

READING COMPREHENSION: THE SIGNIFICANCE, FEATURES AND STRATEGIES

YURKO N.A. 

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages
Lviv State University of Physical Culture named after Ivan Boberskyi

PROTSENKO U.M. 

PhD (Pedagogy), Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages
Lviv State University of Physical Culture named after Ivan Boberskyi

UKRAINE

Abstract: *The study seeks to address the key issues of reading comprehension in a foreign language learning. Reading is an incredibly useful skill for life and one of the fastest ways to learn and remember a language. Despite much attention being paid to various educational issues, along with different aspects of language study, there is a necessity of more detailed focus on reading comprehension in foreign language learning. Subsequently, the purpose of the survey was to examine and analyse the significance, main features and strategies of reading comprehension. The main issues of listening in learning a foreign language have been explored and determined by the methods of monitoring and comparative analysis of internet resources. Taking into consideration the research outcomes, further perspectives for studies on reading comprehension in a foreign language learning have been outlined.*

INTRODUCTION.

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows. Ability to comprehend text is influenced by readers' skills and their ability to process information. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read [1]. Proficient reading is naturally determined by the individual's cognitive development and depends greatly on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. People usually learn comprehension skills through education and instruction.

Reading is a skill many people take for granted, but the act of reading and properly comprehending a text is a complex and interactive process. It requires

several different brain functions to work together and most often requires one to puzzle through multiple layers of context and meaning [2]. Comprehension, or extracting meaning from what you read, is the ultimate goal of reading. Rather than passively reading text, readers must analyze it, internalize it and make it their own [3].

Developing reading comprehension skills is incredibly important for growing readers, starting as early as picture books. As children get older, it will help them understand textbooks, newspapers, and other more complex texts [4]. English language learners at all levels of English proficiency, and literacy, will benefit from explicit instruction of comprehension skills along with other skills [5]. Reading comprehension is a vital life skill. It can influence both the students' academic success and their later life functioning and performance.

Much attention has long been paid to various educational issues [6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15], along with different aspects of language study [16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29]. However, there is a necessity of more detailed focus on reading comprehension in foreign language learning. Subsequently, the purpose of the survey is to examine and analyse the significance, main features and strategies of English reading comprehension.

MAIN MATERIAL.

Reading comprehension is the understanding of what a particular text means and the ideas the author is attempting to convey, both textual and subtextual. In order to read any text, your brain must process not only the literal words of the piece, but also their relationship with one another, the context behind the words, how subtle language and vocabulary usage can impact emotion and meaning behind the text, and how the text comes together as a larger, coherent whole [2]. Due to monitoring and comparative analysis of the internet resources [2; 3; 4; 5], the main issues of reading comprehension appear to be the following.

1. Significance.

Becoming better at reading in English can really open your mind to the language and the people who speak it. There are many practical reasons to practice English reading. As you practice English reading, your other English language skills will also improve. You will learn new vocabulary words, see different sentence structures in use and get English language practice in general.

English language learners will still need a lot of vocabulary development and teaching of comprehension strategies even if they: have been mainstreamed after some bilingual instruction; are being pulled out for English as a second language; and/or have been assessed as English proficient but you know that they still need additional help with language, reading, and writing [5].

Reading can improve your conversational English. Stories are typically filled with dialogue, so you will see many examples of natural English conversations. Reading English texts, you will get a much better idea of how the English speakers talk. You can also read non-fiction books that will teach you about English conversation. From both fiction and non-fiction books, you will learn common expressions, see formal and casual speech and learn speaking patterns that you can copy in your own English speaking. That will give you more confidence when you are talking in English. Best of all, you can learn all of this at your own pace. In addition, all that reading will also give you many interesting topics to talk over.

Reading in English can make your written English become more fluent. It will show you written grammar rules in action. English stories will help you recognize proper grammar and get used to the rules. You will learn how to properly use punctuation, like commas, periods and quotation marks. Reading will show you how to write sentences that other people could understand quickly and easily. English reading will also remind you how words are spelled correctly, which will make writing much easier. If you read enough, you will be able to notice when something is written incorrectly, because you will be familiar with the correct structure.

Reading comprehension is essential for many significant aspects of daily life, such as: reading, understanding, and analyzing literature in your English classes; reading and understanding texts from your other class subjects, such as history, math, or science; understanding and engaging with current events presented in written form, such as news reports; properly understanding and responding to any and all other workplace correspondence, such as essays, reports, memos, and analyses; simply taking pleasure in written work on your own leisure time [2].

Reading in English is an incredibly useful skill for life and one of the fastest ways to learn and remember a language. Reading is a fun way to learn, because it does not have to feel like studying. With reading, you can enjoy a story while improving your English along the way.

II. Features.

Actually, when you read in your native language, you do not have to think about what you are going to read, how you are going to read it or how you are going to make sure that you will understand it. Reading in your native language is automatic, it just happens. Over time, with effort and practice, reading in English will become just as automatic for you.

The process of comprehending text begins before children can read, when someone reads a picture book to them. They listen to the words, see the pictures in the book, and may start to associate the words on the page with the words they are hearing and the ideas they represent [3].

It is necessary to perceive that not all types of reading are the same. As a matter of fact, there are some different types of reading and different ways to properly understand what you read.

Intensive reading. Reading intensively means trying to understand every word on the page. You want to get as much information as you can from the text. This is the kind of reading you do when you have some time to really focus and you do not want to be distracted. You will also want to keep a dictionary handy because you will want to look up any words you do not know. It is better to have a notebook too, as it is always a good idea to take notes as you read.

