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Developing Reading Strategies for Enhancing Learners'

Reading Comprehension

The Case of 1st Year Master Economics Students

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Dedication

*My humble effort is dedicated to my sweet and loving parents who
believed in me.*

My supportive and encouraging siblings

My lovely best friend

My devoted and beloved fiancé

*Special thanks to all my colleagues and friends at TOYOTA ALGERIE
SPA. I truly appreciate the support they gave me.*

Acknowledgements

Praise to ALLAH for giving me both the strength and faith to accomplish my goal.

My deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Abdelaziz BOUSBAI for his unwavering support and mentorship throughout this journey .

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

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Abstract

General Introduction

1-Statement of Problem.

2-Aims of the Study.

3-Research Questions.

4-Hypothesis.

5-Methodology.

6-Structure of the Dissertation.

7-Definition of the key words.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Reading is a receptive language process; it is the process of recognition and interpretation of written or printed materials. Yet, reading proficiency plays a major role in understanding a written statement accurately and efficiently, in fact reading is considered as a channel of communication.

Higher university studies require learners to conduct a number of academic tasks, such as reading and comprehending articles, summarizing books, writing essays, etc. Since university students are expected to rely on themselves in processing texts, they must be autonomous and active, their role as learners is to conduct academic tasks and investigate into their field of study.

However, this will not be achieved unless learners use appropriate reading strategies, which Grabe (2009), defines strategies as “processes that are consciously controlled by readers to solve reading problems” (p.221). In this essence, strategies are methods or plans made by learners to overcome problems occurring while reading. However, due to the complex nature of reading, learners face many problems when they read technical authentic texts. Westwood (2008), argues that, weak readers read very little and are the very students who use a variety of tactics to reduce the amount of time they spend engaging with books. Hence, they think of reading as a frustrating process, that will lead them to think of reading as an embarrassing task, which would affect their self-esteem, confidence and motivation.

Therefore, it is intended throughout this study to highlight the major causes of reading problems faced by L2 learners which is the case of First Year Master Economics Students at the University of Ouargla.

Statement of the Problem

It is generally known that reading is a skill that comes from experience and needs to be constantly improved through different types of reading materials. Moreover, reading is considered as a crucial element in improving readers’ use of language. If reading comprehension fails, students will need to repair their comprehension, and this would not be accomplished unless learners’ have the ability to be strategic in their

learning process; meaning that; they need to select the appropriate reading strategies in order to manage their comprehension of any task involves reading.

First year Economics students face enormous problems in comprehending authentic texts within their field of study. They are neither exposed to nor aware of any effective strategies used in processing scientific and authentic materials.

Aims of the Study

The current study aims to; first identify and apply a pertinent reading strategy in Economics university course to increase the learners' comprehension of scientific texts. Second, it attempts to incorporate authentic materials in reading sessions.

Research Question

- 1- To what extent can reading strategies enhance the learners of Economics performance of English language?
- 2- What problems do economics students encounter when reading a text in their field?
- 3- In what ways can authentic materials develop the learners' comprehension of scientific materials?

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that, using appropriate strategies and authentic materials would enhance the reading comprehension performance of Economics Students.

Methodology

This study is conducted on First Year Master of Economics students at Ouargla University. They are chosen because their academic programme requires them to undertake English course as a part of their academic learning. So, it is natural that they are likely to face problems in processing scientific materials.

Even though there are many methods of conducting this inquiry, we have chosen the descriptive method because the nature of the problem requires us to use this approach. The purpose of adopting the descriptive method is to examine, describe, explain and interpret the conditions of the phenomenon intended to be studied in this research. To collect information, we used the questionnaire which is one of the tools of data collection in a descriptive research.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two main parts. The first one consists of three chapters. The first chapter presents an overview of the nature reading; the second one deals with academic reading; as for the third chapter, it introduces the problems and their causes.

The second part of the dissertation is devoted to the analysis of the findings. This part is followed by the general conclusion and some pedagogical recommendations.

Definition of Key words

- ❖ **Academic Reading:** deals with concepts and ideas related to subjects that are studied in an academic context. Academic reading requires students to obtain information and understand ideas and theories.
- ❖ **Reading:** “is a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with the text in order to (re) create meaningful discourse.” (Silberstein, 1994).
- ❖ **Reading Strategies:** the term refers to techniques or approaches that the reader employs in order to facilitate the reading process.
- ❖ **Reading Skill:** “automatic and routinized information processing techniques that are applied to a text unconsciously due to expertise, repeated practice.” (Alexander et al, 1998).

Section One : Theoretical Part

Chapter One : The Nature of Reading

Introduction

1. Definition of Reading

2. Processes of Reading

2.1. Bottom-Up Model

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3. Reading Approaches

3.1 Environmentalist Approach

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4. Purpose of Reading

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Introduction

Reading is conceived as a key skill in the process of learning. Without an adequate reading skill, learners will struggle because reading is thought to be the primary means for gaining various sources of knowledge. Furthermore, it is one of the four significant skills, especially for those learning English as a second and foreign language (ESL/ EFL) for academic purposes or professional development. Since reading in second language is the essence of our study, in this chapter, the literature relevant to this study will be reviewed. First to examine the nature of reading. Second, various approaches of reading and reading processing models will be highlighted. Finally, different purposes of this skill will be exposed.

1. Definition of Reading

Reading has been described in a variety of ways to explain the process of what happens when one reads and how one comprehends a text. However, a widely accepted explanation of reading is not found in the literature (Dubin, Eskay and Grab 1986). The definition of reading varies from one person to another, for some it is recognizing written words, for others it is an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking. However, reading always has a purpose. Reading should highly considered because it is an integral part of our daily life. It is assumed to be something that everyone can do. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading. People may read for different purposes, some may read to survive, others to learn and others read for pleasure Nuttal (1996) states that the central ideas behind reading are: (1) the idea of meaning, (2) the transfer of a meaning from one mind to another, (3) the transfer of a message from writer to reader, (4) how we get meaning by reading, (5) how the reader, the writer and the text all contribute to the process.

Learning to read requires considerable cognitive effort and long learning process, whether one is learning to read in the L1 or in the L2. If a person is not taught to read, in one way or in another by a teacher, a parent, a sibling, that person will not learn to read (Grabe and Stoller 2002). Reading is not just a source of information but also a means of extending one's knowledge as Wilga said (1980, 259) "Clearly reading is a most important activity, but also as a mean of consolidating and extending one's knowledge." Over the last three decades, the view of reading has changed from as a mere process of decoding to an interactive process between the text and the reader.

According to Spiro (1977), Brewer and Treyns (1981) reading is a “ multi-level interactive process”; that is the text must be analyzed at various levels with units of analysis going from the letter to the text as a whole. Mitchell (as cited in Dubin et Al., 1986), for instance defines reading as ability to make sense of written messages. Goodman (1976) argues that reading is a “psycholinguistic guessing game” in which the reader reconstructs as best as he can a message which has been encoded by a writer”. Grabe also describes Goodman’s perception of reading which is seen as an:

{...}active process of comprehending where students need to be taught strategies to read more efficiently (eg. Guess from context, define expectations, make inferences about the text, skim ahead to fill in the text, etc (1991, P.377).

Reading can be seen as an interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or what is called reading fluency. In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text and tries to elicit the meaning using various kinds of knowledge such as: systemic knowledge, i.e. linguistic knowledge as well as schematic knowledge about the world.

Considering the definitions cited above, we can acknowledge that reading is not a straight forward process; however, it is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page, but also from the ideas, memories and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences. Prior to further discussion of how readers comprehend the writer’s words and what the necessary conditions are to maximize comprehension, a broad analysis of the models of the reading processes proposed in reading research would be helpful in giving deeper insight into the nature of reading comprehension.

2. Processes of Reading

Reading researchers have sought to identify how reading comprehension works and what processes are involved in comprehension. It has emerged models of how readers extract meaning from a text. These three models have been mentioned in L1 reading research: bottom up, top-down, and interactive models.

