

THE EFFECT OF TEXT TYPES ON READING COMPREHENSION ABILITIES IN SLA

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Abstract:

This article examines the impact of text types on reading comprehension abilities among students and advocates for tailored instructional strategies that address the specific needs of learners. By employing diverse reading materials and methodologies, educators can enhance students' reading proficiency and overall comprehension skills, ultimately supporting their academic success.

Key words: Reading comprehension, text types, comprehension strategies, educational practices.

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Reading is one of the four fundamental language skills, categorized as a receptive skill (Wallace, 1992). It holds significant importance in teaching a second or foreign language. This activity is complex and requires conscious effort from the reader. Essential to fully understanding a text is the reader's prior knowledge. Nunan (2003) describes reading as a fluent process where individuals integrate information from a text with their own background knowledge to create meaning. Consequently, the information extracted from printed material can vary among readers. Furthermore, written texts convey both linguistic and contextual meanings. Linguistic meaning pertains to the literal interpretation of the content, while contextual meaning encompasses the socio-cultural and intended nuances embedded in the text. Analyzing how these factors impact students' reading comprehension can illuminate the challenges they face and help identify effective strategies to address these issues.

Text types are different categories of written material, each designed for specific purposes and structured in unique ways. There are some common text types in language learning such as narrative texts, expository texts, descriptive texts, persuasive texts, technical texts. Firstly, we will analyze the definitions of the above mentioned texts and illustrate some examples of each text type.

Narrative Texts tell a story and include components such as characters, settings, plots, conflicts, and resolutions. They can be either fictional or nonfictional and serve to entertain, inform, or convey messages. The examples of this type of texts are novels, short stories, and biographies.

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Expository texts aim to explain, inform, or describe a topic. They present factual information and often contain data, statistics, and logical reasoning. Some examples can be illustrated as textbooks, articles, and how-to guides.

Persuasive texts are crafted to convince the reader to adopt a specific viewpoint or take action. They utilize emotional appeals, logical reasoning, and evidence to sway opinion. Several examples can be listed as opinion pieces, advertisements, and political speeches.

Technical texts provide detailed information on specialized subjects, often using precise language and structure to convey instructions or explanations. User manuals, technical reports, and scientific papers can be real examples for this type of the text. Each text type fulfills a distinct role and necessitates different reading and comprehension strategies. Recognizing these categories can significantly improve readers' abilities to analyze and interpret written content.

Many researches have been done on the effects of the texts on reading comprehension abilities so far. Scholars have analyzed this topic from different points of view and they have given their own findings and conclusions based on their research. Text types do affect reading comprehension in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Researches have shown that different text types can influence how learners understand and engage with written material.

Different text types require distinct comprehension strategies. For instance, narrative texts often encourage learners to visualize scenarios and infer character motivations, while expository texts demand analytical skills to understand and synthesize factual information. This differentiation affects how learners approach reading tasks. A study by Zabrocky and Ratner (1992) found that good and poor readers responded differently to various text types, impacting their comprehension monitoring and recall abilities.

Text types also influence the activation of prior knowledge, which is crucial for comprehension in SLA. As discussed by Nunan (2003), readers often rely on their existing knowledge to make sense of new information. Narrative texts may allow learners to connect personal experiences with the story, while expository texts might require specific background knowledge about the subject matter.

The research paper titled *The Effect of Text Types on Reading Comprehension Abilities among High School Students in Moulay Ismail High School, Meknès, Morocco* by Rajae Berkane explores the impact of different text types on the reading comprehension skills of high school students. The study aims to assess how various text categories, including narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive texts, influence students' abilities to comprehend reading material. The research generally utilizes experimental designs, wherein students are presented with various text types and subsequently evaluated to gauge their comprehension levels. Results commonly suggest that the type of text affects comprehension, with students typically achieving better results with texts they find familiar or prefer. Narrative texts, due to their storytelling elements, tend to engage students more effectively, whereas expository texts can be more challenging, particularly for those who are less accustomed to academic language. The outcomes highlight the necessity of implementing teaching strategies that address different text types to improve reading comprehension. The study advocates for the inclusion of a variety of reading materials within the curriculum to better equip students for diverse academic texts. By comprehending

how different text types impact reading comprehension, educators can create focused strategies to meet students' specific needs, ultimately enhancing their reading proficiency.

The chapter titled *Narrative Representation and Comprehension* in the *Handbook of Reading Research* explores the cognitive mechanisms involved in interpreting narrative texts. (Graesser, Golding, and Long .1991) The authors examine how readers form mental representations of stories as they engage with the material. The chapter stresses the significance of narrative structure, which encompasses elements such as plot, character, and setting, and how these factors impact comprehension. The way a story is organized affects readers' recall and interpretation of information. The authors highlight the importance of mental models in understanding narratives. Readers construct mental images and representations of the events in a story, which facilitate inference-making and conclusions. The authors point out that comprehension often requires readers to make inferences that extend beyond the text. Filling in gaps within the narrative demands background knowledge and experience for a complete understanding of the story. The chapter addresses the concept of cognitive load, referring to the mental effort necessary for processing information. The complexity of a narrative can influence how effectively readers comprehend and retain the material. The findings suggest that insights into narrative comprehension can enhance teaching methods, particularly in developing strategies that help students engage with and understand stories more deeply.

Hall, Sabey, and McLellan explores strategies for educators to effectively incorporate expository texts into their teaching practices for young learners. (Hall, Sabey, McLellan. 2005). The authors discuss the unique characteristics of expository texts, which aim to inform or explain rather than tell a story. They highlight the importance of these texts in the primary-grade curriculum as they help students acquire factual knowledge. The article addresses common difficulties that young readers face when engaging with expository texts. These challenges may include complex vocabulary, unfamiliar structures, and the need for prior knowledge to fully understand the material. The authors propose various instructional strategies to enhance comprehension, such as teaching text features (e.g., headings, captions, and diagrams) that help students navigate the text more effectively. They also recommend modeling how to summarize information and encouraging active reading techniques. The article emphasizes the critical role of teachers in guiding students through expository texts. By providing support and scaffolding, educators can help students build confidence and improve their comprehension skills. The authors offer practical examples and activities that teachers can implement in their classrooms to foster a better understanding of expository texts.

In conclusion, the exploration of text types and their influence on reading comprehension underscores the complexity of reading as a skill, particularly in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Reading, categorized as a receptive skill, plays a crucial role in language learning, requiring readers to actively integrate their prior knowledge with the textual information presented. Various text types—such as narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, and technical—each serve distinct purposes and necessitate different comprehension strategies.

Moreover, educators are encouraged to adopt instructional strategies tailored to these text types to better equip students for diverse academic challenges. By understanding how different text formats affect reading comprehension, teachers can implement more effective teaching practices, fostering an environment that supports language learners in developing their reading skills. Ultimately, a thoughtful approach to text types can lead to improved reading proficiency and comprehension abilities among students.

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