



## IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE READING COMPREHENSION FOR ESP LEARNERS.

Saidrasulova Shaxnoza

UzJMCU, Department of Foreign languages

Senior teacher

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7800687>

**Abstract:** The aim of this research is to develop and verify the effectiveness of an instructional model of reading for students of higher education. In order to collect data questionnaire and interview schedule was used. The data analysis revealed that, teaching strategies adopted by the teachers and performance of the students in reading comprehension of English were strongly correlated. The main strategies adopted by the teachers for reading English were making students read aloud, translation of the text, asking information based and comprehension questions, teaching grammatical patterns, teaching vocabulary, making summaries, asking for filling gaps, looking for specific information from the given text, column matching, assigning reading home work etc.

**Key Words:** Reading skills, Strategies, Techniques, Activities based teaching, Development, English, enhancement, instructional model, physical education, qualitative and quantitative researches, sophomore students, strategy.

**Introduction:** English has become a global language and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has increasingly become a universal demand. As reported by Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, and Dearden (2018), English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has become a growing global phenomenon, particularly in higher education. More and more higher education institutions are now keen to offer both undergraduate and postgraduate programs through the medium of English (Earls, 2016). The reasons for this are various and context-dependent. They include a perceived need to internalize the higher education institution (Knight, 2013) so that it is prestigious enough to attract foreign students due to falling enrollment numbers of local students through changing demographics, national cuts in higher education investment, the need of the public sector to compete with the private sector, and the status of English as an international language (EIL), especially in the domain of research publications.

The teaching of English as a foreign language is always a challenging task. When it comes to the places where English serves a very limited purpose, it becomes more crucial and painstaking to teach and learn. The aim of teaching English in this research is to develop students' English professional capability, increase their knowledge of different academic disciplines, and prepare them to take part in the international community (Wanphet & Tantawy, 2018). In this context, English is considered an instrument rather than a subject. In other words, mastery of the English language is regarded as a by-product of attaining academic knowledge in content courses (Alfehaid, 2018).

Traditional teaching practices and classroom do not promote many opportunities for the students to participate in the classroom or speak in the classroom rather they are like one-way traffic. The teacher plays an active role and teaches deductively throughout the course.

However, the demand for today's competitive world is to become active and expressive students at every forum. Students still do not feel comfortable when they are asked to deliver a speech or speak in front of the audience. This is because they are not trained enough to read and speak in the classroom. Additionally, teachers across the world in ESL/EFL classrooms do not use strategies or techniques to teach reading skills or develop the schema of the students.

English as an international language has been playing important role in the social, economical and scientific development all around the world. Khan (2007) states that, English is one of the major sources of communication in the world. According to Muhammad (2013) there is number of the countries of the world where English is taught as second or foreign language and is also included in the list of such country. The importance of English can be witnessed from the fact that it is being taught as compulsory subject from grade and assumed to be main source of getting employment, higher education. Although serious efforts have been made for teaching English yet it has not reached to its satisfactory level. In this regard Nunan (2003) states that, teaching and learning process of English is not good because grammatical structures, translation of the text in mother tongue and the sentences are produced generally emphasizing reading and writing without meaningful tasks. Hence communicative skills are ignored which results in low confidence of the learners. Mumtaz (2006) rightly observes that teachers fail to recognize the benefits of reading and that is why they neglect or ignore it in the classroom.

Reading skills especially in EFL settings have different goals or we can say that a reader read a text with different intentions. Understanding a written text means getting the required meaning of that particular text as efficiently as possible. To retrieve the required meaning from the text one needs to apply different reading strategies according to their needs and wants. For example looking a newspaper for some specific information and looking a notice for required information or particular kind of information.

Richard Allington and the Commission on Reading define reading as the process of constructing meaning from written texts. Skilled reading is: Constructive: Learning to reason about written material using knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study.

Fluent: Mastery of basic processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning.

Strategic: Controlling one's reading in relation to one's purpose, the nature of the material and whether one comprehends.

Motivated: Able to sustain attention and learning that written material can be interesting and informative; and

A lifelong pursuit: Continuous practices, development, and refinement (Allington, 1998).

Literature review: Reading skill is associated with important outcomes in modern society, such as employment and income prospects (OECD, 1997). How to best establish strong foundational reading skills, encourage children to become strong readers (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997), reduce the disparity between good and poor readers and alleviate possible Matthew Effects (Stanovich, 1986) has been the centre of much debate. It is well recognized that reading comprises both language and word recognition skills (e.g., Gough & Tunmer, 1986) but, as is argued in this article, there is currently little evidence on how

comparatively earlier development of reading skills affects the development of language skills among English learners.

