

SOME STRATEGIES TO DO READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES EFFECTIVELY FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJORED FRESHMEN AT TAY DO UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

ALGUMAS ESTRATÉGIAS PARA FAZER EXERCÍCIOS DE COMPREENSÃO DE LEITURA DE FORMA EFICAZ PARA CALOUROS NÃO-INGLESES GRADUADOS NA TAY DO UNIVERSITÁRIO NO VIETNAM

NGA H.T. NGUYEN

Tay Do University,
Vietnam
nhtnga@tdu.edu.vn

XIEM L. TRAN

Tay Do University,
Vietnam
txiem@tdu.edu.vn

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Corresponding author:

nhtnga@tdu.edu.vn



Abstract: Among four skills in language, reading has a key role which is a basic means to improve other skills. Without reading, it is difficult for students to further their advanced education in higher levels. The study was conducted to find out the methods to do reading comprehension exercises effectively and quickly as well as some suggestions to improve reading skill for non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University. The participants were of 102 non-English majored freshmen majoring in Pharmacy, Accounting, Business Administration, Food Technology, and Information Technology. The instruments were questionnaire to get the information and the reading test to evaluate students' levels in reading comprehension using skimming, scanning, guessing the meanings of words from context and background knowledge to do "True/False", "Question types", "Filling in the blank" and "Matching" exercises.

Keywords: Strategy. Reading skill. Exercise. University.

Resumo: Entre quatro habilidades em linguagem, a leitura tem um papel fundamental, que é um meio básico para melhorar outras habilidades. Sem a leitura, é difícil para os estudantes promover sua educação avançada em níveis superiores. O estudo foi conduzido para descobrir os métodos para fazer exercícios de compreensão de leitura de forma eficaz e rápida, bem como algumas sugestões para melhorar a habilidade de leitura para calouros não-ingleses graduados na Universidade Tay Do. Os participantes eram de 102 calouros não-ingleses graduados em Farmácia, Contabilidade, Administração de Empresas, Tecnologia de Alimentos e Tecnologia da Informação. Os instrumentos foram o questionário para obter as informações e o teste de leitura para avaliar os níveis de compreensão de leitura dos alunos usando escumação, escaneamento, adivinhando o significado das palavras a partir do contexto e do conhecimento de base para fazer os exercícios "Verdadeiro/Falso", "Tipos de perguntas", "Preenchimento do espaço em branco" e "Correspondência".

Palavras-chave: Estratégia. Habilidade de leitura. Exercício. Universidade.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Reading, as one of the four basic skills in language learning, is very important, not only as a language skill but also as a language input for other skills to develop. Actually, many students of non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University feel nervous about reading comprehension exercises. They do not know how to attain the effectiveness in reading because when they read a long book or news, they feel bored and do not understand the aim that the authors want to express. It is necessary to find out suitable ways to solve these problems. When the reading skill is developed, students will not worry when doing any texts; it helps them save time when finding the main ideas and general overview of the content.

The research mainly focuses on investigating the use of reading strategies that help non-English major freshmen find out beneficial reading strategies to do reading exercises. The study can help students develop effective reading strategies and improve their reading proficiency.

In Vietnam, learning strategies has become a topic of interest in recent years when the concepts of "self-learning" and "life-long learning" have been familiar to the ears of both Vietnamese teachers and students. Several studies in this field have been conducted with different types of learners to find out particular strategies employed by effective and ineffective learners such as Le (2018) on Vocabulary learning strategy used by students at Vinh university or Long (2005) on Reading strategies employed by hue university non-English majored students in reading English level B1 texts or Nguyen (2018) on Reading strategies used by Vietnamese EFL and ESL University students. However, these studies are still not enough; thus, more research should be done in order to clarify particular strategies used in different settings and by learners of different levels.

Therefore, the study "Some strategies to do reading comprehension exercises effectively for non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do university" intends to examine the reading strategies in doing reading comprehension. Based on the findings, some implications to improve reading comprehension are made.

Aims and significance of the research

Aims of the research

The major purposes of the study are:

(1) To identify the important of reading comprehension subject and strategies to do reading comprehension exercises of non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University

(2) To inform the concerned teachers so that they can find ways to improve their students' reading proficiency.

