**Lecture 3: II-Teaching the Four Language Skills**

**1-Teaching the Reading Skill**

**Introduction**

Literacy is defined as the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices. Literacy involves productive (e.g., writing, speaking) as well as receptive (e.g., reading, listening) processes that are more alike than different, especially in their inherently constructive, or transactive, character. Reading exposes foreign language learners to many vocabulary items and a variety of grammatical structures, idioms and phrases...etc. Therefore, EFL teachers should prepare special materials for the learners to engage them in reading either inside or beyond the classroom.

**1. Definition of Reading and Reading Comprehension**

Goodman (1967) described reading as "a precise process. It involves exact, detailed, sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and larger language units" (p. 126). He defined it as

[A] selective process. It involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader's expectation. As this partial information is processed, tentative decisions are made to be confirmed, rejected or refined as reading progresses. (pp. 126-127)

According to Nurdianingsih (2021), "reading has three basic definitions in which learning to read means: (1) learning to pronounce the words; (2) learning to identify words and get their meaning; and (3) learning to bring meaning to a text or extract message from a text" (p. 286).

Pardo defined reading comprehension as "a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text" (2004, p. 272). It is

also defined by Grabe and Stoller as "the ability to extract, interpret, and use information from a print or digital text" (2018, p. 12).

## 2. Types of Reading

**1-Extensive vs. Intensive Reading:** extensive reading is the type of reading that is related to reading the text for pleasure. This practice of extensive reading is more suitable for the learners who want to choose and read on their own will. Through extensive reading, the learners develop their vocabulary and grammar (general information). On contrary, intensive reading is aimed at a particular text that involves the learners in doing some tasks and activities related to vocabulary and grammar. Here, the learners read the text for detailed study and they read between the lines.

**2-Digital vs. Print Reading:** digital reading is the process of extracting meaning from a text that is in a digital format. However, print reading is the ability to comprehend a written text/material.

**3-Critical Reading:** critical reading involves "an interactive process using several levels of thought simultaneously" (Flynn, 1989, p. 664). It is a type of reading that is based on critical thinking. Ruggeiro (l984) defined critical thinking as "the close examination of a proposed problem's or issue's solution to determine both its strengths and its weaknesses. In short, it means evaluation and judgment" (p. 129).

**4-Speed Reading:** it is the process of rapidly recognising and absorbing phrases or sentences on a page all at once, rather than identifying individual words. During the late 1950s, Evelyn Wood coined the term speed reading in the United States of America to refer to exceptional readers who could read between 1500 and 6000 words per minute, often by reading down the page rather than from side to side, reading meaningful groups of words rather than individual words. (Abdul Karim, 2022, p. 141). The average rate is 250 words per minute. Consequently, EFL teachers should provide several learning activities to increase learners' reading rates.

**5-Active Reading:** it is a type of reading that involves proactively interacting with the text in order to gain a deeper understanding of the material. It is an approach to reading, advocated by Neil Anderson (2013), that focuses on the following elements:

**A** = Activate Prior Knowledge

**C** = Cultivate Vocabulary

**T** = Think About Meaning

**I** = Increase Reading Fluency (the ability to read a text with accuracy, appropriate rate, and good expression)

**V** = Verify Strategies

**E** = Evaluate Progress

## 3. Reading Techniques

**1-Skimming:** this term means to get a quick idea of the gist of a text while running your eyes over it. It is very useful for the teachers to ask their students to have a quick look at the text before plunging into it for detail to get some specific pieces of information. (Sárosdy, 2006, p. 53)

**2-Scanning:** this term means reading for specific information. In contrast to reading for gist we often read a text because we need specific details. For example, reading about the weather. (Sárosdy, 2006, pp. 53-54)

**3-SQ3R:** it is a reading technique that was introduced by Robinson in 1946. It stands for **S**urvey, **Q**uestion, and **3 Rs: R**ead, **R**ecite and **R**eview. The five concepts are explained as follows (Robinson, 1946):

1-**S**urveying before reading helps you get a bird's eye view of your reading, so you can see its basic structure and important concepts (Title, author, and any headings to subsections; images, graphs, any review questions or practice quizzes; the introduction and the conclusion).