2.1. Bottom-Up Model

It is known as text-based model, distinguishes decoding from comprehension. According to this model, learners need to recognize letters before they can read words. In other words, the reader focuses mainly on the text, analyzing it, starting from smaller textual units and building up a meaning

for a text from these small units at the bottom (letters to sounds and to words) to larger units at the top (phrases- clauses, sentences) (Brow, 1998; Carrel et al, 1988; Thompson, 1988; Urquhart et Weir, 1998).

In this process word recognition takes place prior to comprehension, as shown in the figure below:

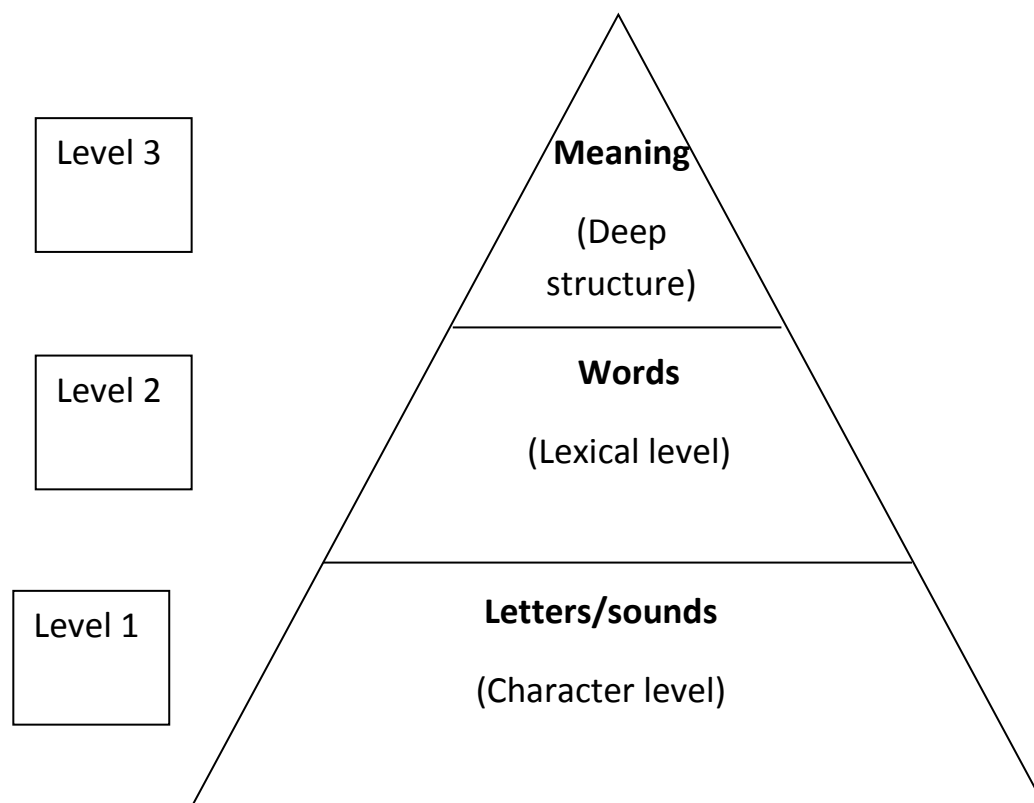


Figure 1: Bottom-Up Model

2.2. Top-Down Model

It is known as reader based model, this model is based upon schema theory which accounts for the acquisition of knowledge and the interpretation of text through the activation of schemata (networks) of information stored in the brain which acts as filters for incoming information.

In top-down models, the reader's background knowledge of the content (content schemata) and rhetorical structure of the text (formal schemata) play an important role in the processing of the text (Carrel et Al 1988). Thus, the reader. It is viewed as an active participant in the reading process, extracting meaning from the text, making predictions, and confirming or disconfirming those predictions (Carrel et Al, 1988; Carter et Numan, 2001; Thompson, 1988; Urquhart et Weir, 1998). An example of top-down approach to reading comprehension is the psycholinguistic model of reading proposed by Goodman

(cited in Grabeetstoller, 2002). Goodman(ibid) has described reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” in which readers guess or predict the text’s meaning on the basis of minimal textual information, and maximum use of existing, activated knowledge. Goodman’s theory had an impact on both first or native language reading and later on second language and foreign language reading, in the sense that the reader was seen as an active participant in the reading process, making and confirming predications based on background knowledge and command of various levels; graphophonic, syntactic, semantic.(Carrel et Al, 1988; Thompson, 1988). As demonstrated in the figure below:

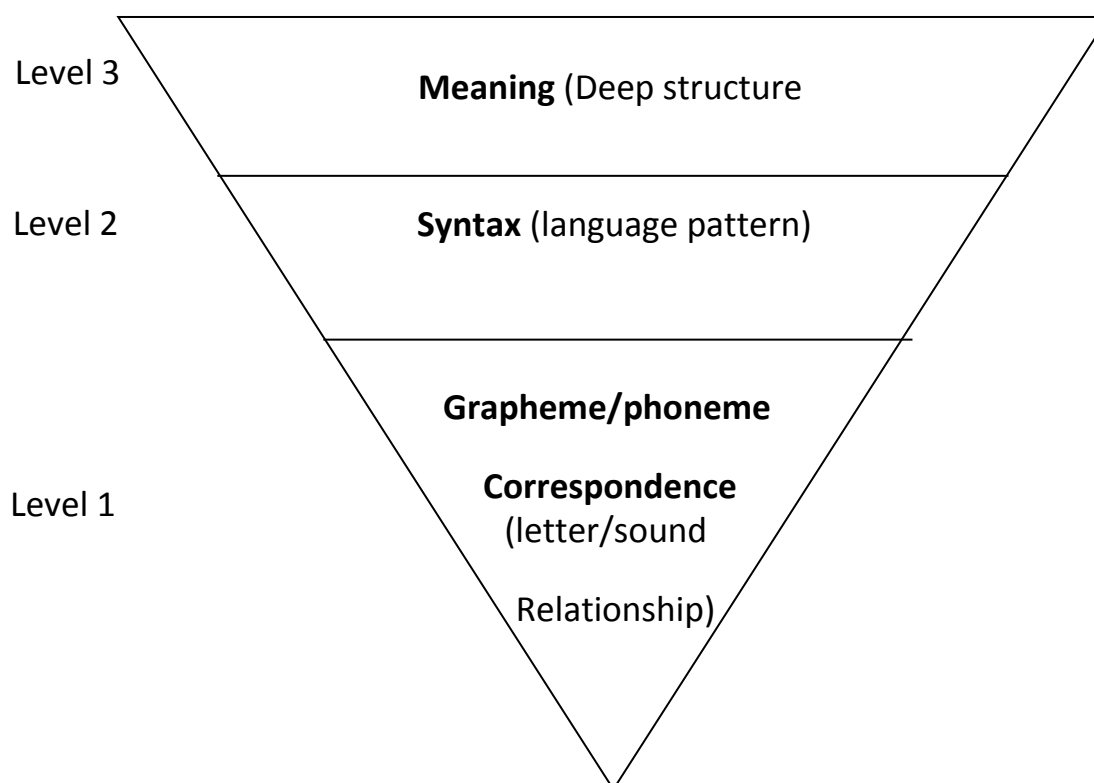


Figure 2: Top-Down Model

2.3. The Interactive

Also known as balanced model, proposed by Rumelhart (as cited in Brown, 1988), refers to the interaction between the bottom-up and top-down processing. That is readers process reading by first, interpreting the linguistic items in the text (bottom-up process), second, relating this information to what is already known about the world (Carrel et Eisterhold, 1983).