Significance of the research

Students often feel difficult with reading comprehension exercises, this research is conducted to find out suitable ways to solve reading comprehension exercises of the students in the process to do reading comprehension exercises. The results of the research could become beneficial for teachers and students of non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University. More importantly, it could help students of non-English majored freshmen to improve reading comprehension exercises. In addition, teachers also know students' problems through the study to look for the students' attitudes toward reading comprehension exercises. Therefore, they can select suitable solution for their students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of reading

It is stated that reading is a kind of culture that people regardless of age, sex, or class should learn and have. Rumelhart (1997) states, "Reading, whether in a first or second language context, involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and the text." In addition, Harmer (1988) adds, it is the eyes and the brain to dominantly participate in the reading process. The eyes are on messages and the brain then has to identify the meanings of those messages. So the speed of reading depends much on the mechanical process of looking and perceiving and it is the reader who decides how to fast he wants to read the text. Besides, according to Schoenbach et al. (1999), "Reading is seen as a complex process of problems solving which involves working to build up a sense from the text and not just a sense from the words and sentences written on the page but it goes to ideas, memories knowledge evoked by those words and sentences." Moreover, reading helps in learning vocabulary and in creating mental image even if we do not understand completely. It is one of the easiest ways to know about the world.

Definitions of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what people are reading. It is also the act of constructing meaning form the text. This act is not simple to teach, learn or practice." (Sweet

and Snow, 2003). Reading comprehension is not just a receptive process, it implies a complex process in which the readers identify basic information and are able to predict, to infer, to argue and to recognize writers' points of view. Also, reading comprehension is about understanding a text which is read through the process of constructing meaning from a text. Comprehension is a constructing process because it involves all elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind.

In addition, Grellet (1981) defines reading comprehension as "Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible." Teachers assume that to be able to comprehend, students should do comprehension exercise in order to improve their reading skills. Students tend not to read a text for overall meaning but rather to read in a point in the text at which a cue word in a question suggests the answer may be found.

In Harrison and Dolan (1979), the way to develop reading comprehension is through organized small group discussion of texts. The aim of the activities is to give support to the students to do close reading in a noncompetitive atmosphere. Usually the group discussion contains six or eight students. The number of the students is enough to give the member opportunity to participate.

Harrison and Dolan (1979) state that reading comprehension is not only a single skill but a set of related skills. These include:

1. Word recognition and mastery of vocabulary.
2. The ability to see in the material the structures of the sentences, paragraphs, and longer passages that form the whole units.
3. The intelligence to follow the thought development in the result of presenting and making any relevant deductions, inferences, or critical assessments.
4. The ability to concentrate on the reading task.

Therefore, reading comprehension is a key skill for most of students in a foreign language and reading comprehension should therefore take its place alongside the development of the other three skills of language: listening, speaking and writing. Reading comprehension is a way that helps students to get information and get to know everything around them, and so on. If we have no reading skill, we will not develop listening and speaking skill, because if we do not read we will not know what to say and do not understand what people say.

The importance of reading comprehension strategies

Reading strategy provides learning opportunities, facilitates learning and recalling of information as well as strengthening the reading comprehension ability of language learners

Trabasso and Bouchard (2002) explain that, “Reading strategies can be taught explicitly while students are leaning subject-specific content through authentic reading take through these ideas, reading strategies happening in reading process.” Moreover, according to Ben (2002), “Readers often encounter problems in understanding the meaning of the context, but reading strategies help them in learning foreign language and reading comprehension.”

We find that strategies are a very important factor in language acquisition. Learners need to be explicitly taught how to properly use reading strategies to monitor their reading comprehension. Reading strategies can help students solve the problems happening in reading process. Moreover, the strategies should be explained to students clearly as they are doing reading exercises in order to help students to understand these strategies more thoroughly.

Through the employment of reading strategy such as meta-cognitive instruction in non-English classes, English foreign language learners will be able to improve their reading comprehension and experience a higher level of competency which will further motivate them to read on a regular basis. So, students need to improve their reading strategies to read better. To improve reading strategies, students must learn and practice a variety of reading strategies every day in order to form a habit in reading process.

Grellet (1981) provides some reading comprehension strategies that efficient readers use to comprehend a text and to develop fluency and efficiency in reading skills.

1. Before reading a text, set clear goals for reading.
2. Preview texts.
3. Infer the meaning of unknown words from the context.
4. Understand information not clearly stated in the text.
5. Predict and check predictions while reading.
6. Generate questions before reading.
7. Look back in the text to monitor understanding.
8. While reading, often stop to paraphrase or summarize important information.
9. Find the structure of the text, i.e. how the text is organized.
10. Understand how sentences are linked together in a text.
11. Feel “motivated” to read.

Some strategies to do reading comprehension exercises effectively

To do reading exercises is not easy; therefore, non-English majored freshmen need have the suitable methods to do many kinds of different exercises and apply many strategies in the process of reading.

