

READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

HABILIDADES DE COMPREENSÃO DE TEXTO

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is the primary goal of the reading process; it is not merely the recognition of written symbols and the pronunciation of words, but rather the skill of perceiving both the explicit and implicit meanings of texts. Hence, the importance of reading comprehension emerges as a mental process in which multiple elements overlap. Consequently, reading comprehension progresses through various levels that allow the reader to read the text, understand its embedded ideas, analyze them, predict outcomes, and distinguish between facts and opinions. This research aims to identify reading comprehension, its skills, and its importance in education, as well as to understand its role in developing the mental and linguistic abilities of learners. The two researchers adopted the descriptive analytical approach by reviewing educational studies and research that addressed reading comprehension. The research concluded that reading comprehension is indispensable, not only in reading but also in other academic subjects. This contributes to raising the learner's linguistic level, providing them with ideas and information, and applying them in their life. Due to the importance of reading comprehension, focus should be placed on developing and enhancing its skills across all educational stages.

Keywords: Skills. Comprehension. Reading.

Resumo

A compreensão de leitura é o objetivo principal do processo de leitura; não se trata meramente do reconhecimento de símbolos escritos e da pronúncia de palavras, mas sim da habilidade de perceber tanto os significados explícitos quanto os implícitos dos textos. Assim, a importância da compreensão de leitura surge como um processo mental no qual múltiplos elementos se sobrepõem. Consequentemente, a compreensão de leitura evolui por vários níveis que permitem ao leitor ler o texto, compreender as ideias nele contidas, analisá-las, prever resultados e distinguir entre fatos e opiniões. Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo identificar a compreensão de leitura, suas habilidades e sua importância na educação, bem como compreender seu papel no desenvolvimento das habilidades mentais e linguísticas dos alunos. Os dois pesquisadores adotaram a abordagem analítico-descritiva, revisando estudos e pesquisas educacionais que abordavam a compreensão de leitura. A pesquisa concluiu que a compreensão de leitura é indispensável, não apenas na leitura, mas também em outras disciplinas acadêmicas. Isso contribui para elevar o nível linguístico do aluno, fornecendo-lhe ideias e informações, e aplicando-as em sua vida. Devido à importância da compreensão de leitura, deve-se dar ênfase ao desenvolvimento e ao aprimoramento de suas habilidades em todas as etapas educacionais.

Palavras-chave: Habilidades. Compreensão. Leitura.



1 CHAPTER ONE: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 First: the research problem

The research problem was identified through a review of previous studies and research, the results of which indicated a clear weakness in reading comprehension skills among learners across various educational levels, particularly in primary and intermediate stages. These studies emphasized the necessity of acquiring and developing reading comprehension skills, highlighting their paramount importance. Such skills are vital for enabling learners to become proficient readers who can transcend superficial meanings to reach the implicit, aesthetic, critical, and creative levels of a text.

Based on the researcher's experience in teaching the Arabic language at the intermediate level, a decline in students' comprehension of reading texts was observed. This is manifested in their inability to identify the main idea of a text, understand vocabulary through context, or analyze the text to infer implicit meanings. Consequently, this leads to lower academic achievement across all subjects, necessitating an investigation into reading comprehension skills and their development.

Accordingly, the researchers pose the following question:

- What are the skills of reading comprehension?

1.2 Second: importance of the research

The Arabic language is distinguished from other languages by a unique characteristic bestowed upon it by Almighty Allah, who chose it to be the language of His Holy Book revealed to His final Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH). Allah says: *"Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand"* [Az-Zukhruf: 3]. Allah also pledged to preserve His Book, saying: *"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [the Qur'an] and indeed, We will be its guardian"* [Al-Hijr: 9]. This divine preservation has been the reason for the permanence and immortality of the Arabic language, which spread alongside the expansion of Islam (Abdul Wahid, 2024: 15).

Undoubtedly, the Arabic language represents an educational priority within the pedagogical system, as it serves as the foundation for the learner to acquire knowledge

and engage with all fields of study (Mamoun & Haniya, 2021: 1281). Reading is considered the most critical skill among language skills; it fulfills the objective of language teaching and provides the learner with linguistic contributions that elevate their performance levels. Reading "furnishes" the mind with knowledge, and thinking itself is a pattern resulting from reading. In nature, reading is a fluid, active process involving the reader and their skills, the text and its structure, and the construction of meaning. Reading comprehension represents one of the primary goals of teaching reading (Sulaiman, 2023: 9).

Furthermore, reading comprehension contributes to solving contemporary problems faced by the learner. It is the pathway to broadening ideas, enriching information, and fostering self-confidence, enabling the learner to express opinions, criticize, and innovate in discovering new sciences and facts. It also helps students consolidate and retain information for long periods. Conversely, learning without understanding is merely rote learning resulting from memorization and repetition, which is highly susceptible to being forgotten (Abdul Qadir, 2020: 522).