Although, research has attempted to explain the processes involved in reading comprehension, the nature of reading process remain complex. As it's shown in the figure below

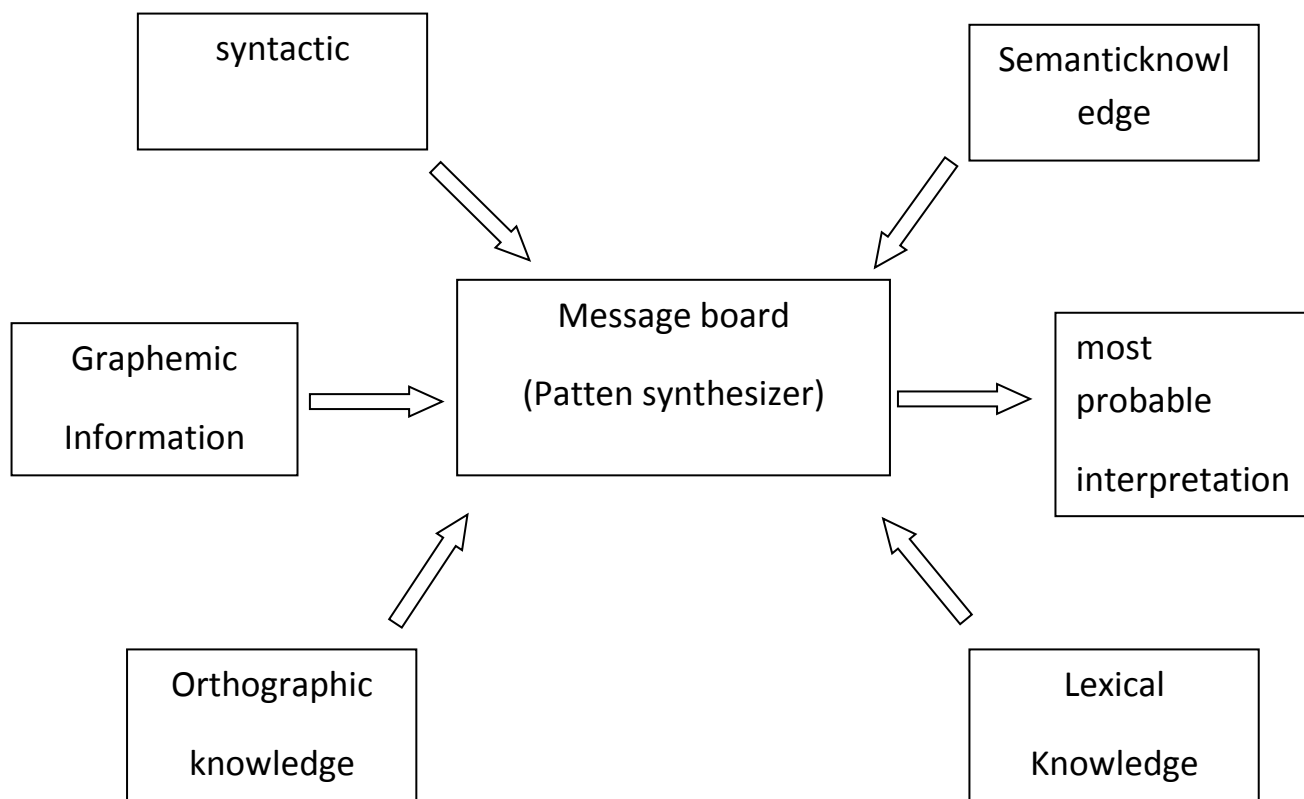


Figure 3. Interactive

1.3 . Reading Approaches

As it has been stated above the term reading is tackled in different ways by different scholars. However, we have not mentioned how the view of reading has changed over the past decades. Since reading skill is dealt within the field of language learning and language teaching. In this section, we shall shed the light on three current approaches to teaching reading from a communicative perspective namely those of the environmentalist, the innatist and the interactionist.

3.1. Environmentalist Approach

Language learning was dominated by the environmentalists ideas up to the end of 1960's (Uso-Juan & Martinez- Flor, 2006). Two schools of thought in linguistics and psychology emerged.

In linguistics, Bloomfield's (1933) structural school of linguistics was very influential in the 1940's and 1950's. Bloomfield and his followers (structuralists) view language as "consisting of different elements related to each other in a linear way by means of a series of structures of rules" (ibid). Bloomfield, in his book, *Language* (1933) insists that a scientific theory of language must reject all data that are not directly observable or physically measurable (cited in Malmkjær, 1991).

In the field of psychology, an influential school of thought appeared, the behaviourist school, the main figure of this school, B.F Skinner who based his learning theory on three elements: stimulus, response and reinforcement. Behaviorists view learning in terms of imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation. This school neglected the human mind and concentrated on observable facts outside the person. Under this influence reading was viewed as a passive perceptual process. Readers were merely decoders of symbols printed on the page before they could construct the author's intended meaning (Carrel, Devine and Eskey, 1988).

3.2. Innatist Approach

The environmentalist view of reading was challenged by many researchers, Chomsky is one of them, who undermined the behaviourists models of language learning that prevailed throughout the 1950's.

Chomsky (1957, 1965) and his linguistic revolution provided the basis for the innatist theory of language learning, which claims that children are born with an innate faculty language acquisition device (LAD) that helps them to acquire a language.

Following Chomsky's innatist position, researchers were interested in understanding how this view would work in the acquisition of reading. For example, research in psycholinguistics in particular the work of Goodman (1965, 1967, 1969), and Smith (1971) have shown that reading is an active process in which readers guess or predict the text's meaning on the basis of textual information and background knowledge activation (cited in USO- Juan & Martinez - Flor, 2006).

3.3. Interactionist Approach

The significant change in language learning was conducted by the interactionist approach by the late 1970's. All the works were carried out from the disciplines of linguistics cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics.

In the field of linguistics, studies shifted from sentences to discourse (or language beyond sentences). In the meantime, in the cognitive psychology, researchers were interested in understanding what goes on in the reader's mind during the reading process. Thus, story grammarians (Rumelhart, 1975; Thorndyke, 1977; Stein and Glenn, 1979) represented an effort to formulate correspondence between the structure of the story and the processing properties involved in the reading process and its effect on understanding (Rumelhart, 1975). However, these ideas did not get to the heart of comprehension because, the form was considered more important than the content. i.e. they were so structural and neglected the non-textual of the reading act (Pearson and Stephens 1994) .

The interest that was given to the non-textual factors involved in the reading process gave birth to the most influential theory (schema theory) in the 1980's (Grabe, 1988; Rosenblatt, 1988; Swaffrar, 1988) argued that reading is an interactive process, that is a dynamic interaction between the reader and the writer whereby the reader creates meaning from the text by activating his stored knowledge and extending it with the new information supplied by the text.

4.Purposesof Reading

In academic settings, reading is supposed to be the central means for learning information. It also provides the foundation for synthesis and critical evaluation skills. Besides, reading is the primary means for autonomous learning. L1 and L2 learners read for a variety of purposes (Grabe 2002) such as:

- 1- Reading to search for information: scan or search text for a specific topic, word, or phrase.
- 2- Reading for general comprehension: get the main ideas and at least some supporting ideas and information.
- 3- Reading to learn new information: understand the main ideas and store meanings and supporting details in a coherent organizational frame.
- 4- Reading to synthesize and evaluate information, in addition, reflect on the text content, integrate it with prior knowledge, and judge quality and appropriateness of texts in relation to what is already known about the topic (Saville-Troike, 2006, P157).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to provide a review of the nature of reading. It has shown the significant progress made over the past decades in understanding what reading comprehension is and the enormous impact it has left on both learning and teaching fields. Once considered as a plane decoding process, reading now is considered as an interactive, constructive and contextualized process that enables learners make sense of what they read. Not to mention that the psychological and sociocultural factors play a key role in the success of the reading process.

The first chapter has dealt with the term reading without reference to any particular context. In the next chapter we will deal with the term in an academic context where reading is considered to be important and paramount in the success of EFL learners.