Skimming strategy

Skimming is commonly used in reading comprehension. It is one of specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading. There have been many definitions of skimming. "By skimming, we mean glancing rapidly through a text to determine whether a research paper is relevant to our own work or in order to keep ourselves superficially informed about matters that are not of great importance to us." (Christine (1982). Skimming consists of quickly running eyes across the whole text for its gist; Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, or possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas.

When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone the intention of the writer. Therefore, skimming is a more through activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. In addition, skimming is one of the strategies to get the main idea of a paragraph, page, or article and a few details.

By using these ways, students can save time when finding out the main ideas of reading passage and can do "Question types exercise" correctly and quickly. A question is a linguistic expression used to make a request for information, or the request made using such an expression. The information requested may be provided in the form of an answer. There are basis types of question. They are Yes/No Question (the answer to the question is "Yes" or "No", Word Question (the answer to the question is "in the question"). So, students have to use the information in reading text to answer the question. Reading test requires students to do exercise from "Question types".

Scanning strategy

Similar to skimming, scanning is a necessary technique in reading efficiently. It is a reading technique to be used when students want to find specific information quickly. "Scanning is a quickly searching for some particular piece of information in a text, scanning exercises may ask students to look for name or dates, to find a definition of key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading

through the whole text.” (Brown (2001). Scanning occurs when a reader goes through a text very quickly in order to find a particular point of information that is relevant to the purpose. We only try to locate specific information in scanning. We just let our eyes scan the text unit we find the information we are looking for, such as a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information. Therefore, scanning is far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose (Grellet, 1981).

In conclusion, this strategy requires students to read the text with very high speed. By using scanning strategy, they can find the details for question quickly without reading all word in reading text and it is good to do “True/False exercise” correctly and quickly. True/False question is considered as “Write T on the lines before the statements that are true, according to the reading. Write F on the lines before the statements that are false”. When doing this exercise, students use information from the text to decide the sentences are true or false.

Guessing the meaning from the context

One of the most effective ways of vocabulary learning is guessing the meanings of words from context. A useful strategy of vocabulary learning is through context. Learning from context has long been desirable by teachers and many teachers have found learning from context to be effective. Prince (1996) lists the three benefits of learning from context: First, evaluate the meaning of a word in a context that forces learners to develop strategies, such as predictions and inferences, become increasingly beneficial. Leap when learning progresses because they master an attitude of self-control. Second, having a system that responds to new words in context is the actual basis that words are actually used in the presentation for communication purposes. Finally, the context provides a way to use words. Guessing the word meaning is also a useful advice for students when they face to the unfamiliar word. Guessing is to estimate or conclude (something) without sufficient information to be sure of being correct.

By this strategy, it helps students guess what the unfamiliar word meaning from contextual clues. They do not have to use dictionaries to look up word meaning. They can understand the content although they do not know all of words appeared in reading text. Guessing the meaning of new words helps readers to read and understand text quickly because difficult words usually create problem for students and are obstacles in reading comprehension. Furthermore, the best way to find the meaning of new words is to dark inferences from the context rather than using a dictionary. More importantly, Nation and Coady (1988) suggest a-five-step strategy for guessing from context:

1. Finding the part of speech of the unknown word.
2. Looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplifying this context if necessary.
3. Looking at the wider context of the unknown word. This means looking at the relationship between the clauses containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.
4. Guessing the meaning of the unknown word.
5. Checking that the guess is correct.

In short, guessing strategy helps students apply exercise “Matching” better. This exercise consists of a set of directions, a column of statements and a column of responses. Matching items require student to match a series of stems or premises to a response or principle. There are many types of matching exercise such as: Example & Terms, Definitions & Term, Titles & Paragraph topics, Historical events & Dates, Problems & Principles, Descriptions & principles, Statements & Postulates, Applications & Postulates, Classifications & Structures, Achievements & people, Functions & Parts.

Background knowledge

Finally, that is background knowledge. To read effectively, students need to integrate new material into their existing knowledge base, construct new understanding, and adapt existing conceptions and beliefs as needed. Proficiency at these tasks is essential to literacy (Davis & Winek, 1989). The more knowledge students accumulate, the smarter they become. Students are constantly confronted with new information, particularly once they progress to the upper elementary grades and transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”. Background knowledge can be built in two ways: through direct experiences or through in indirect experiences.

