



A STUDY OF READING DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 14 th February, 2026 Accepted: 11 th March 2026	This study examines the main difficulties students face in reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. Reading is an essential skill for academic success, yet many learners struggle to understand texts effectively. The purpose of this research is to identify common reading problems and explore strategies that can improve comprehension. A survey was conducted among EFL students using a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. The results show that the most significant challenges include unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and difficulty identifying main ideas. In addition, issues such as lack of concentration and slow reading speed were reported. The findings are consistent with previous research, which highlights vocabulary and reading strategies as key factors. The study concludes that using techniques such as skimming, scanning, and regular reading practice can help improve students' reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: English language, reading, reading comprehension, reading difficulties, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is an essential skill in learning English as a foreign language. It allows students to understand texts, gain knowledge, and improve their overall language ability. However, many students face difficulties when reading English texts, especially due to limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, and weak reading strategies. This topic is important because reading plays a major role in academic success and communication. The purpose of this research is to analyze the main difficulties students face in reading comprehension and to explore strategies that can help improve their understanding of texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies show that many EFL students experience difficulties in reading comprehension. According to Ramadhianti and Somba, students struggle with identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences from texts. Similarly, Khafidhoh and Abdullah found that lack of motivation, poor vocabulary, and pronunciation problems are major factors affecting reading ability.

Another study by Satriani highlights that students often have low reading habits and need more time to understand texts, especially when materials are complex or unfamiliar. Additionally, students face challenges in connecting background knowledge with new information, which affects comprehension.

All studies agree that vocabulary and lack of reading strategies are key problems. However, they also

suggest solutions such as using reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and predicting meaning. While some researchers focus more on motivation, others emphasize cognitive skills and strategies. Overall, previous research shows that reading difficulties are common but can be improved with proper techniques and practice.

SURVEY METHOD

The survey was conducted among students studying English as a foreign language. A total of approximately 10 took part in the study. The data was collected using a questionnaire that included multiple-choice, True/False/Not Given, and open-ended questions. The survey was distributed online and in written form. The questions focused on students' reading habits, difficulties in reading comprehension, and strategies they use to understand texts. This method helped to gather both quantitative and qualitative data about students' reading experiences and challenges.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the survey indicate that many students experience difficulties in reading English texts. In terms of reading habits, approximately 60% of participants reported that they read English texts only sometimes, while about 20% read often and another 20% rarely read outside the classroom. This shows that regular reading practice is limited among students.

Regarding self-assessment, around 70% of students rated their reading ability as "good," 20% as "very



good," and 10% as "weak." However, despite this confidence, the results reveal several significant challenges.

The most common difficulty identified was unfamiliar vocabulary, reported by about 80% of participants. In addition, approximately 70% of students stated that they struggle with complex sentence structures, while around 60% have difficulty identifying the main idea of a text. Other issues include lack of concentration (about 50%) and slow reading speed (around 30%).

The survey also shows that only about 40% of students feel confident in identifying the main idea, and around 50% are able to make inferences while reading. These results suggest that higher-level reading skills are not fully developed.

In terms of strategies, about 60% of students reported using skimming and scanning, while around 50% rely on regular reading practice and improving concentration. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which emphasize vocabulary knowledge and reading strategies as key factors in improving comprehension.

CONCLUSION

Open-ended responses showed that students often face issues such as lack of focus, unfamiliar topics, and difficulty with idioms. These findings are similar to previous studies, which highlight vocabulary and reading strategies as key issues.

In terms of strategies, students reported using skimming, scanning, and regular reading practice. Some also mentioned the importance of concentration and a quiet environment. Overall, the results confirm that reading difficulties are common, but students are aware of useful strategies to improve their comprehension.

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