Chapter two : Academic Reading and Reading Strategies

Introduction

2.1. Academic Purposes for Reading

2.2. Definition of Reading Strategies

2.3. Skills Vs Strategies

2.4. Classification of Reading Strategies

2.4.1. Metacognitive Reading Strategies

2.4.2. Cognitive Strategies

2.4.3. Social/ Affective Strategies

2.5. Types of Reading

2.5.1. Intensive Reading

2.5.2. Extensive Reading

2.6. Reading Transfer

Conclusion

Introduction

Learning to read has been always considered as a type of problem solving. Studies in first and second language (L1/L2) have confirmed that good readers become “strategic” in their attempts to make sense of a text. They have focused on identifying which strategies the learners use and which ones are most effective, also how skilled readers use them in order to achieve their strategic competence. This latter, is fundamental for enabling L2 learners to achieve purpose for communicating. Talking about reading and reading instruction is based on the assumption that reading fundamentally involves comprehending what we read. In other words, the finding or creating of meaning which depends heavily on having automatic word-level skills, the appropriate background knowledge and various comprehension strategies(Pressley 2000).

Good readers need strong word-level skills because they enable them to decode a text efficiently. Skilled readers also contribute significantly to their comprehension of texts through the background knowledge they bring to the reading task. It also helps them to make inferences.

2.1.Academic Reading

In the past decades, researchers discovered a mutual relationship between a student’s academic reading skills and academic success. However, students take the learning of this skill for granted, therefore most of them fail at conducting any academic task presented to them.

Reading is a process shaped partly by the text, partly by the reader’s background and partly by the situation reading occurs(Hunt, 2004). Thus, academic reading is a demanding and complex process, which requires a high focus from the students. It is very different to every day reading, simply because with academic reading the learner will have a larger amount of reading materials and he/she needs to be able to grasp the main ideas, theories, key themes and arguments while reading.

In addition, an academic text does not simply involve finding information about the text itself, rather it is a process of working with the text itself and connecting with the author and the context in order to recreate a new meaning to the text. The reader recreates the meaning of the text together with the author, in other words, the reader negotiate the meaning with the author by applying his prior knowledge to it(Maleek and Heerman, 1992).

However, this process is only possible if learners use a series of strategies by which they can read effectively and in a short period of time. Unfortunately, most of students are neither aware of nor exposed to those strategies.

For this reason, the following section is devoted to strategies that university students can adopt to achieve their purposes effectively.

2.2. Reading Strategies

There are various views concerning reading strategies depending on different scholars and literary sources, that is why there is no clear cut definition of the term.

Oxford Dictionary defines the word strategy as “ a) a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose; b) the purpose of planning something or putting a plan into operation in a skillful way.”

Paris, Wasik&Turner(1991), define reading as tactics used by readers to comprehend texts better. Also, “a strategy is a plan selected deliberately by the reader to accomplish a particular goal or to complete a given task (Paris, Lipson &Wixon 1983). According to Garner(1987), reading strategies are generally deliberate, playful activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure”(p.95).

So, we conclude that reading strategies are mental actions deliberately employed by the reader to facilitate the reading process; first to enhance his/her reading comprehension and second, to overcome reading difficulties so that ultimately they achieve particular reading goals.

2.3. Skills Vs Strategies

The term reading skills has been in curricula for teachers at least for 50 years. In contrast, the term strategies became popular in the 1970s to signify the cognitive aspects of information processing.

When most people think about strategies they immediately think about skills. *Larouse Chambers English Dictionary* defines strategies “ the art of planning or carrying out a plan skillfully”; whereas it defines skill is as “ the cleverness of doing something either from practice or from natural gift.”

Although the terms skills and strategies are sometimes used interchangeably, it should be mentioned that a distinction between them exist. Alexander, Graham & Harris (1998) highlight two differences between strategies and skills:

a)-“automaticity of performance”

b)-“learner’s awareness and intentionality”

Thus, based on what have been mentioned above, skills are defined as automatic or routinized information processing techniques that are applied to a text unconsciously because of expertise, repeated practice, luck and naïve use (Alexander et al, 1998).

Strategies, on the other hand, are defined as tactics that readers use deliberately when routine techniques are inadequate to resolve a given interpretation (Anderson, 1991;Carrell, 1998; Paris et al; 1991).Therefore, skills are performed in the same way every time used, and strategies are employed differently because the unique nature of text requires readers to modify strategies to fit the demands of the text(Duffy1993).

All in all, it is believed that skills and strategies are two sides of the same coin; meaning that they both have different stages of development. Yet, they encourage readers to perform well, as well as to contribute in facilitating the reading process.In this essence, skill can become a strategy if it is employed deliberately. Similarly, a strategy can become a skill when it is used automatically.

2.4.Classification of Reading Strategies

A standard consistent classification of reading strategies is not found in the literature, however depending on the level or type of processing involved, reading strategies can be classified into three categories: Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Social/affective strategies.

2.4.1.Metacognitive Reading Strategies

The strategies that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies are called metacognitive, they are higher order skills that help readers gain awareness of whether they comprehend texts or not. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed (Skeham1993, p.87).

These strategies help readers observe their reading process and themselves as learners and use them in order to identify available resources, decide which to use so that they can perform a specific task.

According to Brown (1994, p.115), metacognitive strategies include “checking the outcome of any attempt to solve a problem planning one’s next move, monitoring the effectiveness of any attempted action, testing, revising and evaluating one’s next strategies for learning”. In other words, metacognitive strategies are used to plan, monitor and regulate the reading as it occurs.

a)Self Monitoring

Hanson(1996) views that the ability of a student to self-monitor his or her performance is a natural step toward becoming independent, which can only happen when students take responsibility for their own behavior and essentially become “agents of change” (p.173-191).Thus, self-monitoring is used to assess whether students are functioning academically and to improve their academic performance.

b)Evaluation

Evaluating is a reading strategy conducted during and after reading, this involves encouraging the reader to form opinions, make judgments, and develop ideas from reading. Teachers can create evaluation questions that lead the student to make generalizations about and critically evaluate a text.

c)Questioning the text:

By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading.

When a student need to understand and use new information though it is most beneficial if he/she writes the question, as the learner read the text for the first time. With the use of this strategy , learners can understand the material better and focus only on the main ideas , not on illustrations or details.

2.4.2.Cognitive Strategies

William and Burden state that Cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information order to learn, that is for obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information (1997, p.148). They are also defined as “mental steps or operators that learners use to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content“ (Weden& Robin, 1987.p19). These strategies require of readers to make predictions and hypothesis about the text content by relating the new information to their prior knowledge, meaning that readers use those strategies to strengthen the relationship between new and existing knowledge of the learners.

The cognitive strategies used in reading include guessing from the context, analyzing, skimming, scanning, note taking and summarizing.

a)ActivatingPrior Knowledge

It is a reading strategy that occurs before the student is introduced to reading material. The instructor uses pre-reading activity which can be done in the form of class discussion. This enables the reader to make connections between something they already have knowledge of and the new knowledge from the text.

b)Predicting

Malegiano(1993) states that “prediction strategy involves thinking about what might be coming next in the text. It is applied by effective reading that means, the used picture, headings and text as well as personal experience to make prediction before they begin to read”.

The reader predicts what may happen; afterwards he confirms or denies his prediction. Also, this strategy motivates learners to share ideas and to work in pairs or in groups.

c)Skimming and scanning

Skimming is a reading technique that is used to get a quick glance of a section or chapter to extract the main ideas. It is used by readers to generate“ a general idea about the content of printed materials through reading the text quickly, i.e. , in this strategy readers will look for something quite specific or develop general ideas before putting effort into close reading” (Grellet, 1991).

