it is called selectional restriction.

So, we can take ‘tea’ as a noun, and we can say ‘sweet tea’, we can say ‘dark tea’, but we cannot use the adjectives sweet for every other noun. So, we cannot say ‘sweet computer’, we cannot say ‘sweet chair’. We know very well that sweet is not just sweet as an adjective not just have a reference to its little sweetness it is used in other meanings as well. But in those cases, this word has a completely different reference.

So, as long as we understand what I want to underline through this is there is a restriction between the occurrence of adjectives next to a noun and this restriction is purely semantic and cognitive in nature. So, we learn things about adjectives and nouns. One adjective describe nouns, adjectives can only describe nominal elements, and one adjective can describe multiple nouns, and multiple adjectives can also be used to describe a noun, and there is a restriction on the occurrence of the two next to each other which is not structural in nature it is semantic, it is based on meaning. So, these are few things do this exercise for yourself you will learn something new about it.

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Read out aloud at a slow tempo

That will do, granny,' he said ungraciously. 'Let me tell you something about Rajam. Do you know how many marks he gets in Arithmetic?' 'He gets all the marks, does he, child?' asked granny. 'No, silly. He gets ninety marks out of one hundred.' 'Good. But you must also try and get marks like him. . . You know, Swami, your grandfather used to frighten the examiners with his answers sometimes. When he answered a question, he did it in a tenth of the time that others took to do it. And then, his answers would be so powerful that his teachers would give him two hundred marks sometimes. . . . When he passed his F.A. he got such a big medal! I wore it as a pendant for years till—When did I remove it? Yes, when your aunt was born. . . . No, it wasn't your aunt. . . . It was when your father was born. . . . I remember on the tenth day of confinement. . . . No, no, I was right. It was when your aunt was born. Where is that medal now? I gave it away to your aunt—and she melted it and made four bangles out of it. The fool! And such flimsy bangles too! I have always maintained that she is the worst fool in our family. . . .'



We can look at one more passage and see what we learn out of it. So, here we go and like I said read it a couple of times. “that will do Granny he said graciously. Let me tell you something about Rajam. Do you know how many marks he gets in arithmetic? He gets all the marks, does the child asked granny. No, silly he gets 90 marks out of 100. Good, but you must also try to get marks like him. You know, Swami, your grandfather used to frighten the examiners with his answers sometimes. When he answered a question, he did it in a tenth of the time that others took to do it and then his answers would be so powerful that his teachers would give him 200 marks sometimes.

When he passed his F.A. he got such a big medal. I wore it as a pendant for years till when did I remove it, yes when your aunt was born. No, it was not your aunt; it was when your father was born. I remembered on the tenth day of confinement. No, I was right it was when your aunt was born where is the medal now I gave it away to your aunt, and she melted it and

made four bangles out of it. The fool and such flimsy bangles too. I have always maintained that she is the worst fool in our family.

When you read this passage you again see how the grandmother is not just trembling, it is not just mixing things up, in terms of timelines, but also is telling no he is wanting to tell more to Swaminathan than listening to him. Swaminathan wanted to tell his own story. So, can we read it one more time and let me do that and see how this pauses help us.

“That will do Granny he said graciously. Let me tell you something about Rajam do you how many marks he gets in arithmetic. He gets all the marks does he child ask granny. No, silly he gets 90 marks out of 100. Good, but you must also try to get marks like him. You know, Swami, your grandfather used to get, used to frighten the examiners with his answers sometimes. When he answered a question, he did it in the tenth of the time that others took to do it and then his answers should be so powerful that his teachers should give him 200 marks sometimes.

When he passed his F.A he got such a big medal I wore it as a pendant for years still when did I remove it. Yes, when your aunt was born. No, it was not your aunt; it was when your father was born. I remember on the tenth day of confinement. No, no, I was right; it was when your aunt was born, where is the medal now. I gave it to your aunt as she melted it and made four bangles out of it. The fool and such flimsy bangles too. I have always maintained that she is the worst fool in our family.

So, the grandmother dominates the conversation. Now you learn a lot when you read. At this point, I can only go back and tell you that when you listen to elderly people, when you learn from your grandparents, when you hear stories from them as I mentioned you learn about history, you learn about sociology, you learn about culture, you learn manners whatnot. And also please underline such learnings remained lifelong does. They make us who we are; they help us become who we want to become.

Moving away from that what I can underline here for you to read this passage carefully and see how reading was and how you read it to others that it becomes easy for others to understand and again one more time I will underline that please underline the differences, please try to find out the differences when I am reading it twice you will find some of them as I mentioned before it will help you learn something about it.

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ACTIVITY

Do any of these words use all of the four ending?

	-ed	-ing	-er	-est
Try	Tried	Trying	X	X
Answer	✓	✓	✗	✗
Tasty	✗	✗	✓	✓
Wise	✗	✗	✓	✓
Clean	✓	✓	✓	✓

Handwritten notes: Under 'Clean' row, 'er' and 'est' columns, 'cleaner' and 'cleanest' are written with 'Comp' below them.



So, what here I invite you to do another piece of exercise. So, what you can do is take some words like tried, tasty, wise and clean. I have taken 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and try to add these endings and see if that possible word that you can use, can we say I am doing it for you here, can we say tried yes we can. Can we say time yes we can, can we say tier no, can we say tryest no. The answer, answered, answering, answerer, no, answerest no.

Tasty, tastier no, tasting no, tastier yes, tastiest yes. Wised no, wising no, wiser, wisest yes. Cleaned yes, cleaning yes, cleaner yes, cleanest yes. Answered yes, answering yes, answerer no, answerest, no. When we use answerer then that becomes a noun so here 'er' is a marker of an adjective and 'est' is also an ending that we use for adjectives. So, when we are using an adjective let us say 'clean' and when we have a word like 'cleaner' or 'cleanest', so what we do is this is a simple adjective in its simple form. This helps us to comparison.

So, when we say 'I have a cleaner vehicle', I am comparing this vehicle with some other vehicle which is not as clean as this one. When we say 'cleanest' we are the 'est' type of adjective is also in a sense a comparison, but it is called superlative because it is tense out in comparison with everything else that is every other object of that type in comparison with it. So, when it is on the top, it becomes superlative, and this remains comparative because it only creates a comparison between two the one that we are talking about and the other one.

We can say 'I have a cleaner room.' 'My room is cleaner than yours.' These things help you compare one with the other and as I said 'est' is also a comparison, but comparison with all and therefore it becomes superlative. So, try finding some more words and try to do this exercise for yourself and hopefully, it will be fun.

I hope you understand this significance of reading, the significance of learning to read for developing cognitive capacity with the use of language at the same time when we pay attention to the different components not only we learn to understand, but we also pay

attention some of the structural aspects of it. We can learn some complex nuances of a structure very simply and very easy. Thank you so much for your attention. See you soon.