Background knowledge is parenting terms for many more specific knowledge dimensions such as conceptual knowledge and met cognitive knowledge, subject matter knowledge, strategy knowledge, personal knowledge, and self-knowledge are all specialized forms of background knowledge. By using this strategy, students can do “Filling in the blank” exercises effectively. Filling in the blank question types consist of a sentence containing a blank space for insertion of a word or phrase to correctly complete the sentence. Students have to choose the suitable words (give in the box, brackets or not) to fill in the blank. The words are related to parts of speech or

tenses, etc. Some “Fill in the blank” exercises are from the reading texts, students have not to look back the texts. This can help students to remember the contents better.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study is designed to find out the students’ methods to do some types of reading comprehension exercises. The students are the main keys of the research. They are non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University. These students do a reading test. After that, a questionnaire is delivered to them. The collected data are used for analysis.

Research questions

The study is designed in order to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strategies to do “True/False”, “Question types”, “Filling in the blank” and “Matching” exercises effectively?
2. What should students do to get good result in reading comprehension exercises?

Research aim

This research is conducted with the aim to find out strategies to do some common types of reading comprehension exercises. In addition, it also aims to give some suggestions that help students know how to do “True/False”, “Question types”, “Filling in the blank” and “Matching” exercises effectively.

Participants of the research

The participants are 102 non-English majored freshmen majoring in Pharmacy (26), Accounting (19), Business Administration (20), Food Technology (18), and Information Technology (19) at Tay Do university. Their ages range from 18 to 21. Vietnamese is their first language and English is their foreign language. Most of them have studied English for about 7 years and 2 semesters is the time that they are studying reading comprehension at Tay Do university.

Research instruments

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is chosen as a main means to collect data from students. There are three parts as the following.

Table 1: The gist of questionnaire

Question/Statement	Summary of the question's/statement's content
From 1 to 6	Students' background
From 7 to 10	Strategies to do exercises
From 11 to 12	Some suggestions

Reading comprehension test

The reading comprehension test is chosen to evaluate students' reading levels as well as to help students to remember the ways to do the exercises. All these exercises are extracted from Interaction 1 Reading textbooks and on the internet. Students have 30 minutes to finish the test. After doing this test, students can answer the questionnaire more easily. It includes 4 following parts:

In part I, it is "Question types". It includes 5 questions. In each question, students must find out the meaning of a certain word or phrases by using answer reading comprehension questions to complete sentences. Every possible way to solve the exercise is accepted, even if they need to use a dictionary. With this part of exercise, students can use skimming skill by making use of context clues (Definition clue, Synonym clue, Contrast clue, Experience clue, Example clue and Clue from another sentence).

In part II, it is "Filling in the blank", there are 5 blanks in a short paragraph. Students only need fill available words to fill in the blanks. In this exercise, the students have to use background knowledge strategies.

In part III, it is "True/false exercise". It has 5 questions. Students only write the letters T (true) or F (false) on each line. In this exercise, the students can use scanning skill.

The final part is exercise about "Matching". There are 5 questions about matching words, the definitions on the right are based on the meanings of prefixes then match them with the words on the left by writing the letter (A, B, C, D, E) on the line. In this exercise, the students can do it base on knowledge and experiences in reading comprehension by the ways guessing the meaning from the context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' background

The ideas about reading comprehension

All students (100%) agreed that reading comprehension is important. Firstly, it can help students improve other subjects such as writing, speaking, and listening by providing a large amount of information. Secondly, students believe that they can get more vocabulary, grammatical structures, improve pronunciation and social knowledge in the reading process. Finally, reading also helps students have a good job in the future. In short, reading comprehension is an important subject for non-English majored students in many ways.

The ideas about reading comprehension exercises in the textbook

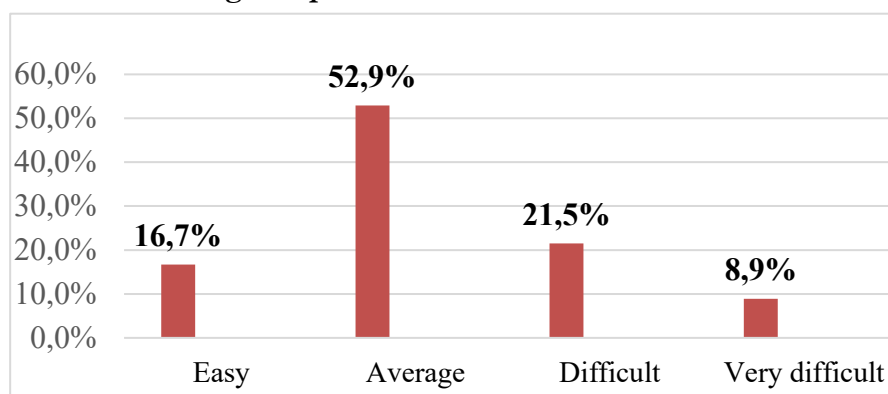


Figure 1: The ideas about reading comprehension exercises in the textbook

Students think about the level of reading comprehension exercises in textbook differently. 53.9% of freshmen say that the exercises in textbook are at the average level and they may get good results. The next 16.7% answer that the exercises are easy for them to do and 21.5% think they are difficult. Only 8.9% choose they are very difficult. In short, a lot of students think that the exercises in reading textbook is reasonable and suitable for freshmen levels.