Scanning is a reading technique which implies, reading quickly to locate specific information, according to Grellet, (1998), “it is a tactic that requires reader to search information without reading the whole text, through looking at its title, table of content, and so on.” Both of reading strategies can be used by readers in order to assist them in extracting specific information in a short amount of time, still, the two techniques must be taught appropriately in order to serve the learner.

d)Summarizing

Oxford(2006) defines “summarizing as a short description of the main ideas or points of something without any details (p:77)”.Reading Rockets organization(2014) points out : “ summarizing teaches students how to discern the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information and how

to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way. Teaching students to summarize improves their cognitive ability about what they read.” Summarizing begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. It involves putting ideas together again with the reader’s own words and in condensed form.

e)Previewing

This tactic enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the head notes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

2.4.3.Social/Affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies are those which are non academic in nature and involve stimulating learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and student. They include considering factors such as emotions and attitudes (Oxford,1990).

a)-Social strategies refer to obtaining correction and feedback from other individuals, also when comprehension is not difficult, readers will ask assistance from teachers or peers.

b)-Affective strategies refer to strategies which are related more to the learner’s psychology. Readers may constantly make statements to encourage themselves and may pay attention to factors that interfere with the success by dealing with them, in other words risks are evaluated and wisely dealt with in order to lower anxiety.To sum up, Social/affective strategies are those strategies which involve other individuals in the learning process, and refer to cooperation with peers questioning, asking for correction and feedback.

2.5.Types of Reading

Extensive and intensive readings have attracted the attention of researchers and educationists for many years in the field of second language teaching, and the reason for which they are of great significance is because both approaches have their advantages to offer at different stages of reading instruction. In the following section, we shall discuss the importance of the extensive reading and intensive reading along with what benefits they can bring to the development of academic reading.

2.5.1.Intensive Reading

Intensive reading involves learners to read in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It focuses on essential core vocabulary, pattern of text organization, and types of text processing needed to adequately comprehend any text. It can be said that intensive reading is more academic-oriented approach than extensive reading. The aim of intensive reading involves focusing not only on what the text means, but on how meaning is produced. According to Nuttal (1996), the students should try to understand a text as fully as necessary in an intensive reading setting. Besides, intensive readers are often required to study small amount of materials in analytical manner under the teachers' guidance (Good, 1926).Intensive reading has two main advantages:

The first one is, for learners with reading problems, intensive reading is possibly the fastest way to build vocabulary.Studies shows that students are able to successfully add ten or more comprehension words per day.The second one, reading difficult materials forces the learner to develop strategies for dealing with texts that are too hard to handle.In addition to the above mentioned advantages, there exist other minor ones such as:

- Helping learner to comprehend written texts.
- To become more aware of text organization for a better comprehension.
- To learn how to use and monitor affective reading strategies.
- To develop the students' focus on word meaning and sentence construction in order to deal with difficult complex sentences.

2.5.2.Extensive Reading

According to Banford and Day (1993, p.1), extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of accessible materials in the new language. Furthermore, Thomas (1983) suggests that the terms "free reading", "wide reading" and "extensive reading" seems to be interchangeable. He, also notes that the definition of extensive reading should be the situation where learners choose from a long list of carefully selected and various books instead of a situation where pupils are allowed to read anything their hearts desire. Thus, extensive reading involves students reading long texts or large quantities for general understanding, with the intention of enjoying the text. It means that students are given freedom to choose their own topics in order to give them background knowledge.

Grabe (2009) emphasizes on the benefits of extensive reading, they are as the following:

- First, it helps students to develop positive attitudes towards reading and to have a sense of motivation to read.
- Second, with extensive reading, students get rich vocabulary.
- Finally, students develop the language skills of listening, grammar, spelling and writing.

As it is presented above, extensive reading helps learners to develop their reading abilities because it is a process which requires a lot of reading, and the more they read the more they enrich their knowledge of the language, reading speed, fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading strategies, one does not become a good reader unless one reads a lot (Grabe,2001).

2.6. Reading Transfer

Psycholinguistic researchers characterize reading as an active process in which the reader uses linguistic cues and produces hypothesis about the message of the writer (Clarke,1979). As Goodman (1970) states in his definition of reading “a guessing game” that involves an interaction between the reader and the writer. Reading in both first and second language contexts involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and text. Reading in L1 shares important elements with reading in second or foreign languages. Also reading in both L1 and L2 contexts require knowledge of content, form and linguistic schema (Singhal, 1998). Readers use mental activities in order to construct meaning from text. These activities are generally reading strategies or reading skills. Strategic L1 and L2 readers consciously and unconsciously engage in specific behaviors to enhance their comprehension of text. Reading comprehension involves multiple cognitive processes which are related to each other (Horiba,1996). These processes include recognizing, analyzing and generating inferences. It may seem self-evident that, a reader who does not possess the same linguistics base as the L1, reader will face difficulties and they become greater when there is a greater differences between L1 and L2.

Language transfer happens when a second or a foreign language learners use first language knowledge and various strategies to facilitate their learning of target language. It occurs consciously as a deliberate communication strategy, where there is a gap in the learner’s knowledge; and unconsciously either because the correct form is not known or because , it has not been completely automatized, although it has been already learned (Benson, 2002). According to Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (1979), humans produce language through a deep structure that enable them to generate and transfer their own grammar to any other language.

As people learn languages, they develop certain skills. The skills learned in the first language are naturally transferred to the second language O'Malley and Chamot (1990,p120.) define transfer as “the use of previous linguistic or prior skills to assist comprehension”. This indicates that while reading inL2, learners transfer their first language knowledge or skills. Transfer can be facilitative, in areas where L1 and L2 are identical. Second language learners use different strategies to facilitate their reading comprehension, and transfer of L1 skills or knowledge is one of those strategies. Many studies have been conducted to identify the influence of L1 and L2 and to investigate what role transfer plays in L2 reading. The studies have demonstrated the correlation between L1 reading and L2 reading ability and established skills from L1 has positive impact on L2 reading. Studies show that there is a correlation between L1 and L2 reading ability and learners transfer prior linguistic and cognitive skills from l1 to facilitate their reading in L2. Transfer of reading skills often has a facilitative influence on L2 reading.

Finally, L2 teachers need to understand the advantage of L2 learners who process the ability to transfer prior linguistic knowledge, prior skills or existing schemata to facilitate their learning in the target language. This enables teachers to teach the students ways to help them use the second language more effectively.

Conclusion

Reading is a kind of process in which one needs not only to understand the explicit meaning of a text, but to comprehend its implied ideas. A.Tierney (2005) states” learning to read is not only learning to recognize words; It is also learning to make sense of texts.

Comprehension requires a great deal of cognitive capacity. For example, good readers acknowledge that comprehension occurs from reading activities such as relating what is being read to prior knowledge, predicting what might be coming next in the text, and summarizing what is being read.

These comprehension strategies are metacognitive concepts in reading. If students are capable of comprehending what they are reading through a variety of strategies; they will create an interested attitude towards academic achievement.

Chapter Three: Problems Faced by L2 Readers

Introduction

3.1. Reading Problems Related to Insufficient Linguistic Competence

3.1.1. Lexical Problems

3.1.2. Syntactic Problems

3.2. Reading Problems Related to Lack of Prior Knowledge

3.3. Reading Problems Related to Material Selection : Authentic Materials

3.4. Reading Problems Related to Early Language Development

Conclusion

Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have introduced the nature of reading as an unnatural and complex process. Also, we have provided an overview of the academic reading at the same time we have focused on the significance of utilizing reading strategies by learners in order to enhance their academic performance which after all is the aim beyond conducting this research. In this chapter, we will introduce some of reading problems which the majority of first year master Economic students face while reading for academic purposes. We have classified those problems as the following: 1)- Reading problems related to insufficient linguistic competence, 2)- Reading problems related to lack of background knowledge, 3)- Reading problems related to material selection (the use of authentic materials), 4)- Reading problems related to early language developments.

3.1. Reading Problems Related to Insufficient Linguistic Competence: (language related problems)

Before we proceed, the terminology used here must be clarified. As used by Noam Chomsky and other linguists, linguistic competence is an evaluative term, rather, it refers to the innate linguistic knowledge that allows a person to match sounds and meanings. In other words, the ability of a person to create and understand sentences with a set of grammatical rules including sentences they have never heard before. Linguistic competence includes components such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology.

3.1.1. Lexical Problems

Bean (2011) argues that inadequate vocabulary knowledge hampers reading comprehension of many students. Therefore, many EFL students face difficulties because of insufficient vocabulary knowledge which would automatically constitute a reading challenge.

