READING COMPREHENSION: TEXT TYPES/GENRES

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English as foreign Language Context (EFLC)

Foreign language context (FLC) refers to a speech community outside the national or territorial boundaries (STERN, 1983, p. 16)
LECTURE GOAL AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lecture you will have:

- considered what we understand by using text structure as a road map for reading comprehension in an English as foreign Language Context (EFLC).

- captured the correct terms we use to define reading comprehension in an EFLC.
LECTURE GOAL AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lecture you will have:

- explored how to explain and interpret reading models and theories
- examined the definitions of text genres/types and text structure/organization
- identified levels of reading
INTEREST OF THE SUBJECT

In FLC, reading is the primary source of language input - English is not spoken. English is mostly learned through reading books, texts, articles, etc.

READING IS PRIMARY
In today's world it is more important than ever to understand how to draw meaning from what you read in English both as a foreign and international language. In order to position yourself well, learning to read in EFL with greater comprehension is a skill that will set you apart.
The past few decades have witnessed an increased interest in second language reading. The reasons for such an increase are sociopolitical, pedagogical, and cognitive. The ability to read is recognized to be the most steady and long-lasting of the second language modalities.

(BERNHARDT, 1991).
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Reading is an essential skill that individuals need to process in order to be successful in life. Reading keeps individuals informed, up-to-date, and thinking.
Several studies have emphasized the role of certain factors presumed to affect reading comprehension, such as, background knowledge (Adams, 1982; Alderson & Urquhat, 1988; Johnson, 1982; Lee, 1986), and cultural diversity (Carrell, 1987).
A few studies have examined the effect of authentic texts on reading comprehension. But, the exploration of the role of text genres/types in reading/text comprehension has received very little attention.

What is text comprehension and what role do text genres and types play in text comprehension?
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

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WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

(i) For some reading is essentially the skill of decoding symbols;

(ii) For others reading is a means of discovering the meaning ‘behind’ the symbols.

(Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language, 1988)
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text.

Reading comprehension is a complex, multiple task ability.
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

The foregoing two definitions may correspond to what is identified as the two categories of knowledge that must interact if there is to be “full, or at least native like, comprehension of written texts”: Knowledge of form and knowledge of substance.

(Eskey, 1986, p. 17)
Knowledge of form is linguistic in nature. This includes graphophonic, lexical, syntactic/semantic knowledge and rhetorical patterns of language.
The knowledge of form provides the reader with certain expectations about the language of the text and facilitates making accurate identifications of forms in reading.
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

Knowledge of substance entails cultural, pragmatic and subject-specific information.
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

Knowledge of substance provides the reader with certain expectations about the larger conceptual structure of the text.
WHAT IS READING/TEXT COMPREHENSION?

Reading comprehension, at its most fundamental level, involves the efficient application of lower-level processes (Stanovich, 1986; Carrel, 1984) consisting of phonological awareness, word recognition skills, and syntactic awareness, all of which are crucial for the development of successful reading comprehension (Stanovich, 1986).
Reading comprehension also involves higher-level processing skills of syntax, semantics, and discourse structures together with higher-order knowledge of text representation and the integration of ideas within the readers’ global knowledge (Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011).
LEVELS OF READING

Higher-level cognitive processes combine with the lower-level processes to form the cognitive processing resources that let the reader carry out reading for various purposes (Grabe, 1999, 2000). They are summarized in the following table.
## LEVELS OF READING

