

Relations of Reading Comprehension and Authentic Texts

Jo`raxonov Azamat Azamxon o`g`li

Student of the Uzbek State University of World Languages, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: In this period, English is not a language which is difficult to find anymore. Almost every country in the world uses English as a tool of communication. English is a tool of communication because its function is to share information and to equalize the different culture among countries. This is used in international conferences, education or in business. This is the international language that everyone in every country has to understand. Therefore, learning English become a must to all over the world including Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, English subject is taught as a second language-English as a Second Language (ESL) in the education system that makes language teachers teach it related to the language students communicate.

Keywords: Competent students in English with four speech skills, productive skills, comprehension of the information, understanding vocabulary, metacognitive awareness in second language, purposes of reading activity.

Introduction: On these days and age, English is one of the crucial subjects that is required in the entrance exams to most of higher education institutions. Moreover, students have opportunity not to take English exam in case having proper IELTS or another alternative score. This is used as a benchmark of graduation also to prepare competent students in English. Therefore, English is one of the important subjects that must be taught in Uzbekistan. Teachers certainly link their students with four skills while they instruct in order to make them the competent students in English language. The skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills, meanwhile, speaking and writing are productive skills. Receptive skills mean that in which students receive language, while productive skills are those in which the students produce language. Therefore, receptive skills include understanding when you listen and when you read. You receive the language and decode the meaning to get the message. Productive skills are speaking and writing. You use the language that you have acquired and produce a message through speech or written text that you want others to

understand. With the result, enhancing these four speech skills are significant enough to allow the students to be skilled and competent students in English.

Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading is the instantaneous recognition of various written symbols, simultaneous association of these symbols with existing knowledge, and comprehension of information and ideas communicated. It means when the reader interacts with print, his prior knowledge combined with and the visual (written) information results in his comprehending message. Reading ability is an important goal of language learning. Learners discover new vocabularies and information while reading. However, reading without comprehension is nothing. Comprehension while reading is required as a way to gain the information beyond the text, either it is stated or implied. Reading comprehension means understanding what has been reading. It is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skills but also on students' experiences and prior knowledge. Comprehension involves understanding vocabulary, seeing the relationships

among words and concepts, organizing ideas, recognizing the author's purpose, making judgment, and evaluating. It is shown that students who are able to read and comprehend the text will not only get the meaningful information, but also the brilliant knowledge achieved by them.

Furthermore, comprehension involves prior knowledge, knowledge of text structure, and an active search for information. Comprehension and prior knowledge mean the simplest definition of comprehension which understand the new information in light of what we already know. It means that readers have in their mind frameworks that organize their knowledge of the world. Knowledge of text structure means becoming a good reader. With guided on expert's definition and research, overall, comprehension is a unity process of the readers' activity to finish their understanding of reading text successfully. Such Cowell opinion in his research affirms: Comprehension in reading is a process in which the reader construct meaning while, or after, interacting with a text through the combination of prior knowledge and prior experience, information in text, the stance he or she takes in relationships to the text, and immediate, remembered, or anticipated social interaction and communications. Processing the texts similarly or differently, students may have non-identical interpretation of the texts. It shows that, language learners may process the text in similar ways but comprehend differently, or process the texts in a different way but comprehend similarly. In this point of view, students' comprehension in getting the essence of information in the passage is depend on how they interpret the content of the texts. Reading is one of the most critical skills in learning second language. According to Nuttall (1998), reading has been described as the most studied and the least understood process in education. As Nunan (2001) claims, this is due to several reasons, including the influence of comprehension-based approaches to the development of language, the role of applied linguists, and the development of computer-based language corpora. Developing reading comprehension ability is an important aspect in acquisition of a language. Thus, reading is important according to several ways. Primarily, reading is a tool of learning. Furthermore, reading refines the learner's thinking development which depends on target language. And finally, reading develops creativity.