One of the first problems a foreign language learners encounters is how to commit a massive amount of foreign words to memory, especially in the case of first master economics students, they have to, first deal with English as a second language then get acquainted with new unfamiliar technical words.

Students find it difficult to learn vocabulary, due to the fact that learning vocabulary is not as easy as it seems to be. In fact, knowing a word involves knowing a lot of things. According to Qian (1999) it involves, knowing its (a)pronunciation and orthography,(b)its morphological properties,(c)its syntactic

properties and collocations, (d)its meaning, (e)its register, and (f)its frequency (cited in Hudson,2007,p233) these different aspects make it more challenging for EFL learners to acquire new words.

3.1.2. Syntactic Problems

Syntax is one of the foundational skills of reading and speaking. In English, word order is important for establishing the relationship of meaning between words and sentences. Successful readers, need to be able to recognize the grammatical forms that indicate when information has been embedded, conjoined, or moved within a sentence. Syntactic ties also provide a means to indicate how information is related across the boundaries of sentences(Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Having said so, syntax is likely to be a source of comprehension difficulties for many EFL students long sentences and difficult syntax can block comprehension even when vocabulary is familiar (Nuttal,1991). Faced with long complex sentences, learners get confused and fail to make the differences between main clauses and subordinate, not to mention, they lose focus and fail to remember any of the reading materials introduced to them.

3.2. Reading Problems Related to Lack of Prior Knowledge

Stevens (1982) defines background knowledge quite simply as what one already knows about subject. It is called schema, relevant background knowledge, or just plain experience. When students make connections to the text they are reading, their comprehension increases. Good readers constantly try to make sense out of what they read by seeing how it fits with what they already know. Ellin Oliver keene and Susan Zimmerman in Mosaic of Thought (1997), have identified three major types of connection learners make as they read: a)-text to self , b)-text to world, c)-text to text

However, students are not encouraged to activate their prior knowledge that leads to major difficulties in connecting with the text. So the presented text is simply rejected because of its content which contains unfamiliar information.

Moreover, the cultural background may be a source of comprehension problems for many students. As Carrel and Eisterhold (1983) demonstrate that reading comprehension is culturally based and culturally biased. Meaning that when students read culturally familiar texts, their understanding of the text is better than when they read texts that are culturally unfamiliar.

In spite of the fact that prior knowledge is really important in enhancing students' comprehension of text, many teachers fail to encourage their students to relate what they already know with the presented materials. This encouragement often takes the form of "warm-up" session before reading begins, at the end of this activity most of learners can connect with the text.

3.3. Reading Problems Related to Material Selection

There are different definitions of authentic materials, but they do have something in common. All the definitions highlight the fact that authentic materials implies "exposure to real language and its use in its own community" (Widdowson,1990). "authentic materials are materials that we can use in the classroom and that have not been changed in any way for ESL students" (Sanderson,1991) Even though, bringing authentic materials into the classroom can be motivating for learners because it brings a real-life element to the learning process, many students fail to deal with this kind of materials simply because, authentic materials may be too culturally biased thus it cannot be easily understood by learners. Also, authentic texts contain too many complex structures so lower level students have a hard time decoding the text. Not to mention, this type of materials require special preparation which can be time consuming. According to the findings of the survey carried out by Chavez (1998), learners enjoy dealing with authentic materials since they enable them to interact with the real language and its use. Also, they do not consider authentic situations or materials innately difficult. However, learners state that they need pedagogical support especially when reading literary text. Hence, students actually feel better with authentic texts helping them get involved in real language as long as teachers provide them with pedagogical support and authentic materials should be used in accordance with the students' level of knowledge.

3.4. Reading Problems Related to Early Language Development

There is a close relationship between reading and language, some children inability to achieve reading proficiency seems to be attributed to lack of exposure to language patterns and literacy-based interactions and materials during their early years (National Institution of Child Health and Human Development, 1998) According to author Jane Healy, too many children are being raised in a language –impoverished environment where they seldom read or talked to and too much time is spent passively watching television or playing video games (Healy, 1985).

Consequently, any child who is exposed to such environment fail to build up any linguistic competence and language skills that will be more important when he/she begins formal instruction. Therefore, whether a child becomes a proficient reader is dependent on the environment in which he/she is raised.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with some of reading problems that EFL learners face. We have noticed that students with insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure are likely to face comprehension problems, because those two components represents the basic steps for comprehending any reading material handled to them. Also students who cannot relate with the text by activating their background knowledge are the ones who lose focus and got lost in the cultural differences.

Likewise, students who find difficulties in understanding authentic texts because of the vocabulary selected by native speakers fail to place their knowledge or the information in the texts in real situations the same as English native speakers. Finally, we have seen that some of the problems are related to early language development. we mean by that, those learners while growing up did not receive the proper language learning; particularly reading skill; therefore they have failed as adult learners to deal with different aspect of the language.

Section Two: Practical Part

Chapter Four: Data Collection and Analysis of the Findings

Introduction

1. The Sample

2. Method

3. Students' Questionnaire

3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

3.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire

3.3. Findings and Discussion

Conclusion

Introduction

The main objective of the presented study is to investigate the difficulties that students of Economics encounter when reading for texts written in English. Moreover, it attempts to examine the strategies used by students in order to overcome these difficulties.

This chapter is devoted to analyzing and interpreting data in order to confirm or refute the proposed hypothesis using appropriate reading strategies and authentic materials would enhance students of Economics reading comprehension performance.

1.The sample

A sample of twenty-nine students from department of Economics are selected randomly in order to conduct this research. This number of students is selected because it represents approximately the half of the number of the whole population. Also, we have questioned 10 teachers of English from different departments in order to gather information needed to be investigated.

2. Method

The chosen method for conducting this study is descriptive aiming to describe the obtained data collected by means of two questionnaires; one for teachers who have been teaching English for Specific Purposes and the second for 1st year master Economics at the University of KasdiMerbah. Data gathered will be analyzed and interpreted in the light of the theories already discussed in the theoretical part.

3.Student's Questionnaire

This questionnaire is administered to first year Master Economics students at the university of KasdiMerbahOuargla, the main purpose of the study is to investigate Economic students' reading comprehension problems and their awareness of reading strategies. These students have been selected because they are ESP learners who have been studying English for three semesters.

3.1.Description of the Questionnaire

The aim of this study is to investigate whether Master Economics students use reading strategies when reading academic texts in order to enhance their reading

comprehension performance, and to examine the difficulties they encounter during the reading process. Thus, questionnaire is presented in the form of questions to verify the research hypothesis.

The present questionnaire contains nineteen close ended questions. They vary between “yes-no” , “agree-disagree” and scale (always- sometimes- never) in which respondents choose one option that the best aligns with their viewpoint.

3.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire

1- For my academic studies, I read.

	Number	percentage
Articles	02	06,89%
Books	13	44,82%
Chapters of books	00	00%
Handouts	14	48,27%
Total	19	100%

Table 1: Types of Academic Reading Materials

Table (1) shows that (48,27%) of students read handouts. This result reflects that students read only the documents provided by their tutors, certainly for exam purposes. However, (44,82%) of students prefer reading books.

2- Reading skill is very important for my academic studies.

	Number	percentage
Yes	26	89,65%
No	03	10,34%
Total	29	100%

Table 2 : The Importance of the Reading Skill

Nearly (89,65%) of the participants agree that reading skill is very important to their studies. Reading is an effective skill which enables learners gaining insights and knowledge therefore they expand their thinking. According to many researchers such as Grabe and Stoller (2001) reading is primary means for independent learning.

3- Do you usually read academic texts because they help you in your studies?

	Number	percentage
Agree	28	96,55%
Disagree	01	03,44%
Total	29	100%

Table 3 : The Role of Academic Reading

All the respondents except one read academic texts for the purpose of helping them in their studies. The ultimate goal of academic reading is the comprehension of messages of the texts and doing other tasks such as paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning, and evaluating.

