

Investigating English Reading Comprehension Problems Faced by Students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad

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Abstract

This present study of article aims to the investigation of English reading comprehension problems faced by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad. The main aim of this research study is to find out the difficulties of the students in English reading comprehension. The research method was used in quantitative approach. The technique or an instrument of this study was a questionnaire for collecting data of the sample. The questionnaire was designed into Likert-scale with 15 items and provided to the 40 students of 2nd year students from 21 Batch of BS English Department. According to the student's responses, the data was analyzed into SPSS version-21. The findings and results of this study shows that students were facing problems in reading comprehension, Such as, figuring out meanings of the new words, distinguishing the main ideas from supporting ideas in the reading text, they usually word to word translate when they do not understand the total meaning of the text, they have poor comprehension, they don't have mastery in vocabulary, they keep thinking that other students are better at language than us, they feel stressed when they read texts in English and they feel confused to understand the text. This research study aims to give the awareness of the reading strategies and the knowledge of reading comprehension for the students that can improve their problems in English reading comprehension.

Keywords: Investigation, Students Problems, English Reading Comprehension.

1. Introduction

A research article has different parts, including, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology results and conclusion, Reading is a communication process in which the reader and writer communicate with each other they use discourse through in a text. Reading is a crucial instrument

because it is one of the most regularly used language skill in our day-to-day life, like observed by the usage of social media. Most learners use the internet to search the info through the websites and almost the material is published in the English language. According to Barnett (1990, cited in omaggio, 1993) defines, reading is an interactive process and cognitive process that functions in the mind, as a reader actively participates in the creation of meanings, and management of approaches. Besides, Bamford and Day (2000) hypothesize that reading is the formation of meaning from printed or written messages. This technique allows us to read professionally and acquire successfully (Stoller & Grabe, 2002,). Majority of EFL (English as the first language) beginners might face comprehension difficulties though reading a text that would be difficult for them to understand but active readers might be face problems by applying operational reading strategies to solve the comprehension challenges (Tobing, 2013).

1.1. Research Objectives:

The aims and objectives of this article are:

1. To investigate the factors that affect student's English reading comprehension at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University.
2. To identify the challenges faced by learners in English reading comprehension.

1.2. Research Questions:

The research questions of this article are:

1. What are the factors that affect student's English reading comprehension at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University?
2. What are the challenges faced by learners in English reading comprehension?

1.3. Statement of Problem:

Although English reading comprehension is a serious issue for EFL students at every level; it is well-recognized that the majority of Urdu and Sindhi speakers faced challenges in English reading comprehension particularly, in learning the English language. For building the interest of EFL learners we must find possibilities for them to improve their reading skills. Still, Urdu and Sindhi EFL students reading skills remain under-researched (Renandya 2007). According to this research article, we have observed that most SBBU-SBA university students were facing problems in understanding English language texts. In the same way, the students of 2nd year, 21 Batch of the English department at SBBU-SBA University were also facing difficulties in English reading comprehension also they are in a race to find ways to improve their reading skills and overcome their difficulties. According to Zoghi et al. (2011) he argued that most learners faced challenges in L2 because they lack knowledge of the language or they don't know how to read texts.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Definitions of Reading Comprehension:

Reading comprehension is an active skill or an ability to modify the process of text. This skill tries to develop construction to content of the printed text, understand its meaning, and incorporate with readers' intention what they already possess. Reading comprehension is important for the nationwide success that functions in our society. According to Hornby in Irwan (2010), he mentioned that reading comprehension defines reading the text with the rule of understanding the written codes. Therefore, reading comprehension is a cooperative process among the written text and the reader's upbringing knowledge (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1984).

According to Pang (2013:14), he stated that comprehension is a progressive skill, the development of creating sense of printed confrontations and sentences to transform them into actual meanings. Comprehension means the ability to derive meaning from one word to another in a given text. Hence, reading means communication among the writer's mind and the reader's mind. This is the process in which the writer intends to use his mind to reach out the reader and a way that how the reader tries to understand the message of the writer and tries to create the meanings accurately. Reading comprehension is the basic skill in learning a language. It helps to improve other skills as well as writing, speaking, and listening skills. Reading is the need of students to explore the different perspectives of education. It is very useful in science, media, technology, radio, business marketing, and in more things. It is required to read and understand lots of written material to get better accomplishment in the language learning process.

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading can be taught like a pen to lure the information from the written text and make it stress-free to interpret that written information. It means reading can unlock the doors of education for the students to get more knowledge about different fields. Reading comprehension is the skill that develops the cognitive power of students in the learning language process. It can lead students to better results in an educational process that enable students to the knowledge of the world. Furthermore, it is an ability or proficiency that is critically important in the instructive process of all individuals. It also emphasizes the students who found difficulties in their reading; because lack of vocabulary they are not able to understand the written text properly.

