

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSING READING SKILL OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract:

This article presents the importance of assessment as one of the most effective steps in teaching English. Moreover, developing reading comprehension skills in teaching English is more explored by many researchers [1, 2]. Recent research highlight a few considerations exploring measuring reading comprehension that is most typically performed among university students.

Keywords: Language teaching, reading skill, assessment, learners.

The term “assessment of reading skills” is seen as the practice of defining the students’ reading ability of their skimming, scanning, pronunciation, and interpretation skills). In addition, the term “assessment criteria” is used to refer to the reading process and what criteria measure reading scores in teaching. The concept of “ongoing assessment” includes elements of formative assessment, such as activities, methods, or techniques used in evaluating students reading skills regularly. In brief, “giving constructive feedback” conduct’ or “washback effect” mean what happens between teacher and students to determine students’ strength and weaknesses while reading texts of different genres.

The research will focus on the following research questions:

What are the benefits of applying reading assessment?

What are the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing reading assessment?

How is the role of formative assessment in reading comprehension defined?

Assessment in developing reading comprehension skills involves the ability of readers to critically evaluate information in a text in addition to word decoding and content comprehension. Moreover, this research aims to explore the main obstacles and difficulties that impede students’ text comprehension, as well as developing linguistic, communication, and critical thinking skills. The article presents a new type of standardized reading assessment tasks formats by applying formative assessment tasks that motivate students in reading comprehension.

According to Douglas Brown, assessment is an integral part of the teaching cycle and is applied throughout the learning process. Assessment tasks and tests in reading



can provide motivation, feedback, and authenticity to the students in learning. Moreover, the role of reading comprehension in English in students' understanding of problems, evaluation, and independent thinking is undeniable in higher education. In addition, the researchers Barr, Tagg, Black, Wiliam state that the effective acquisition of reading skills in teaching English in higher education is also measured by the assessment obtained in the exams. It is known that an exam-oriented assessment process does not ensure uniform language skills in reading. Students can play an active role in the learning process to evaluate each other's reading skills with peers. Rethinasamy and Mermelstein noted that classroom assessment is an ongoing process that uses judgments about students' language learning, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other achievements. Thus, reading assessment should allow them to improve their reading in English.

Recently Perera-Diltz and Moe claimed that formative assessments improve teachers' instructional practice and allow them to track students' progress toward standards. This assessment motivates students to build self-confidence pre, while, and after the reading process to comprehend the content. Linse and Nunan and Freeman and Brown point out that reading strategies open good opportunities for assessing reading in an ongoing process. Reading strategies encompass many aspects in conducting pre, while, and after the reading process. Students can respond to all questions, select a word or structure, identify new information, visualize it, schematically interpret content, or summarize in a short context.

It is clear that to become efficient readers of English, two required skills are crucial: bottom-up strategies for recognizing words and phrases to enrich vocabulary size.

top-down skills to drive reading strategies and conceptual comprehension.

Moreover, bottom-up strategies entail assessing reading ability measured for the effectiveness of comprehension. In the top-down approach to reading, students can comprehend content and format schemata to demonstrate cultural experiences for interpretation. The main essential factor in bottom-up strategies is assessing students' metacognitive skills (predicting, questioning, paraphrasing, visualizing, evaluating, and summarizing) through using formative classroom assessments.

Additionally, reading comprehension skills in English are understood as reading for comprehending meaning in different genres and entertainment. It involves decoding specific words to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. First, they must be able to practice fundamental bottom-up strategies, such as selecting new words, phrases, and appropriate terminologies, and new information on fiction, documentaries, and non-academic texts.



Artieda and Veloo et al. discovered that more university teachers hardly used classroom-based assessment in developing reading skills because they do not consider it helpful to the students. This explains why they practice limited classroom-based assessment because the higher education assessment model determines students reading levels by doing paper-based tests instead of practicing reading strategies. They argued that high-stakes testing has negative effects on reading assessment.

First, the discussion revealed that the majority of students should be aware of the requirements of assessment in improving their reading comprehension skills. They argue that the assessment criteria were helpful to identify their levels of reading. Only a few of them (2–3 students) feel stressed while assessing. Secondly, the study discovered that high leveled exam tests that entail theoretical explanations on papers cause fear in students and they could not solve any problems in the current situation. It is a fact that in the assessment of reading comprehension, students should be involved in various tests, assignments, and daily classroom activities to develop cognitive and metacognitive skills in reading. The variations of tasks are based on well-structured tests and activities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the texts for assessment. According to the survey responses, most of the teachers were able to make some progress in reading comprehension by using these types of tasks. The study has related factors that several measurements in formative assessment provide evidence in reading. This evidence was identified in students' activities in the classroom-based reading process.



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