4 – Do you find problems with unfamiliar words in the text ?

	Number	percentage
Always	10	34,48%
Sometimes	19	65,51%
Never	00	00%
Total	29	100%

Table 4 : Vocabulary Problems

The majority of students “Sometimes” find problems with new words in the text. This result reveals that students lack linguistic competence. Students must have adequate vocabulary, grammar, and syntax to interpret the written message effectively.

5 – Do you use a lot of time to finish reading ?

	Number	percentage
Always	19	65,51%
Sometimes	08	27,58%
Never	02	06,89%
Total	29	100%

Table 4 : Reading Rate

Most of the respondents “always” use a lot of time to finish reading. This problem is due to poor word recognition which causes slow reading.

6 – Do you relate your reading problems to lack of prior knowledge?

	Number	Percentage
Always	09	31,03%
Sometimes	19	65,51%
Never	01	03,44%
Total	29	100%

Table 6 : Lack of Background knowledge

(65,51%) of the respondents sometimes face difficulties in comprehending texts because of lack of prior knowledge related to the text. Students cannot relate to the given materials either because of cultural barriers or unfamiliar vocabulary.

7 – Do you face difficulties in understanding complex sentences ?

	Number	percentage
Always	09	31,03%
Sometimes	18	62,06%
Never	02	06,89%
Total	29	100%

Table 7 : Complex Sentences Decoding

Most of the time, students face obstacles in decoding complex and long sentences, (62,06%) of the respondents sometimes fail in recognizing complete structures, whereas (31,03%) of them always face such kind of difficulties. This can be related to the nature of the text and the lack of awareness of lexical and syntactic structures.

8 – Do you stop reading a text when you find it difficult?

	Number	Percentage
Always	11	37,93%
Sometimes	13	44,82%
Never	05	17,24%
Total	29	100%

Table 8 : Complexity of the Text

The answer reveals that (44,82%) of the respondents sometimes stop reading when they find the text difficult to handle whereas (37,93%) of them always give up reading when facing a difficult material. This result reflects that the majority of students lack strategies to overcome these difficulties.

9 – Do you use the title and the illustration of the text to predict its content?

	Number	percentage
Always	18	62,06%
Sometimes	10	34,48%
Never	01	03,44%
Total	29	100%

Table 9 : Predicting Strategy.

The table shows that (62,06%) of the respondents use the title and the illustrations to help them anticipate the content of the text. This pre-reading strategy is of a great importance because it facilitates the comprehension and prepares the readers to engage in reading and to make probable meaning of the text.

10 – Do you preview the text before reading in details to have a general idea about the context?

	Number	percentage
Always	18	62,06%
Sometimes	10	34,48%
Never	01	03,44%
Total	29	100%

Table 10 : Previewing Strategy

The result shows that most of students (62,06%) preview the text before they read in details. This result reveals that students are aware of the significance of this strategy which enables them to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. Previewing is used as an aid to comprehension.

11 – Do you skim the text first then read for details?

	Number	percentage
Always	11	37,93%
Sometimes	13	44,82%
Never	05	17,24%
Total	29	100%

Table 11 : Skimming Strategy

The table demonstrate that (44,82%) of the respondents “sometimes” skim the text to know its gist and (17,24%) “never” skim the text. This result reveals that the respondents are not aware of the importance of skimming strategy to get the main idea of the text which is very important for academic reading.

12 – While reading a text, do you pay attention to the beginning and ending of each paragraph?

	Number	percentage
Always	09	31,03%
Sometimes	13	44,82%
Never	07	24,13%
Total	29	100%

Table 12 : Scanning Strategy

The table reveals that (44,82%) of the respondents “sometimes” scan the text for specific information. This result shows that students are aware of the importance of this strategy. Most of the time teachers ask the students to look for specific information which requires reading only parts of the whole text in order to gain time.

13 – Do you consult an outside source (such as dictionary) ?

	Number	percentage
Always	10	34,48%
Sometimes	14	48,27%
Never	05	17,24%
Total	29	100%

Table 13: The Use of Dictionary

The table reveals that (48,27%) of the participants sometimes use a dictionary whereas (34,48%) always use it to consult for difficult words. The result reflects the fact of the majority of students try to guess the meaning of words then consult an outside source which in this case is dictionary.

14 – Do you ask questions about the text while reading it?

	Number	percentage
Always	15	34,48%
Sometimes	09	31,03%
Never	15	51,72%
Total	29	100%

Table 14 : Questioning strategy

The majority of the respondents “never” ask questions about the text after predicting its content while (31,03%) of them opted for “sometimes”. This result shows that students ignore this strategy which is of a great importance. By asking questions readers seek information to clarify the meaning of the content and to extend their thinking.

15 – Do you link the content of the text with what you already know?

	Number	percentage
Always	11	37,93%
Sometimes	15	51,72%
Never	03	10,34%
Total	29	100%

Table 15: Activating Prior Knowledge Strategy

Most of the respondents “sometimes” are able to use this strategy. They use it as a tool to understand the topic .by activating their background knowledge before, during and after reading they clarify mis-conceptions and to better understand the text.

16 – Do you underline the important parts in the text ?

	Number	percentage
Always	08	27,58%
Sometimes	16	55,17%
Never	05	17,24%
Total	29	100%

Table 16 : Underlining Strategy

Almost (55,17%) of participants “sometimes” underline the important parts in the text. Although this strategy is very important in identifying content of the text and facilitates its comprehension most of student take it for granted.

17 – Do you take notes while reading a text ?

	Number	percentage
Always	06	20,68%
Sometimes	09	31,03%
Never	14	48,27%
Total	29	100%

Table 17 : Note-Taking Strategy

The result of table (17) reveals that (48,27%) never take notes while reading . this shows that the majority of students are unfamiliar with the above mentioned strategy which make text comprehension even more complex.

18 – Do you paraphrase ideas presented in the text using your own words ?

	Number	percentage
Always	04	13,79%
Sometimes	12	41,37%
Never	13	44,82%
Total	29	100%

Table 18 : Paraphrasing Strategy

The table shows that (44,82%) of students are unable to paraphrase the text. Despite the importance of paraphrasing in reading comprehension learners never use it. Yet they neglect the fact that this strategy helps them to monitor their understanding and incorporate new knowledge with what they already know concerning the topic. In fact paraphrasing helps students realize that comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading.

19 – Do you summarize the text ?

	Number	percentage
Always	05	17,24%
Sometimes	10	34,48%
Never	14	48,27%
Total	29	100%

Table 19 : Summarizing Strategy

The results of the table above indicate that (48,27%) of students “never” summarize what they read. Even though that summarizing helps them to identify key elements and condense important information into their own words to solidify meaning, readers take this strategy for granted.

3.3.Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the results shows the way students approach academic texts and attain comprehension. Also, the result reveals that the major problem that learners frequently encounter is new vocabulary items. Besides, it is detected that students spend a lot of time to finish what they read.

The findings demonstrate that most of students lack of awareness of some important strategies such as skimming, underlining, questioning, note taking and summarizing. In spite of that, students are aware of some other strategies as previewing, predicting, and scanning. All in all, the respondents have no clear idea about how to read.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented the methodology and procedures of data collection. The data collected have been analyzed by means of descriptive statistics to report the frequency of the problems and strategies.

The results of this study reveals that the major reading problem is that students frequently encounter unfamiliar words, and that they spend great amount of time to finish what they read. On the other hand, data analysis reveals that important strategies such as skimming, scanning, and questioning are rarely used by Economics students. Also, the findings indicate that students have a moderate attitude towards reading.

General Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

5.2. Recommendations

References

Appendices

Abstract

General Conclusion and Recommendations

As a global language, English has recently become a primary tool for cultural, political, and technological development and has been given much concern in the Algerian education setting after the advent of the globalization process. With that stated, the main purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the problems that first year master economics students face while reading for academic purposes, as well as to examine the extent to which reading strategies enhance their performance and help them achieving comprehension while reading.