Knowledge that people acquire through reading retains in the brain becomes the basis of their creative action. The role of reading comprehension ability has been neglected so far, but currently, it is being received and attentive in the language teaching curriculum. Reading has been the focus of varied and versatile research, e.g., the acquisition of vocabulary in terms of frequency and saliency reading processes, strategies, the nature of reading challenges and experince in second language learning, the role of metacognitive awareness in second language reading or the way in which students organize their learning, and the role of the native language as compared to second one in reading at different proficiency levels. This skill is generally considered to be of a highly individual nature; that is, no two readers approach or process a written text in exactly the same way. Nevertheless, there are general factors that have an impact on reading comprehension. Much work has been done to increase our understanding of the influences of factors such as strategy choices and background knowledge on second language reading comprehension. Skimming is defined as to look at a text or a chapter quickly in order to get a general opinion on the contents. It requires much more complex experience of reading and word recognition skills as it includes more thorough understanding of the text. It is the specific speed-reading technique, which enables you to cover a vast amount of material very quickly. It is one of the tools you can use to read more in less time. It refers to looking only for the general or main ideas, and works best with non-fiction material. It is defined skimming as glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gist, for instance in order to decide whether a research paper is relevant to our own work or to keep ourselves superficially informed about matter that are not of great importance to us. With skimming, your overall understanding is reduced because you do not read everything. You read only what is important to your purpose. Skimming takes place while reading and allows you to look for details in addition to the main ideas. Many people think that skimming is a random process placing the eyes where ever they fall. However, to skim efficiently, there has to be a structure but you do not read everything. Scanning is another beneficial tool for speeding up your reading. Unlike skimming, when scanning, you look only for a specific fact or piece of information without reading

everything. According to Nuttall (1996), scanning is glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for given purpose or not.

The Purpose of Reading

The activity of reading has many purposes. It depends on what people need. However, the main purpose of reading is to acquire the information. Cited from Nunan, Abbas Pourhousein Gilakjani and Sayedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi state that there are seven main purposes of reading:

1. To obtain information for some purposes or because we are curious about some topics.
2. To obtain instruction on how to perform some task for our work or daily life (e.g., knowing how an appliance works);
3. To act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle;
4. To keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters;
5. To know when or where something will take place or what is available;
6. To know what is happening or has happened (as reported in newspaper, magazines, reports);
7. For enjoyment of excitement. However, the main aim of this study is the effort of a teacher to teach a certain text to get certain information in order to catch the precise knowledge of the application letter comprehensively. Then, it also to develop a broad background for the students. Broaden students' background knowledge by reading the authentic text of application letter become interested in the world events.

Definition of Authentic Texts

We believe that texts play an important role in teaching and acquiring a second language. It is essential that a teacher uses texts that appeal to the students in order to get their attention and to increase motivation. Therefore, we think that it is important for the teacher to include the use of authentic texts in the classroom. This extends the students' possibilities of finding and subsequently reading books that appeal to them. This is supported by theory which underlines the importance of relevant texts and motivated students in the learning process.

So, what are the authentic materials? Authentic literature-based instruction strives to use authentic materials to introduce language elements or form in the classroom. An authentic material is defined as any text that was created to fulfill social purpose within a community. Based on this definition, materials like novels, newspaper, magazines, recipe books and shopping advertisements intended for the target audience will be considered authentic materials. Literature-based instruction strives to use what Long and Ross (1993) have defined as the function of authentic materials: To help bridge the gap between learning language form and functions through the use of authentic discourse. There are two main points that challenge the general consensus of using authentic materials within the language classroom. One of the disadvantages of using this material is identifying the appropriate language level that is beneficial for all learners. Thus, teachers need to spend a considerable amount of time searching for appropriate authentic texts that are both suitable for and interesting to learners. This adds to the increasing responsibilities that teachers face daily. Another disadvantage is that authentic materials are often biased because they are written based on the hegemonic culture. Because most language learners are unable to connect to the target culture presented in books, authentic materials might increase a learner's affective filter the learner now has to process both a foreign language and culture. Without possessing shared knowledge or cultural relevancy, authentic materials might not increase student motivation as they do not fulfill student's needs to see themselves reflected in the learning materials. Generally, authentic text is the text that were not originally developed for pedagogical purposes, such as the use of magazines, newspapers, advertisements, news reports, or songs. Peacock point-out those materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purposes in the language community.

CONCLUSION

There are many discussions of the use of authentic texts in teaching reading comprehension in classroom context. Widdowson wrote that authentic material has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to students should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendation that the language presented should

be authentic. In this case, it is true that modifying the materials in teaching reading comprehension has been recommended for the sake of easiness to reach the purpose of the teaching itself. In addition, for the purpose of the present study, the term "authentic texts" is defined as language samples that are created by native speakers for native speakers of the language. It keeps clearly in mind that authentic texts stand for something which made only by the native and provide for the native themselves. The examples of authentic texts are advertisements, magazines, newspapers, articles and brochures. Moreover, authentic texts are not designed for pedagogical purposes, authentic materials are "ordinary texts not produced specifically for language teaching purposes." In line with this, Ferit Kilickaya wrote: " The use of authentic materials in an EFL classroom is what many teachers involved in foreign language teaching have discussed in recent years. We have heard persuasive voices insisting that the English presented in the classroom should be authentic, not produced for instructional purposes.

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