<table>
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<th>Lower-level processes</th>
<th>Higher-level processes</th>
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<td>• Lexical access</td>
<td>• Text model of comprehension</td>
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<td>• Syntactic parsing</td>
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Readers need to integrate and combine a variety of cognitive, linguistic, and non-linguistic skills and processes for efficient and successful text comprehension.
Reading begins with the eyes identifying visual information from the reading text. The visual information is picked up during the process of a fixation. Reading is perceived as a linear process; reading from left to right, identify each letter, a letter at a time followed by the identification of sounds, phrases, clauses and sentences are built based on the syntactic information available.
Lexical items are then identified through grapheme-phoneme correspondence and placed in short term memory until the sentence is identified.
This model is also referred to as the outside in model where readers begin from the print and work on the precise identification of the letters, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs and their pronunciation.
Since this model is text driven, it is believed that meaning is found in the text and successful reading depends on the ability of the reader to plod or decode accurately. Readers need to read word by word instead of meaningful chunks and pronounce all the words in the print before meaning can be achieved.
According to this model, comprehension requires the precise, sequential identification of letters, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and their pronunciation.
One of the major weaknesses is regarding the sequential reading process because it does not allow for the processes that occur later to influence the processes that occurred earlier.
The traditional view of the bottom up reading process was challenged by writers such as Goodman (1988) and Smith (1982). They argued that reading is a top-down process where conceptual knowledge is mainly responsible for forming hypotheses and constructing meaning.
Reading is conceptually driven because it starts with what readers bring to the text and works its way down to the print. Readers will use their non visual information to select minimum visual cues and meaning is achieved through the use of such higher level information.
READING MODELS: TOP-DOWN MODEL

Top down model of reading engaged readers in a cycle of forming a hypothesis, sampling the input, testing it, either re-hypothesizing or confirming the hypothesis, and sampling again.
Just like the bottom-up model of reading, the top-down model also has its limitations; (1) meaning is derived by readers' making guesses based on their prior knowledge, (2) better readers are not only better at interpreting texts; they are also better decoders and (3) poor readers of L1 or L2, may not be able to generate accurate predictions or accurate hypotheses.
The top-down models over-emphasize higher level skills so that little attention is given to the development of lower level skills.
Eskey (1988:93) stresses that top-down models de-emphasize "the perceptual and decoding of the language of the text" and do "not provide a true picture of the problems" faced by less skilled readers. Even fluent readers, if faced with unfamiliar texts, may not be able to form accurate hypotheses, comprehension, therefore, may not be possible.
Integrative model combines the contrasting views of bottom up and top down for a more comprehensive understanding of the text. It recognizes the importance of both the text and the reader in the process of identification and interpretation and perceives reading as an active, interactive process.
This model necessitate the nature of the different kinds of interactions involving different kinds of knowledge and skills and the proponents of the interactive model are Rumelhart (1977), Stanovich (1986), Eskey (1986) and Grabe (1990).
According to Rumelhart (1977:573), "reading is at once a "perceptual" and a "cognitive" process" which "begins with a flutter of patterns on the retina and ends (when successful) with a definite idea about the author's intended message."
Rumelhart's model allows for simultaneous processing of all sources of knowledge both data driven and concept driven instead of lower level processes proceeding in a discrete lock-step nature, not allowing higher level processing to influence lower level processes.
The reading process is neither "a purely bottom-up process" nor "a purely top-down analysis.... Rather, the hypotheses can be generated at any level" (Rumelhart 1977:591).
Grabe's (1991) interactive model refers to two concepts: a. reader-text interaction b. simultaneous processing of many component skills.
The concept refers to reader-text interaction where readers reconstruct meaning based on the printed text and their prior knowledge. Prior knowledge provides readers with certain expectations that help in making predictions regarding the meaning of the text. This prior knowledge is what Eskey (1986) refers to as knowledge of substance and knowledge of forms.
Both the knowledge of substance and the knowledge of forms will interact simultaneously when processing the printed text during the course of reconstructing the message. In other words, "reading involves the interaction of lower level rapid, automatic identification skills and an array of higher-level comprehension/interpretation skills" (Grabe 1991:383).
READING MODELS: INTERACTIVE MODEL