The writers can estimate or shape their text accordingly, but as he never knows who will be the reader of the written text. Nuttal (1982) based on the explanation above, resolved that reading is the process of transforming the information between the readers and the writers to understand the message that is in written format. He also declared that reading is the process that opens the window of the world. Hence, by reading people can be aware of different scenarios of life and they will get information about the world. Furthermore, Nutall (as cited Atikah 2009), he said, above the thousand definitions of reading are in the context but the different people have different perspectives about reading, and he classified reading definitions in short three groups:

- i. Comprehend; interpret meaning and sense, etc.
- ii. Translate, decipher, recognize, etc.
- iii. Articulate, communicate, phonate, etc.

Reading is the most operative tool of communication which is necessary to use through life. In the educational stage, teachers should develop reading habits in students or students must acquire reading skills. So, they can do all the things with good reading skills. Kudsiyah (2009), believes that students

must be good at reading skills. So, they can be capable to scan or skim the written text. In scanning reading, readers don't have to cover all the long passages of text, they just have to highlight the specific points to get the important information from the lengthy written text, in other words, we can call it "Extensive reading" in which they just have to outward reading the text for getting the general idea through a text, they will come to know about information of text is about by molding their eyes over its exterior.

Through reading people will be able to know about much figures of the language because reading is the central part of learning and the way to frame the world. People as readers are most reflexive participants who get information while in an enthusiastic transcript, they have a bundle of ideas and energetic minds that make themselves moderate and it identified to them.

2.2. Reading comprehension problems:

Many learners don't learn the language before reading text in the English language. When they read the text in L2 they should know well the English language first because when they know the language before reading the text they will be connected with the text with more concentration. Moreover, many students faced different sorts of problems in reading text, as some have a poor sense of meaning, they could not sense the words and their meaning when they look at new words in the text, they get confused and stop reading when they do not understand the text. Similarly, some students have poor reading techniques they don't know how to read even though they are not informed about scanning and skimming they don't know how to apply these strategies in a text to make an easy text for a reading to get specific information. They also face difficulty in poor memory when reading the vocabulary; they forget things in a short period. Some learners don't read because lack of motivation they don't develop their reading habits by reading for knowledge.

In addition, when readers do not understand any words, proven and idioms they literally will translate it. In this sense, Nuttal (2000) further mentioned that coordinating connections, prepositional phrases, complex nouns, nominalizations, and participial phrases cultivate the major reason of many problems in reading comprehension because these fundamentals make texts more multifarious and harder to understand by EFL students. Heilman (as cited in Atikah 2009 p.22), classified the five problems of reading comprehension faced by students. Such as:

1. Word attack
2. Fluency
3. Syntactic structure
4. Word meanings
5. Lack of concentration

2.3. Word attack:

Word attack is a disorder of reading comprehension in which some students encounter evident problems in word pronunciation. When a teacher in the classroom supplies many words accurately with good pronunciation but the students incorrectly mispronounced the words or sometimes, they change their

sounds.

2.4.Fluency:

Some students read very fast without knowing the meaning of the text. Often, they misunderstood the meaning of every word and it causes problems with fluency in reading comprehension. The comprehension and understanding of the student get unstable when they read so fast like reckless and too slowly.

2.5.Syntactic structure:

Syntactic structure problems appear when students may have a poor ability to understand the printed text. Syntactic problems include structural linkage words to the phrases and clauses that unite together and make up a sentence.

2.6.Word meanings:

Every learner faced difficulties in meaning because vocabulary is a vast collection of many words and meanings and it is infinite all things jointly cannot be stored in the mind; we forget many words and their meanings.

Lack of concentration:

It is the most fundamental cause of reading comprehension and many learners had faced difficulty in it. According to shaw (1958), he mentioned that reading without concentration creates many difficulties for students because reading with concentration always builds the results of comprehension and without concentration, we cannot able to read carefully and comprehend it well. The lack of concentration creates many difficulties in reading such as;

- I. Difficulty in Eye contact with text
- II. Difficulty in understanding vocabulary
- III. Difficulty in reading speeds
- IV. Difficulty in the environment (uncomfortable situations)
- V. Difficulty in paying attention
- VI. Difficulty in processing the ideas
- VII. Difficulty in text low interest

3. Methodology:

3.1.Research Design:

This research article study focuses on the problems of English reading comprehension faced by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University and this methodology is based on quantitative data for

the data analysis. This study takes place at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University SBBU-SBA. However, this chapter clarifies the research design of the study and categorizes the method and sample of the study.

3.2.The Sample of the study:

To collect the data for this research study, we have used convenience sampling, for selecting 40 students from 2nd year, 21 Batch of English Department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University.