Inspired by this thought, the study attempts to show the crucial importance of this subject; therefore, the study consist of two main parts, the first one includes three chapters in which a literary review concerning the research is provided; the first chapter introduces the nature of reading in general, where various approaches and models adopted by different linguists are provided. The second chapter, first deals with the academic reading, then the reading strategies are demonstrated as well as the importance of reading comprehension. In addition to that, there is a major focus on some of these strategies that enable students to achieve academic proficiency and to overcome reading comprehension difficulties. As for the third chapter, the obtained observations throughout this study reveals the main problems that first year master economics students face while reading in their field of study.

Concerning the second part, it includes one chapter which tackles the practical aspect of the present research; from the theoretical chapter; the data obtained are by means of two questionnaires in order to investigate the hypothesis. The first questionnaire was to administrated to ESP teachers of different departments at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla. The second questionnaire is administered to first year economics students at the department of Economics at the target university. The results of this study show that the reason behind students constant struggle with reading is that reading strategies are totally neglected both by teachers and students. Learners are to some extent ignorant about the effectiveness of using strategies on their academic performance. On the other hand, teachers are not well trained to provide guidance and scaffolding for their learners.

Although the final results and the analysis of questionnaires have indicated that our hypotheses is proved, we still face some limitations which have constrained our research. The first limitation is concerned with time. It would have been helpful to us to use the experimental design rather than the

descriptive one, because using the former we would have collected more valid data, but due to the period of time we had, we could not conduct an experimental study. The second limitation is related to the sampling method adopted in this research, that is the convenience sampling method, although it is time saving method, it cannot represent the whole population; thus the findings based on the questionnaires cannot be generalized to the whole population.

Therefore, and based on the findings, we suggest some recommendations to teachers and learners of English:

Pedagogical Recommendations

On the basis of the results obtained from the two questionnaires of the present study, there are some pedagogical recommendations that we suggest to help teachers as well as students of Economics to overcome the difficulties they face when reading texts in their field.

First, the ESP teachers training must be improved. Teachers must receive explicit training on exactly how to teach reading comprehension strategies. Moreover, they must be given opportunities to practice language so that they can present comprehension strategies properly to their students. Then, they should be given multiple opportunities to observe each other and provide meaningful feedback on their performance.

Second, it is necessary for teachers to motivate reading by selecting the appropriate materials. In addition, we suggest giving opportunity to ESP learners to choose topics of their interest. Since each learner will have different strengths to build on and different weaknesses to overcome. Studies show that students who are provided with choice of text they perform higher reading tasks than those with no choice.

Third, we propose extra sessions to deal with extensive reading. Extensive reading enables learners to achieve their independency by reading either in classroom or at home through sustained silent reading which is based on student-selected texts, so that students would be interested in what they are reading. Hedge (2003) states that since extensive reading helps in developing reading ability, it should be built into an EFL / ESL programs provided the selected texts are authentic.

In conclusion, we wish that these recommendations would ameliorate learners reading performance. Furthermore, we hope that future studies will be conducted in order to cope with the issue more profoundly.

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Appendix (1)

Teacher's questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is developed as a part of our research. It intends to identify the difficulties the teachers face while teaching English for Specific Purposes, and how these teachers overcome such kind of problems. Please, answer the questions as accurately as you can. We are thankful for your time and efforts.

Part one:

Personal data:

1-Department:.....

2-Qualification: License Master/Magister Doctorate

3-Experience as a teacher in the department (number of years):
.....

4-Did you teach in other departments?
.....

Part two:

1-Did you follow any official program in the department?

Yes No

2-How would you place your students?

A-Excellent

B-Good

C-Average

D-weak

3-Do you think that your learners are interested in the English course?

Yes No

Part three:

1-Do you design your course by yourself?

Yes No

2-Do you select your own materials?

Yes No

2-Which difficulties you have met when teaching learners?

.....
.....

3-What do you suggest to overcome these difficulties?

.....
.....

4-Which language skill you find more effective for your learners?(more than one choice is possible)

Reading Speaking
Listening Writing

-Justify your choice?

.....

5-Can you rank these skills in the order of importance?(More important to the least important)

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix (2)

Students' questionnaire

Dear students,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to shed the light on how Economics students read in their academic studies and how they attain comprehension when reading texts, articles and the like. In addition to this, to identify the problems they encounter while reading for specific purposes and the strategies they use to achieve comprehension.

This questionnaire is divided into three parts consist of five pages. It is designed to be answered carefully and accurately. Part one is devote for academic reading comprehension, part two for problems of reading as for the third part is about the use of reading strategies.

Instructions:

Put a cross(X) in front of each

PART TWO:Academic reading comprehension

1-For my academic studies, I read

- Articles
- Books
- Chapters of books
- Handouts

2-Reading skill is very important for my academic studies

- True False

3-I usually read academic texts in order to comprehend them

- Agree Disagree

4-I always do extensive reading to expand my knowledge

- Yes No

PART TWO: Reading problems

1-I find problems with unfamiliar vocabulary in the text

Always sometimes usually rarely never

2-I use a lot of time to finish reading

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

3-I do not comprehend what I read because of lack of prior knowledge

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

4-After reading I forget what I have read

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

5-I have difficulties in recognizing complex sentences

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

6-When I find a text difficult to understand I give up reading

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

PART THREE: The use of reading strategies

1-Before I read the text, I use the little and the illustrations to predict the content.

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

2-I preview the text before reading in detail to have a general idea about the context

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

3-I skim the text first, and later I read for details

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

4-While I am reading a text; I pay attention to the beginning and the end of each paragraph

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

5-I skip unknown words that I couldn't clarify if I understand the gist

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

6-I consult an outside source (such as dictionary) to help comprehension.

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

7-I translate the text into my native language to help comprehension

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

8-I ask questions related to the text through my understanding of it while reading the text

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

9-I predict what will come next in the text

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

10-I link the content of the text with what I already know

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

11-I underline the important parts in the text

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

12-I take notes while reading

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

13-I pay attention to indirectly stated ideas and try to make inferences about them

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

14-I try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

15-I paraphrase the ideas presented in the text using my own words

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

16-After reading the text in detail, I summarize it in my own words

Always Sometimes Usually Rarely Never

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Abstract

The ability to read in English is now seen as an essential basic skill for all foreign language learners; still, it is thought to be as a demanding and difficult task for them to handle. Due to the complexity of this skill, many students fail to achieve reading comprehension. For this reason, the main focus of this study is to make learners aware of the problems that may encounter while reading; also to suggest some reading strategies in order to help them overcome those problems so that they can achieve full comprehension of reading materials. The hypothesis states that using appropriate strategies and authentic texts would enhance the reading comprehension performance of economics students. To test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was administered to students in order to collect data about their use of reading strategies and their ability to achieve reading comprehension. The data gathered demonstrate that most of students lack of awareness of some important reading strategies. Furthermore, the results reveals that students take long of time to finish what they read, especially when they stumble in unfamiliar vocabulary.

Résumé

Savoir lire en Anglais est devenu une nécessité incontournable à nos jours pour tous les apprenants de langues étrangères. Cependant, cette tache reste assez difficile, ce qui infecte la compréhension de la lecture. Notre travail serait donc, de sensibiliser les étudiants en sciences économiques de ces difficultés pour pouvoir identifier les problèmes confrontés, et de suggérer par la suite quelques stratégies de lecture dans le but d'acquérir un niveau qui leurs permettra de comprendre les textes lus. Notre hypothèse affirme que l'appropriation de ces stratégies en présence de textes authentiques, améliore la compréhension de la lecture et la performance des étudiants en science économiques. Pour prouver cette hypothèse, un questionnaires est adressé aux étudiants, pour collecter les informations sur l'utilisation de ces stratégies de lecture et la capacité de réussir à comprendre les textes lus. les résultats obtenues montrent que la majorité des étudiants ignorent certaines stratégies, ce qui révèle que ces derniers prennent plus de temps dans la lecture d'un texte surtout s'ils sont devant un vocabulaire non familier.