While practicing intensive reading, pick a fairly short text that interests you. If you have a really long text or you just do not care about the topic you might give up before you finish. Try to make this process as interesting and enjoyable as you can. That way, you will want to do more intensive reading. The more you can use this powerful tool for improving English, the better.

Extensive reading. This is a more relaxed kind of reading. Extensive reading simply means casually reading anything you see in English, without stress or worry about what every word means. It does not matter what you read: a new recipe, an email, a blog post, billboards along the highway, or newspaper headlines. It is important to read anything and everything in English.

Extensive reading is important because it opens you up to all kinds of English words and lets you practice reading in many different contexts. The more extensive reading you do, the more comfortable you will be with reading in English. Accordingly, the more comfortable you are, the more confident English reader you will shortly become.

Skimming. When you need to read something quickly to get the main idea of the text, you can skim the text. Skimming means to simply read on the

surface. In other words, you do not go too deep into the details. You do not need to know what every word means. You can just read deeply enough to get the basic idea. You can skim with a finger on the page, tracing swiftly underneath the words as you read. Use the pace of your finger to make yourself read faster. Your brain will naturally keep pace with your finger.

Scanning. If you are looking for specific information when you read a text, try scanning for it. When you scan, it is almost like using your brain as a search engine. You are looking out for certain key words or phrases. You do not need to pay attention to everything. Just stay focused, ignoring almost everything except for the information you need.

Researches show that you can retain much more when you actively engage and interact with texts, as opposed to simply reading and re-reading without a clear purpose. Active reading engages your brain in effective strategies that force it to interact with the text before, during, and after reading and that help you better assess what you are learning.

III. Strategies.

Comprehension is the reason for reading, all together it can be one of the most difficult skill to master, especially for English language learners. They often have problems learning the concepts in other subjects, because they cannot comprehend the textbooks. Though, there are a number of ways to build comprehension skills. These skills are particularly important for comprehending what is generally known as information reading.

The process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic. Experienced readers take this for granted and may not appreciate the reading comprehension skills required. In order to read with comprehension, developing readers must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies [3].

It is natural that many students struggle with reading difficulties. Sometimes it can be rather challenging, time-consuming, and interfering your learning. However, with some effective strategies, you can make your reading time meaningful, focused, and productive.

Previewing. This provides a framework for any new information they read. When students preview text, they tap into what they already know that will help them to understand the text they are about to read.

Before previewing the text, determine what you already know about the material you are to read. Identify personal experiences or second-hand knowledge that relates to the topic. Make a list of things you want to know

about the text or questions that you want to try to answer while reading.

Give the text an initial glance, noting headings, diagrams, tables, pictures, bolded words, summaries, and key questions. Consider reading introductions and conclusions to gather main ideas. After you preview, predict what the section or chapter will be about and what the main concepts are going to be.

It is not a good idea to suppose that the only way to read and understand a text is to work through it completely linearly. Allow yourself the freedom to take apart the text and put it back together again in whichever way makes the most sense to you. Sometimes a current confusion in a work will be explained later on in the text, and it can help you to know that explanations are upcoming or even just to read them ahead of time.

Reviewing. Reading is a personal activity that happens entirely in your head. In order to learn comprehension strategies, students need modeling, practice, and feedback. Sometimes it can make the most sense to read, or even re-read, a text out of order.

Actually, not everyone thinks linearly, and not everyone best understands texts linearly either. Therefore, you can feel free to skip forward or backwards, re-read or read ahead as you need to, take the piece in whatever order you need to in order to make sense of the text.

It is often useful to look backwards through a piece of text, or re-read large sections, to remind yourself of any information you need and have forgotten: what happened previously, what a particular word means, etc.

Previous sentences, sections, or even whole chapters can provide helpful context clues. Re-reading these passages will help to refresh your memory so that you can better understand and interpret later sections of the text.

Resuming. After reading small sections of texts, such as a couple of paragraphs, a page, or a chunk of text separated by a heading or subheading, summarize the main points and two or three key details in your own words.

While reading, let yourself stop and summarize aloud or in your head what you have comprehended so far. Then keep reading with your summation in mind and let yourself stop and repeat this process whenever the piece becomes confusing to you. The more you are able to re-contextualize the work in your own words, the better you will be able to understand the text and hold the information in your mind as you keep reading.

Identifying the main idea of the text and summarizing the reading material requires that students determine what is important and then put it in their own words. Implicit in this process is attempting to comprehend the author's

purpose in writing this text.

Discussion. Trying to discuss what a passage says or means can be extremely beneficial. This forces to work through a problem aloud, which has proven time and time again to help people solve the problems. So if a certain piece of text makes your head spinning from trying to work through it by yourself, it is better to start chatting about the material you have read.

Discussing what you know so far about a text can help clear up any confusion. Explain it in your own words, and discuss where you feel your comprehension is lacking. You will find that you have probably understood more than you think once you have been forced to explain it. You will be surprised with how much easier it is to understand a text once you have talked it through.

In addition, asking and answering questions about the reading material is another strategy that helps students focus on the meaning of text. Teachers can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

CONCLUSIONS.

Based on the above survey outcomes, it is possible to conclude the following. The undeniable significance of reading comprehension in studying a language unveils it to be an extremely useful skill for life and one of the fastest ways to enhance other language skills, more fluent written English, a greatly developed vocabulary and much improved conversational English. Reading comprehension features to involve four main types, including intensive reading, extensive reading, skimming and scanning. The key efficient strategies for reading comprehension development have been found to comprise previewing, reviewing, resuming and discussion of the reading material. The effective means of applying the research findings in the contemporary education environment can be outlined as the perspectives of further studies.

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