2-**Q**uestioning about the content during surveying will help you focus your reading on understanding the critical gaps in your knowledge.

3-**R**eading aims at filling in the gaps between what you know and what you need to know.

4-**R**eciting after reading aims at solidifying what you have learned. You recite by asking yourself out loud the questions you developed and summarising the reading in a few sentences or highlighting key points.

5-**R**eviewing (daily or as frequently as possible) aims at making sure your understanding of the material sticks in your mind.

**4. Stages of Teaching Reading**

 **1-Pre-reading:** at pre-reading stages, teachers can guide students in examining text headings (and subheadings) and then predicting what each section is about. The goal is for students, over time, to take these steps independently without being directed to do so.

 **2-While-reading:** while students are reading, they can be guided by their teacher to discover text organization features/structure. Depending on the nature of the text being read, teachers can ask students for instance to complete an outline of the text or underline lexical clues that indicate major organizational patterns (**e.g.,** cause–effect, comparison–contrast, problem–solution).

 **3-Post-reading:** discourse–structure awareness can be developed further in post-reading discussions and rereading tasks. Students can also be asked to reread a text to match main ideas and supporting information across two columns (Grabe & Stoller, 2018, pp. 55-56)

**5. Models of Reading**

**1-Bottom-up Model:** focuses on development of basic skills such as decoding letters, words and sentences. Here the reader starts with letters or larger units, and as he attends to them he begins to anticipate the words they spell. When the words are identified, they are decoded to inner speech from which the reader derives meaning. In this process, reading comprehension is believed to be an automatic outcome of accurate word recognition.

**2-Top-down Model:** relies on the readers' prior knowledge and expectations to comprehend the text. Here, the reader's cognitive and language competence plays a key role in the construction of meaning.

**3-Interactive Model:** top-down and bottom-up processing in reading seem to occur simultaneously. Rumelhart (1980) argued that comprehension is dependent on both graphic information and the information in the reader's mind (as cited in Ngabut, 2015).

**6. Objectives of Reading**

Whether the learners read the given text intensively or extensively, reading has two main aims: instrumental or pleasurable. We can speak about instrumental reading when we want to achieve some clear aim. For example, reading instructions on a machine because we want to know

how to operate it. Reading a brochure if tourists need some pieces of information about a spot of interest...etc. Pleasurable reading takes place for pleasure (free time). In both types of reading, the learners are interested in the topics either because they find them useful or because they find them interesting. (Sárosdy et al., 2006, p. 53)

**7. Cycles in Reading**

**1-The optical/visual cycle:** the eye is an optical instrument that perceives symbols. Light bounces off the page to the reader's eyes but the brain only gets useful visual input as the eye fixates (stops and focuses).

**2-The perceptual cycle:** the reader interprets symbols. The brain forms perceptual images of the visual input on the basis of what it expects to see and the meaning it is constructing.

**3-The syntactic/lexico-grammatical cycle:** as the perceptions are formed, the reader assigns a grammatical pattern and specific wording to construct links between words. S/he groups symbols together to build up a sensible text.

**4-The meaning/semantic cycle:** at the stage, the reader constructs meaning since the goal of reading is always comprehension. (Goodman, 1988, p. 15)

**8. Reading Processes**

**1-Recognition-initiation:** the brain must recognize a graphic display in the visual field as written language and initiate reading. Normally this would occur once in each reading activity, though it's possible for reading to be interrupted by other activities, examining pictures, for example, and then to be reinitiated.