3.3.The Process of data collection:

To accumulate the data from the research sample, we have used a technique that is possibly appropriate for the aim of this study. The instrument of the study was adopted questionnaire for the data collection. Thus, a questionnaire was peacefully provided to the 40 students to analyze their problems in English reading comprehension. All the students responded well as per the level of knowledge or the problems they were facing in reading comprehension.

3.4.Questionnaire:

The researcher applied this technique to collect the data from the questionnaire; the researcher adopted a relevant questionnaire for collecting the data from 40 students of 2nd year, 21 Batch of English Department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU-SBA). The Adopted questionnaire was named "Reading comprehension problems encountered by EFL students at Ajloun national university" and published in the International journal of language and linguistics on vol.8 on 1 march 2021 written by two Associate professors (Tarneem Waleed Abu Abeedah, Dr. After Al-ghazo) and (Dr. Mohammad Al-sobh) scholars of English department language and literature at Ajloun vocational university Jordan.

English reading comprehension problems were needed to discover out the challenges faced by the students in reading comprehension. This technique was very valuable to obtain the data, related to the main objectives of this research study. The questionnaire was intended for the population of the sample. The questionnaire was designed with 15 close-ended questions with four choices provided to the students. The time of 30 minutes was given to the students while collecting data for the research at the English department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University SBBU-SBA.

3.5.Data Analysis:

After the collection of data, the researcher has analyzed the data through the statistical package for the social science SPSS, V.21 software. All the items were scored on five points Likert scale. The participant's responses were described in mean and standard deviation form.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

4.1.Research findings:

This Article examines the research findings on the issues of English reading comprehension problems faced by 2nd-year students of the English department at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad. In this article, we analyzed the obtained data collected from the questionnaire responded

to by the students who faced problems with English reading comprehension in the printed text and written observations in the classroom with study activities. In the Quantitative data analysis, we found that students were facing numerous problems in English reading comprehension. On this problem, the student lost their interest in learning the English language and they believe they make mistakes and they do not understand the content of the text. So, they don't like to read English language texts and don't want to be anxious about the reading. This issue has been impacting the mentality of the students that they do not have the capability in comprehending the English text rather than they need practice for it to overcome the root of the difficulty in reading comprehension.

4.2. Quantitative data analysis:

We have used the quantitative method for data analysis and obtained the data from the questionnaire by analyzing it into a Statistical package for social science (SPSS) in version. Here, the data is calculated into mean and deviation to figure out the quantity of problems faced by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad. The responses of the students were designed into a Likert scale of 5-points to get the result of the study in descriptive statistics table to find out items values in variables as well as in statistical mean and deviation format to calculate the average of absolute deviations of the data items in central point.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics:

Mean and Standard Deviation of English Reading Comprehension problems:

S.NO	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I faced a problem in figuring out the meanings of some new words in the reading comprehension.	4.68	.572
2.	I faced a problem in identifying the aim behind reading comprehension.	3.98	.947
3.	I face a difficulty in guessing the meanings of some new words.	3.75	1.235
4.	I face a problem in distinguishing main ideas from supporting ideas in the reading text.	3.98	1.310
5.	I face difficulty in extracting main and detailed ideas in the text.	4.05	1.131
6.	I face a difficulty in recognizing total meaning of the text.	4.15	1.145
7.	I usually translate word by word when I am reading.	4.28	1.062

8.	I feel stressed when reading a text in English in the class.	4.05	1.037
9.	I never quite sure of myself when I am reading in the class	4.30	.992
10.	I keep thinking that other students are better at language than I am.	3.78	1.271
11.	Even I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	4.08	1.248
12.	I feel upset when I don't understand what I read in English.	3.75	1.335
13.	I face a difficulty in summarizing the main ideas of the text.	3.93	1.185
14.	I don't face difficulty with reference questions.	4.05	1.061
15.	I find text mapping as easy task for me.	4.15	1.167

According to descriptive analysis, the student's attitude towards questionnaire indicates that they face difficulty in figuring the meaning of new words, or they feel upset when they do not understand the text in English. It means statistically, the mean average of this problem was (4.68) and std. deviation was (1.335) that indicates that this is the high degree level of estimation in the variables of the study. Moreover, student's claims that they never feel quite of about themselves they feel problems in interpreting the text in the classroom because they don't know how to read and comprehend the text in an accurate way and that type of student's ~~wakes~~ in reading comprehension can drag them into hesitations and they will lose their confidence in the classroom. They faced problems in the language classroom even they are well prepared for the class but they feel uneasiness in the classroom and it indicates the fear of doing mistakes and low level of confidence and they also face difficulties in understanding the reading text they feel upset when they orally don't comprehend the text.