Reading is now perceived not as a linear, discrete, sequential series of processes, but as a non-directional process where knowledge from different sources interacts to produce the most appropriate interpretation of a message.
Construction-Integration (CI) model (Kintisch 1998; Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978) is considered the most current and valid reading comprehension model, applicable even to L2 text comprehension.
The CI model distinguishes between a text model of reader comprehension and a situation model of reader interpretation.
According to the text model, comprehension takes place at both local and global levels: Local level processes (micro-structure) employ language knowledge through nouns, predicates, and modifiers to build sentence-level understanding while the global level processes (macrostructure) utilize language knowledge together with cohesion and text structure to understand sentence-level relationships and to ultimately create a text-based understanding.
“No one process defines reading comprehension by itself, but together they provide a fairly accurate account of the processes required for fluent reading.” (Grabe and Stoller, 2002, p.17)
To be able to comprehend what is read, a person needs to be familiar with text structure and topic, aware of reading strategies, how to use these strategies in the processing of material and word recognition (Pang, 2008).
The notions of text types/genres are conceptual categories designed to characterize the main text structures, or patterns of organization or one of their parts according to their dominant properties. These terms are often used interchangeably in different contexts and are generally thought to mean the same idea.
Sometimes, the introduction of the complex difference between text types and text genres embarked upon. Thus, a genre is said to include various text types and the two terms are kept strictly apart from each other. However, let us retain that text types and text genres provide a structure for text structures or patterns of organization. They provide structures for the organization of the content and structure of pieces of writing.
Text structures are taken to refer to how information is organized within written materials. According to AKHONDI et al (2011), one of the most efficient strategies for which there is an influx of research and practice is training students on text structure knowledge to facilitate their comprehension of the expository texts. Text structure acts as a road map for reading comprehension.
When you understand the structure of the text, you know how ideas are arranged and know what to expect from the text. This knowledge then aids you in understanding the relationships of information within the passage.
Our focus regarding the influence of text genres and structures will be on **main idea and supporting details, chronological order, compare and contrast, order of importance, sequence, spatial, cause and effect, problem and solution**.
Main idea and supporting details

A paragraph is a series of sentences that support a main idea. It typically starts with the main idea (called the topic sentence), and the rest of the paragraph provides specific details to support and develop the idea. The example below shows the relationship between point and support.
Example: ’People in my family love our dog Punch. However, I have several reasons for wanting to get rid of Punch. First of all, he knows I don't like him. Sometimes he gives me an evil look and curls his top lip back to show me his teeth. The message is clearly, "Someday I'm going to bite you." Another reason to get rid of Punch is he sheds everywhere. Every surface in our house is covered with Punch hair. I spend more time brushing it off my clothes than I do mowing the lawn. Last of all, Punch is an early riser, while (on weekends) I am not. He will start barking and whining to go outside at 7 a.m., and it's my job to take care of him. When I told my family that I had a list of good reasons for getting rid of Punch, they said they would make up a list of reasons to get rid of me.
Description

Descriptive writing creates an impression in the reader’s mind of an event, a place, a person, or thing. The writing will be such that it will set a mood or describe something in such detail that if the reader saw it, they would recognize it. Descriptive writing will bring words to life and makes the text interesting.
Example: “It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist.”
Chronological order

When information in a passage is organized by the time in which each event occurred, it is organized chronologically.
Example: This morning was crazy. My alarm clock was set for PM instead of AM, so I woke up really late. I just threw on some clothes and ran out the door. I rode my bike as fast as I could and thought that I was going to be late for sure, but when I got there everyone was outside and there were firetrucks all lined up in front of school. I guess somebody pulled the fire alarm before class started. It worked out though, because nobody really noticed or minded that I was tardy.
Compare and Contrast

Compare and Contrast is a text structure or pattern of organization where the similarities and differences of two or more things are explored.
Example: Apples and oranges are both fruits, which means that they have seeds inside of them. Each has a skin, but orange skins are thick and easy to peel. Apple skins are thinner and do not peel easily. Oranges also contain more acid than apples, but both fruits are delicious.
B - TEXT GENRES AND TEXT STRUCTURES