The ideas about the importance of strategies to do reading comprehension

When being asked about the importance of using strategies to do reading exercises, most of students agree that strategies to do reading comprehension is important. Thanks to these, students have improved their reading speed as well as find out the necessary information for the exercises quickly. Moreover, they can find the details for their questions without reading all words in reading text. Finally, that saves time when reading; find the main ideas and general overview of the content. As for freshmen of non-English majors, reading proficiency is very important to them.

Ideas about the purposes of reading comprehension

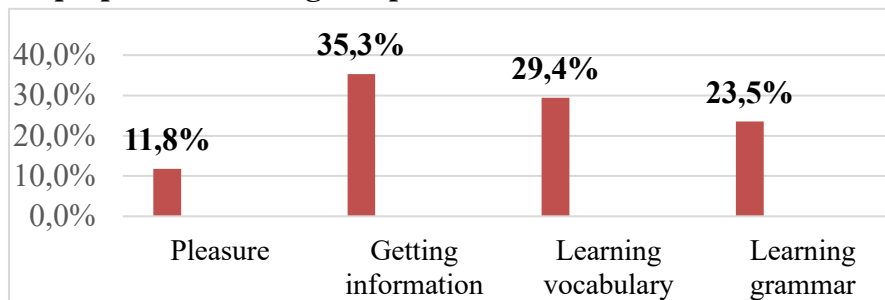
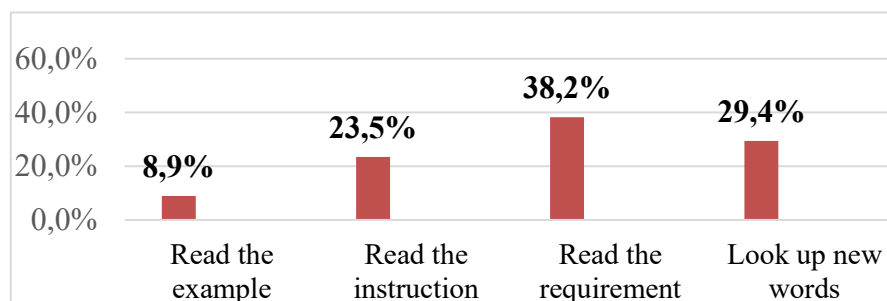


Figure 2: The purposes of reading comprehension

There are many purposes of reading comprehension. They are for pleasure, getting information, learning vocabulary, and learning grammar. In specific, 11.8% of students' choices are the first purpose – for pleasure. 35.3% the greatest choice is getting information. 29.4% choose learning vocabulary and the rest 23.5% for learning grammar. These choices show that students do not consider reading as the way to relax after their studying time. Students just study reading for getting information, learning vocabulary and learning grammar to complete their tasks.

The activities before doing reading comprehension exercises

Figure 3: The activities before doing reading comprehension exercises



The activities students do before doing reading comprehension exercises to get good results are very different. The greatest numbers of choices are to read the requirements of the reading text of the exercises (38.2%). Students think that they can know what the exercises require so they easy do the exercises better. In addition, they can know clearly the information that the exercises need and find out it.

The next is reading the instruction of the reading text. 23.5% of freshmen think that it can help them to understand the meaning and know more clearly the content of reading text so they can feel confident while doing the exercises and can finish the exercises easily. Moreover, students

can get the information of the reading text and can find out the necessary details to do the exercises quickly.

8.9% of students choose to read the examples before beginning to do the exercises. If they read the examples, they can know more clearly how to do the exercises perfectly. These help students to finish their works better.

Finally, using dictionaries to look up some of the new words in reading text is the way that 29.4% of students do before they solve their exercises. The reason is dictionaries help them to understand the content of reading text.

The ideas about strategies to do reading comprehension

Most of students agree that scanning and skimming are the most important skills to do reading comprehension exercises. Skimming helps students to find out main ideas, students can use this strategy in many ways such as read the title, read the introduction or the first paragraph, read the first sentence of every paragraph, read any headings and sub-headings, read summary or last paragraph, notice any pictures, charts, or graphs in the reading text. Scanning helps students to find out details, students can use this strategy in many ways such as state the specific information students are looking for, try to anticipate how the answer will appear and what clues students might use to help they locate the answer, use headings and other aids that will help students identify which sections might contain the information they are looking for and selectively read and skip through sections of passage. Students should apply these skills when doing reading exercises besides other necessary ones.