Based on the above, the importance of this research is manifested in the following:

- **The Importance of the Arabic Language:** It is regarded as the most sublime language of all, being the language of the Holy Qur'an.
- **The Importance of Reading:** It serves as the primary key to all sciences and branches of knowledge.
- **The Importance of Reading Comprehension and its Skills:** It is the ultimate goal of the reading process and the means to uncover the meanings embedded within a text.

1.3 Third: research aim

This research aims to identify: **"What are the skills of reading comprehension?"**

1.4 Fourth: definition of terms

1. **Skills:** Everything that can be learned and acquired, developed by the learner through training and simulation. What is learned varies according to the type, nature, and characteristics of the subject matter, as well as the objective of learning it (Abu Mahfouz, 2017: 15).
2. **Comprehension:** Ibn Manzur defined it as: "Knowing something by heart (internally). To comprehend something means to understand it, perceive it, and know it. To 'make someone understand' is to clarify it for them, and 'to grasp speech' is to understand it bit by bit. A 'comprehending man' is one who is quick to understand" (Ibn Manzur, 2016: 3481).
3. **Reading:** A cognitive and visual activity accompanied by vocalization through lip movement during oral reading. Its goal is to reach an understanding of the meanings and ideas carried by written symbols, and to benefit from and interact with them (Mamoun & Haniya, 2021: 1283).
4. **Reading Comprehension:** An interactive, constructive mental process practiced by the reader through written content to extract the general meaning of a subject. This process is inferred through the reader's possession of a set of behavioral indicators expressing this understanding, measured by the score the reader achieves in reading comprehension tests designed for this purpose (Abdul Bari, 2010: 30).
5. **Reading Comprehension Skills:** These are the target skills in reading instruction. They involve enabling the reader to recognize words, understand sentence meanings, and link meanings together, organizing them in a logical and sequential order. They also involve retaining meanings and ideas and utilizing them in life activities (Zayer & Ahoud, 2016: 88).

Procedural Definition of Reading Comprehension: It is a set of mental processes that enable the learner to interact with a read text, allowing them to extract explicit and implicit meanings and interpret ideas by linking their prior experiences and skills with the text being read.

2 CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 First: elements of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension consists of several fundamental elements:

1. **The Reader:** The primary element of comprehension. The reader engages with the subject matter through interaction, achieved by the effective employment of their mental and linguistic abilities.
2. **The Text:** A highly influential factor that can either facilitate or hinder understanding. Consequently, the reader constructs several mental representations to achieve comprehension.
3. **Context:** Refers to the cultural and social environments surrounding the reader. Context extends beyond the classroom; thus, differences in reading comprehension can often be attributed to diverse backgrounds and cultures (Abdul Bari, 2010: 20).

2.2 Second: levels of reading comprehension

Scholars have categorized reading comprehension into various levels based on the nature of reading and its objectives across different educational stages:

1. **Literal Level (Reading the Lines):** Involves the explicit reading of everything written. It includes recognizing individual words, understanding their meanings and opposites, and classifying them. It focuses on direct meanings without deep processing (Abdullah & Ammar, 2014: 31).
2. **Interpretive Level:** Refers to the reader's ability to perceive cause-and-effect relationships to reach generalizations.
3. **Critical Level:** The reader's ability to issue judgments on the read text.
4. **Creative Level:** The ability to utilize all opinions in the text and apply them with originality (Ibrahim, 2013: 37).
5. **Aesthetic Level:** A deep level focusing on the reader's emotional response and their ability to sense the writer's feelings and imagination.

6. **Innovative Level:** A high level of comprehension where the reader creates new and unconventional ideas and perceptions (Harahsheh, 2007: 113).

2.3 Third: reading comprehension skills

Researchers have classified these skills in several ways:

2.3.1 *Otto chester's classification*

1. **Convergent Thinking Skills:** Including identifying the main idea, determining sequence, using context for word recognition, identifying prefixes/suffixes, and pinpointing details.
2. **Divergent Thinking Skills:** Including understanding the writer's purpose, distinguishing between fact and fiction, identifying character traits, perceiving emotional interaction, understanding figurative language, and predicting story outcomes.

2.3.2 *Adams' description of skills*

- Identifying the central general idea.
- Understanding the main idea of a paragraph.
- Grasping fine details.
- Identifying relationships between ideas.
- Critiquing and expressing opinions on the text (Ibrahim, 2013: 35-36).

2.3.3 *Fathi younis' complex comprehension skills*

- Assigning meaning to symbols and understanding larger units (phrases, paragraphs).
- Understanding words within context and reading in conceptual units.
- Understanding the writer's organization, inferring trends, and evaluating literary styles.

- Retaining, applying, and interpreting ideas based on prior experience (Abdullah, 2015: 33-34).

3 RESULTS

Based on the above, the researchers reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a positive correlation between reading ability and the level of reading comprehension.
2. A dynamic relationship exists between the reader, the text, and the context, where environmental factors significantly impact comprehension levels.
3. Reading comprehension enables the reader to acquire information, analyze, interpret, and draw inferences from texts.
4. Reading comprehension skills contribute significantly to the development of the reader's literary and scientific capabilities.

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