Order of Importance

Ideas or steps are prioritized by the writer or speaker according to a hierarchy of value.
Example: The company has a clearly laid out hierarchy. All major decisions go through the president, who controls the entire operation, but most daily decisions go to the board. Beneath the board members are the regional managers, who oversee the branch managers, who run each local branch.
Sequence/process

Sequential order, or process writing as it is sometimes called, is when information in a passage is organized by the order in which it occurs.
Example: How to Make Cookies. First, get your materials. Then, make your dough. Lastly, cook your dough at 400 degrees for 10 minutes.
Spatial

Spatial organization is when information in a passage is organized in order of space or location.
Example: Volcanoes are a feared and destructive force for good reason. A volcano is like a pressure valve for the inner earth, but they can also be very beautiful. One part of the volcano that people rarely see is the magma chamber. The magma chamber is way beneath the Earth’s bed rock. It is tremendously hot. Running from the magma chamber to the crater of the volcano is the conduit. The conduit connects the magma chamber to the outer world. At the top of the volcano is the crater. This is where the magma exits. Volcanoes are a beautiful yet dangerous natural phenomenon.
Cause and effect

Paragraphs structured as cause and effect explain reasons why something happened or the effects of something. These paragraphs can be ordered as causes and effects or as effects and then causes. The cause and effect text structure is generally used in expository and persuasive writing modes.
Example: Many people think that they can get sick by going into cold weather improperly dressed; however, illnesses are not caused by temperature- they are caused by germs. So while shivering outside in the cold probably won’t strengthen your immune system, you’re more likely to contract an illness indoors because you will have a greater exposure to germs.
Problem and Solution

Problem and Solution is a pattern of organization where information in a passage is expressed as a dilemma or concerning issue (a problem) and something that was, can be, or should be done to remedy this issue (solution or attempted solution).
**Example:** It seems like there has been a surge in teen pregnancies these days. Teen pregnancies make it very difficult for young mothers to pursue their dreams and meet the demands of an infant. Fortunately, most teen pregnancies can be easily prevented by using birth control; however, even birth control is not 100% effective. The most effective way to prevent teen pregnancies is abstinence, which is 100% effective.
RESOURCES:

To Understand: New Horizons in Reading Comprehension
By Ellin Oliver Keene

What Reader’s Really Do: Teaching the Process of Meaning Making
By Dorothy Barnhouse and Vicki Vinton
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La psychologie cognitive analyse l'activité de lecture en considérant qu'elle est constituée d'un ensemble de mécanismes et de processus mentaux qui entrent en interaction pour aboutir à la construction de significations. On peut alors postuler que dans le cas où la mise en œuvre de ceux-ci n'est pas encore maîtrisée par l'apprenant de l'anglais langue étrangère, elle doit faire l'objet d'un entraînement et d'un accompagnement par l'enseignant. Il devient alors essentiel d'introduire et de mettre en avant les variables socioconstructivistes du dispositif pédagogique susceptibles de modifier et de baliser le scénario pédagogique de la lecture de l'anglais langue étrangère en insistant davantage sur le rôle de médiation et de rémédiation pédagogique de l'enseignant, et sur la qualité de celle-ci. Évidemment, la qualité de cette médiation est renforcée en tenant compte du rapport symbiotique qui existe entre la compétence de lecture et la compétence de communication de l'apprenant dans un contexte de langue étrangère.

Doctorat unique, didactique de l'anglais langue étrangère (ALE), pédagogie de la lecture, 2007; DEA, éducation, didactique et pédagogie de l'ALE, 2003; Maîtrise, éducation, didactique et pédagogie de l'ALE, 2001, Université d'Abidjan-Cocody; CAPES, ENS d'Abidjan, 1995; Licence d'enseignement, linguistique générale, 1993, université d'Abidjan-Cocody

La pédagogie de la lecture de l'anglais, langue étrangère

Bi Semi Jean Pierre Tra
“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies, said Jojen. The man who never reads lives only one.”

George R. R. Martin, A Dance with Dragons (A Song of Ice and Fire, #5)