The freshmen have a lot of reasons for this agreement. Firstly, they say that almost of reading comprehension exercises relate to these skills. Students have to apply them to solve their exercises. Secondly, when students apply these skills, they will have a main idea topic and knowledge of the reading text quickly and can do the exercises more quickly and more easily. Thirdly, when students use scanning and skimming skills, they can save time while reading and understanding the content of a reading comprehension text.

The strategies to do exercises effectively

True/False

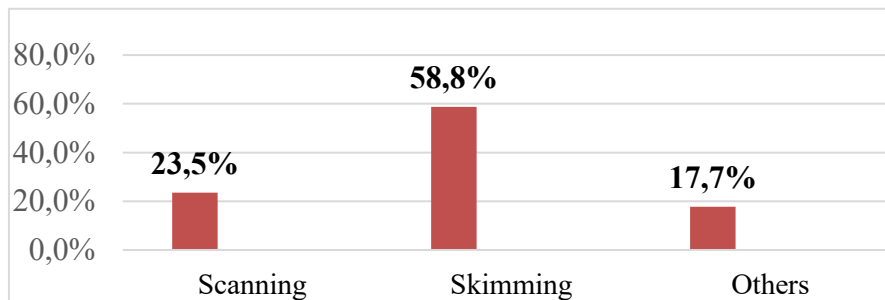


Figure 4: The strategies to do “True/False” exercise from questionnaire

Through figure 4, it can be seen that 58.8% of students often use skimming to do “True/False” exercise, only 23.5% and 17.7% choose scanning and others respectively. However, students should use scanning because this skill helps students to find out the answers quickly and correctly. Many students are still confused about the ways they should apply to finish their “True/False” exercise effectively. In addition, they give other skills for doing this kind of exercise such as guessing meaning from the context and using background knowledge. That has a great influence on their test results. Figure 5 will show the result of exercise.

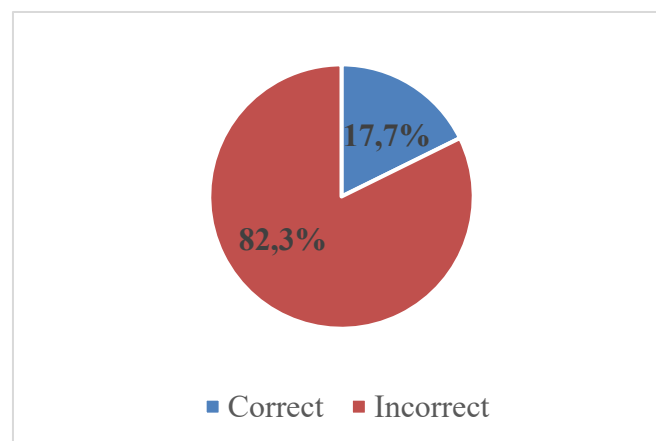


Figure 5: The result of doing “True or false” exercise

Just 17.7% of the students can finish well and correct answer in this exercise. The result from the questionnaire is 23.5% of participants know how to use scanning skill. Therefore, they may cause that they do not know which strategies they should apply. The remaining 82.3% of participants did not have the correct answer. They may use other ways to do and the results are not as good as they think.

Question types

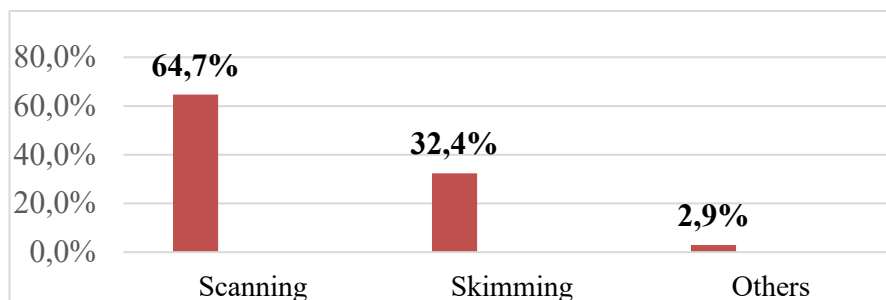


Figure 6: The strategies to do “Question types” exercise from questionnaire

In this chart, there are 64.7% of freshmen think that they should apply scanning to find out the answers. Other 32.4% choose skimming to find suitable answers. 2.9% have many reasonable ideas to solve this type of exercise such as trying to remember the content of reading text, reading the question carefully, noting the key words and using the clues in the context. However, the most suitable skill is skimming skill because this skill helps students to find out the answers correctly and quickly. Figure 7 will show the result of doing “Question types” exercise from the text.