Researchers have determined that these readers actively coordinate a number of conscious processes before, during, and after reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Good readers are aware of how their reading is going and why. They know, for example, when a text is difficult to read because it contains many new ideas and when it is difficult to read because it is poorly written. They are adept at using their prior knowledge as they read to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them.

Reading is a highly strategic process during which readers are constantly constructing meaning using a variety of strategies, such as activating background knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, making predictions, drawing inferences, asking questions and summarizing. Strategies are used in combination to solve problems, to think about text and to check understanding. Consequently, teaching comprehension strategies should focus on thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000),

Reading as a Process-Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what that meaning is. Reader knowledge, skills and strategies include-

Linguistic competence- ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary and how words are structured into sentences.

Discourse competence- knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the texts to one another.

Sociolinguistics competence- knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content.

Strategic competence-the ability to use top-down strategies as well as knowledge of the language.

Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skill and strategies are appropriate for the type of texts, and understand how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

According to Anne (Citation2000), instructional practices in reading comprehension have shifted over the last century from using oral reading to help get meaning from text to using silent reading to aid comprehension; from using worksheets, workbooks, and reading kits to direct student comprehension to teaching reading strategies that aid students in guiding their own comprehension; from asking "what" questions (e.g., those that provide practice finding the main idea) to asking "how" and "why" questions (e.g., those that teach how to make inferences while reading); from teaching subs-kills (e.g., identifying a story sequence) to teaching comprehension strategies that include these sub-skills (e.g., summarizing); from providing little direct teaching to increasing the amount of direct teaching that is specific (e.g., strategy instruction), followed by supervised independent practice.

Methods: The data from teachers' interview and classroom observations as well as students' questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted in order to examine the procedures teachers implement to help learners with low reading skills.

The result from classroom observation showed that translating the written text into learners' L1 was used as one way of helping learners with low reading skills. Moreover,

during loud reading activities, immediate articulation error correction of words was used as another technique to help those learners.

The interviewed teachers forwarded different strategies. Some of these are: letting good reader students read as a model, translating reading passages into the students' mother tongue, letting them read in front of the class, preparing reading competitions, and advising them to read different English texts are some of the ways teachers use to help students develop their reading skills.

The participant teachers' responses concerning this particular question showed the procedures they apply to help learners with low reading skills. For instance, using clever students (good readers) as model readers was one of the strategies employed. Teacher 04 regarding this said, "There are some students who cannot even read a word ... The only thing I do to help students with low reading skills is I let a good reader read it and I just make them follow them as a model." He added that if he has time, he himself sometimes shows them how they should read. Translating reading passages into the students' mother tongue was the other strategy used. On this subject Teacher 03 said, "Sometimes I try to help learners by using their mother tongue. That means in the classroom I help them by interpreting (translating) the text. Especially if the text is short, I try to interpret it in the classroom. Teacher 02's strategies are letting them read in front of the class and advising them to read different English texts. On the other hand, the student respondents to the questionnaire item: "Our teacher guides us how to read texts in the class." The majority (28.43%) of the participants said their teachers always guide them on how they should read texts. On the subject of whether or not their teachers point out students' particular problems regarding reading, most (22.54%) of them replied their teachers very often showed students reading problems. Contrary to this, a significant number of students (19.60%) and (21.56%) consecutively answered that teachers never and rarely declare the students' specific reading difficulties.

**Discussions and conclusions:** The very essential point the researcher deduced from the practice of teaching reading skill was the absence of supplementary reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, and novels. The teachers were dependent on the textbook. Supplementary materials help to motivate learners (Dodd, Citation2015) by creating interest in learning and encouraging learners to use the language in the class. Moreover, Riasati (Citation2010) explains that using supplementary materials in the class is necessary because there are different groups of learners with different learning needs and learning styles, topics in a textbook may not be relevant for and interesting to all learners. Thus, to fulfill the needs of students and the objectives of the lesson a teacher has to select and use the appropriate supplementary materials for the reading classes.

Furthermore, the teaching of vocabulary which is one of the key practices in instructing reading skills was not given sufficient emphasis. In line with this, Thorburry (Citation2002) states teaching words is a crucial aspect of learning a language as languages are based on words. Walters (Citation2004) added that it is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Both teachers and students agree that the acquisition of vocabulary is a central factor in teaching a language. These assertions show how vocabulary is an important element in language teaching. Thus, adequate emphasis should be given to both its instruction and method of instruction.



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