**2-Prediction:** the brain is always anticipating and predicting as it seeks order and significance in the input.

**3-Confirmation:** the brain verifies its predictions by confirming or disconfirming them.

**4-Correction:** the brain reprocesses when it finds inconsistencies or when its predictions are disconfirmed.

**5-Termination:** the brain terminates/ends the reading activity when the reading task is completed, but termination may occur for other reasons: the task is nonproductive; little meaning is being

constructed, or the meaning is already known, or the story is uninteresting or the reader finds it inappropriate for the particular purpose. At any rate, termination in reading is usually an open option at any point. (Goodman, 1988, p. 16)

## 9. Levels of Reading Comprehension

Levels of comprehension range from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type:

**1-Literal Comprehension:** getting the information and reproducing what is in the text by creating images (readers create images using the senses to help them to draw conclusions, make predictions, interpret information, remember details and assist with overall comprehension), skimming, scanning, self-questioning (Basaraba et al., 2012).

**2-Inferential Comprehension:** seeing the relationship between the ideas by connecting, comparing, inferring, predicting (Basaraba et al., 2012).

**3-Evaluative Comprehension:** extending beyond the text by summarising and paraphrasing, synthesising, determining importance, self-questioning (Basaraba et al., 2012).

**4-Applied Comprehension:** using information from the text to construct knowledge (e.g., to express opinions and form new ideas based on information in text).

## 9. Compensatory Strategies while Reading

Readers use some strategies as compensations when they encounter difficulties in reading. The strategies are listed from least to most disruptive:

**1-Slowing reading rate:** as readers become more skilled, their control over reading rate increases. When difficulties are encountered, readers typically slow their rate of reading allowing them to sort out the difficulties the text imposes.

**2-Pause:** a pause is an uncommonly long delay while reading. Less skilled readers pause longer and more often than do skilled readers. Pausing seems to provide the time needed for an inefficient text processing. Pausing may be selected as the strategy when slowing reading rate fails to resolve the difficulty. Furthermore, when the source of confusion is unclear, pausing can occur as readers try to understand its nature and select other compensations for resolving it.

**3-Look back:** look backs occur when readers briefly glance back at a few words in that portion of the text that has been read. The compensation here seems to be one that restores information (readers' background knowledge/schema) to working memory or assigns more attention to information already read. Look backs have been documented as useful in determining the meaning of an unknown word by uncovering textual cues.

**4-Read aloud:** readers will often select to read aloud when the text is difficult or when the environment is noisy and distracting. This compensation strategy seems to provide auditory feedback.

**5-Sounding out, analogizing to a known sight word, or contextual guessing**: when an unfamiliar word is encountered (a word that is not recognized immediately) readers may use four strategies in an attempt to identify the word:

1-Reading by sight is possible: words frequently encountered (e.g., car) are eventually recognized as whole units that activate sounds and meanings quickly from memory. This is automatic word reading. The remaining three are compensatory: backups when automatic word reading fails.

2-Phonological recoding is using the rules of phonetics to match a series of letters to a spoken word in memory.

3-Analogising (comparing) to known sight words occurs when readers look at a word's spelling and bring to mind similarly spelled words to cue its meaning.

4-Contextual guessing is using surrounding text to infer an unknown word's meaning. (Ehri , 1994)

**6-Jump over (Skip over a word):** at times readers decide not to work at figuring out an unknown word or they work at it and are unsuccessful. In these cases they may purposely skip the word and continue reading.

**7-Reread text:** rereading is a compensation strategy used when all the previous strategies do not work. Rereading some portion of the text, perhaps returning to the beginning of a sentence and starting over or, at times, rereading a full paragraph or more may resolve problems with disruptions (**e.g.** syntax) caused by a lack of understanding of what was read. (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007, pp. 561-562)

**10. The Role of Context in Reading Comprehension**

Reading occurs in a context rather than in isolation. Context refers to the words and ideas surrounding a particular word or phrase. It is crucial for comprehension and vocabulary understanding because it provides clues (contextual clues) that help you make sense of what you are reading (Nagy & Scott, 2000). Contextual clues are elements of grammatical and visual composition that suggest meaning for the audience or reader. They can be anything that helps you understand the meaning of unknown words.

**Conclusion**

There is a mutual relationship between a student's academic reading skills and academic success. Students as well as teachers have to focus on the development of this skill by promoting learners' reading comprehension through the use of virtual environments and technological tools.

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