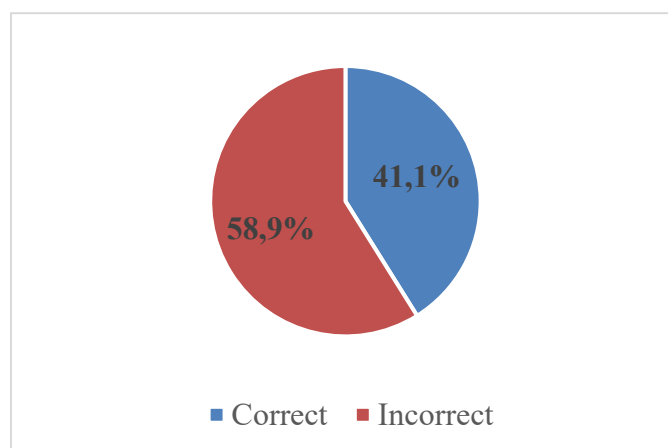


Figure 7: The result of doing “Question types” exercise

Through 5 questions in this exercise. 41.1% of freshmen had the correct answer because they know how to use strategies in the sentence based on skimming skill. And the remaining participants 58.9% did not have the right answer. Maybe they did not read questions carefully, lack of experience in skimming skill.

Matching

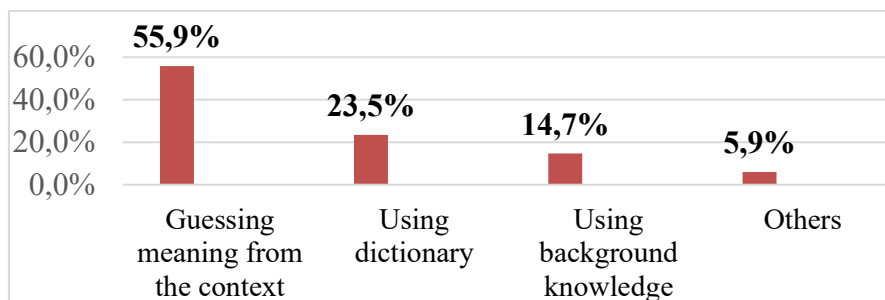


Figure 8: The strategies to do “Matching” exercise from questionnaire

For this exercise, 55.9% of the ideas are made on using guessing meaning from the context. Students think that guessing word meaning through contextual clues of affixes is one of the best methods to do matching exercise. 14.7% are made on background knowledge. They think that to do matching exercise based on using knowledge and experience is the best way. The next 23.5% is for using dictionary. Freshmen think that they can use elimination or dictionary to find out the correct answers. The last 5.9% choose other ways. They give a lot of ideas but some are not suitable to do this type of exercise such as skimming and scanning skills. Basing on data from questionnaire, it can be seen that most of students have guessing meaning from the context ways to do matching. Figure 9 will show the result of doing “Matching” exercise from the text.

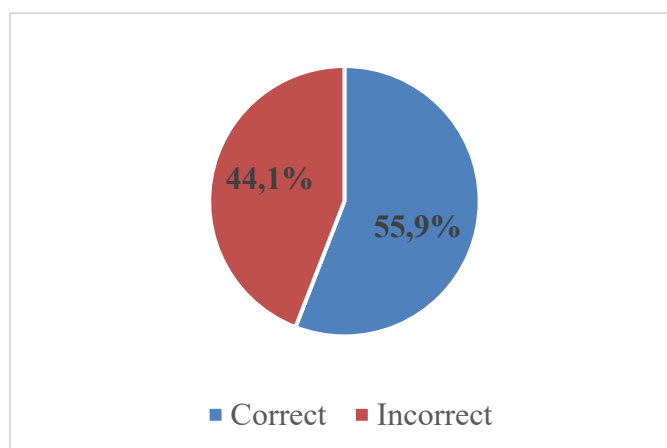


Figure 9: The result of doing “Matching” exercise

This exercise has the best correct answer. There is one example answer sentence for students to refer. 55.9% of students find the correct answers. They can use guessing meaning from the context in suitable ways to do task. The rest 41.1% have incorrect answers. The reasons may come from lacking of vocabulary, knowledge and experience.

For matching exercise, students should use guessing meaning from the context if the exercises involve in matching ideas or information in reading text with the ideas or definition or they are about antonym and synonym, students should try to guess word meaning from context.