According to the thirteenth statements, it classifies that student feels difficulties in summarizing the main ideas of the text in the reading comprehension. Statistically, it calculated in the mean absolute deviation where as it indicated that the mean average of this statement was (2.35) and std. deviation was (1.252) this also mean high level of degree estimation of the variables. Consequently, according to the last two statements in the questionnaire it calculated that students do not face difficulties in text mapping and with reference questions, the finding of the study is precisely emphasizing on the difficulties faced by students in the English reading comprehension at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, SBA in which highly investigated that students have poor understanding in reading comprehension.

4.4. Discussion

In this research Article, we have discussed that the English reading comprehension problems faced by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. The study findings asserted that university students were facing problems with reading comprehension which has been investigated in many ways. In edict to

justify the findings of the study, the researcher has related this study with other relevant studies.

The researcher has found that students are facing lack of vocabulary enchantment, they don't have mastery in vocabulary and this is the greatest barrier to which they couldn't comprehend the reading text. According to zuhara (2015) students should be master in vocabulary before comprehending any reading text. Because vocabulary is the core of the language that grows within the learning process and formulate the language. She added that difficulties come when the students don't improve their weaknesses and students are influenced by their weakness in the vocabulary because when they are unfamiliar with the vocabulary and they cannot comprehend the reading text. In English language learning, vocabulary has a vital role in reading because a bunch of knowledge of vocabulary is very important for the learners in learning language and comprehending reading texts. Above that, prior knowledge of the students based on the reading and generated many words of vocabulary to build the interest of the students in reading texts.

In this sense, students facing problems in ascertaining the aim behind reading comprehension because they are not understanding the text but they are extensively reading the text without paying attention of the context and its meaning and the ideas and thoughts are mentioned that creating the aim of the text. It causes a problem for the students when they do not understand the language in which they are reading, they don't have mastery in English language then how could they understand the text. For sure, students should focus on the English language before reading any English textbook. Hence, they face difficulty in extracting main and detailed ideas in the text because they are not much competent in the English language and they don't wholly understand it. They don't read text in this way to simplify the text in a short form to clearly understand, this problem can impact on students learning when they don't try to extract important ideas from the text, they will get confused and never understand text completely. Removing the important ideas or detailed fruitful knowledge from the whole text can be helpful for the student to understand it in a more efficient way without consuming much time and energy.

The short paragraphs are easy to understand and recall then the long narrative paragraphs. Sometime, students face difficulty in recognizing the total meaning of the text it because the English language is very wide with infinite vocabulary and used for different perspectives and in different situations and students face difficulty when the English is written in a tough vocabulary like in old works of English literature works of Shakespeare and other literary scholars of the literature. In addition, when students feel unfamiliar with the text, they do not recognize the total meaning of the text and so, they prefer to translate whole text in word-by-word translation when they read the text.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research article study about the English reading comprehension problems faced by students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazir Abad. The study researchers have found out that the student's difficulties in English reading comprehension. The result of the study concludes that students are facing many problems in the reading comprehension. Such as, they are facing problems in figuring out meaning of new words, they are facing problems in deduction meanings of the words, they are facing difficulties in distinguishing main ideas from the text, they are facing problems in identifying main aim of the text, they are facing problems in extracting main points from the text or they feel stressed in the language class even they are well prepared for the class. Sometimes, they translate text word by word because they do not understand the text and they feel upset when they do not comprehend the text and they usually think that other students are better at language than us.

Collectively, these are problems were observed through the questionnaire.

In the observation of the questionnaire, it has been noted that students are facing many problems at the same time, because they have poor reading comprehension ability and usually, they don't like to read text in English language because they feel stressed when they read in English in the language classroom. Hence, they don't understand English language entirely that's the reason why they do not understand the text accurately and they don't have strong assumption level to guess meaning of the new words in the English text.

So, from the overall findings of this study it could be indicate that Students are facing problems in English reading comprehension due to they have lack of prior knowledge, lack of comprehension, lack of concentration and lack of confidence in the reading process. Including, the burden of confusion and lacking sense of the things together is also impact on the reading comprehension and in effective for the language learning classroom. Students faced difficulties in summarizing the main ideas of the text and the purpose behind reading these are the crucial basic problems that learners faced during their reading process especially when they read text in the English language.

6. Recommendations:

In this article, we have observed that there are the many problems in reading comprehension faced by students but when they consult to the teacher and make discussion about their weakness in reading comprehension so might teacher can improve their reading comprehension problems. The language classroom should be based on activity where teacher and students can share the knowledge, discussion about the students' learning difficulties, motivations should be provided by the teacher to encourage their students and help them to build their confidence level, comprehension level and capacity building level. The language class should be based on for the practice of four language skills to improve students' English language and teacher should have taught about, pre reading, post reading and while reading for connecting students with reading activities and build level of the students in reading comprehension.

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