



# International Journal for Innovative Engineering and Management Research

A Peer Reviewed Open Access International Journal

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IJIEMR Transactions, online available on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Link: <https://ijiemr.org/downloads/Volume-10/Issue-06>

**DOI: 10.48047/IJIEMR/V10/I06/41**

Title: **READING INSTRUCTION PROBLEMS**

Volume 10, Issue 06, Pages: 205-207

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## READING INSTRUCTION PROBLEMS

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**Abstract:** This article presents the difficulties which occur in teaching reading as a language learning skill. To support reading comprehension, the teaching process is perceived as a crucial part as it not only facilitates when working with teaching materials but also when processing and perceiving foreign language data. The aim of this study is to find out what impact innovative materials have on developing comprehension of foreign language texts.

**Keywords:** teaching reading, assessment, innovative teaching methods, comprehension, foreign language text.

### Introduction

Most of the first year EFL students have stern difficulties in most of the English language areas such as: writing, strategic reading, listening, and communication. Generally, teachers report students' weaknesses in all these skills [1, 43-45]. One of the obstacles that confront the teachers of reading comprehension is the lack of skills, knowledge, and strategies for good comprehension. For first year learners, teachers are required to teach these strategies and to make diagnostic assessment in order to detect and overcome students' weaknesses instead of only introducing literary texts with the focus on comprehension questions and vocabulary items. Gabb puts a very vital inquiry why students face difficulties in moving into fluency stage although they have acquired the essential decoding skills. She categorizes a number of obstacles such as: limited vocabulary and lack of background knowledge (schematic knowledge). Orasanu demonstrates: *"the knowledge a reader brings to a text is a principal determiner of how that text will be comprehended, and what may be learned and remembered"*. That is to say that students' background knowledge is important in reading because it determines their text's comprehension. In the last few years, students

were not taught the reading strategies and the reading skills but were simply given texts to read and answer. In other words, they were not equipped with the techniques and the skills that help them skim, scan, evaluate, judge, criticize, react, or discuss the author's ideas. They were not introduced to all these reading fundamentals that train them how to select and read a text or a book [2,16-18 ].

### Main part

Furthermore, the teaching of reading at the some of the departments of English in the Uzbekistan universities is teacher-centered rather than learner-centered. In fact, the students do not contribute in the selection of texts or topics for classroom study. Reading is never rewarded and is limited to text comprehension in the classroom. Moreover, it is conceived as a simple subject or module to pass at the end of the year.

Still, EFL learners are not trained to be autonomous and active readers. In more clear words, they are not pushed by teachers of reading to make extensive reading to build up knowledge and to enhance their language. Unfortunately, this approach to improve students' language competence is utterly neglected by both teachers and students

although they admit that poor reading leads to poor language achievements.

Reading comprehension can function on three levels: literal comprehension is the basic level at which the reader understands factual information; inferential level of understanding involves inferring details that are not explicitly stated in the text; critical level of comprehension takes place when the reader evaluates the text and the writer's ideas, compares and contrasts the information. Weak readers "have enormous difficulty progressing beyond a literal level of comprehension because most of their cognitive effort is taken up in unlocking the print". While good comprehenders and effective readers use a number of cognitive skills as they read (visualising scenes, actions and characters in a narrative text, reflecting critically, questioning, monitoring understanding, evaluating, predicting, inferring, and summarising), poor comprehenders and ineffective readers do not interact cognitively with the information, do not think deeply, do not check or monitor understanding, do not read critically, or use effective strategies to aid comprehension. [3, 34-78]. On the contrary, being inexperienced readers, children do not possess knowledge related to a variety of a text organisation and may find understanding different text/discourse structures difficult. Also, children's experience with oral language does not prepare them for understanding the organisation of paragraphs as discourse unites, nor does it give them the skills of analysing topic sentences. What is more, the first texts children read are too short to be organised in paragraphs, so that they can learn about paragraphs and discourse organisation once they start reading longer texts. In respect to certain grammatical structures that children learn in written texts, rather than in spoken language, it is often the case that such new grammar patterns may appear confusing and

problematic for children. Cameron argues that "without the support that comes from recognising the syntactic patterns, early readers have to work on each word as a separate unit, working out what it is and storing it in memory while the next word is tackled," which can be inefficient as "memory spans are limited, and words can drop out of short term memory before the child gets to the end of the sentence and has a chance to work out the meaning of the whole" [4, 315-317]. Consequently, beginning readers' inability to integrate text information from different levels, and their inadequate experience with different types of discourse, may result in comprehension difficulties at text level.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, without acquisition of functional decoding skills children cannot build sight vocabulary or achieve fluency in word identification by combining groups of letters and blending them into words. Identification of words is "the most basic but indispensable first step toward reading connected text with understanding," and if it is done rapidly, it "releases the reader's cognitive abilities to concentrate fully on the meaning of the material being read and his or her response to it". Obviously, L2 reading development is influenced by a learner's L1 literacy skills and L1 orthography, which "may help explain possible L2 difficulties in word recognition, fluency and reading rate.

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