Filling in the blank

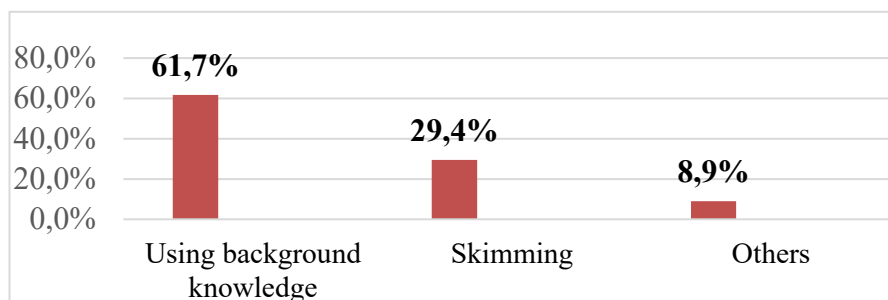


Figure 10: The strategies to do “Filling in the blank” exercise from questionnaire

61.7% of students use background knowledge to do filling in the blank exercises. It is good for students because they can get the general topic and understand the exercise based on their background knowledge. Others 8.9% pay attention on parts of speech of the words given so they can choose the most suitable words to fill in the correct blanks such as read carefully paragraphs in the exercise. And the last 29.4% use skimming to do “Filling in the blank” exercise. Students think that skim the reading text before solving this type of exercise is faster. Figure 11 will show the result of exercise.

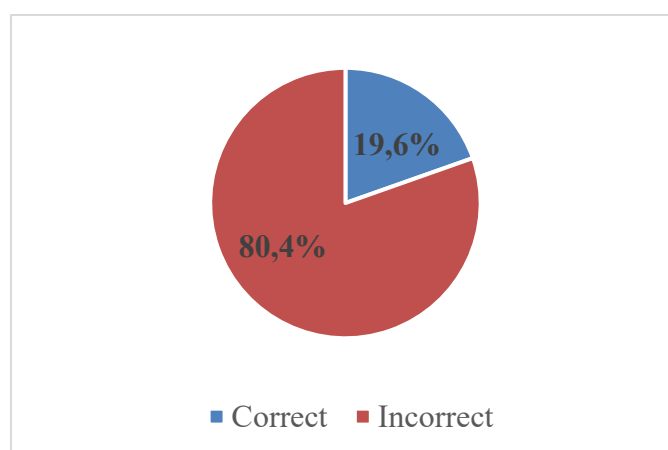


Figure 11: The result of doing “Filling in the blank” exercise

80.4% of students make incorrect answer because they do not know that they should use their background knowledge and experience to solve these questions. Students should read the

paragraphs in the exercises carefully to make sure that they can understand of the meaning and do the tasks effectively. On the other hand, 19.6% of the remaining students have the exact answer.

Conclusions of the test and the questionnaire through the results

The result of doing types of exercises from the test

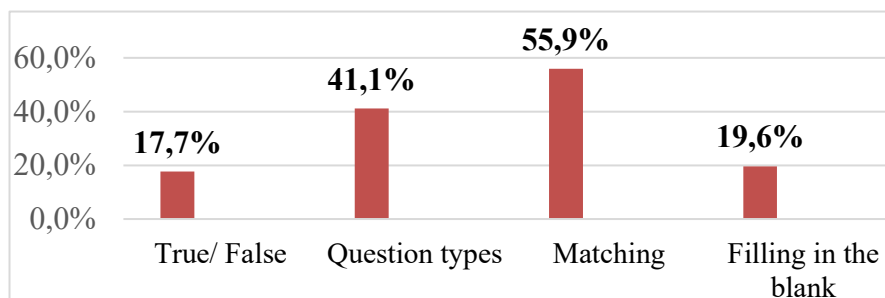


Figure 12: The result of doing types of exercises from the test

After surveyed and analyzed, the results collected from 102 non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University show that most of the participants complete well “Matching” exercise and the rate of matching is the highest one in four kinds of exercise (55.9%). Maybe freshmen could base on the text and combine with guessing the word meaning to complete this exercise with high result.

In contrast, the rate of “True/false” exercise is the lowest in the survey. Actually, only 17.7% get the correct answer. Students meet many difficulties in type of exercise. This exercise is very hard, students have to scan the text quickly and find suitable information to choose the correct answers. They have to apply strategies while they also have to remember the events exactly; they cannot do that in a short time, so they do not find out right answers.

The rate of “Question types” exercise is 41.1%. It is a fairness number. This means that students have limited skimming strategy, so there are still some students who cannot complete this exercise. In addition, freshmen do not complete this exercise well because they choose unsuitable strategies.

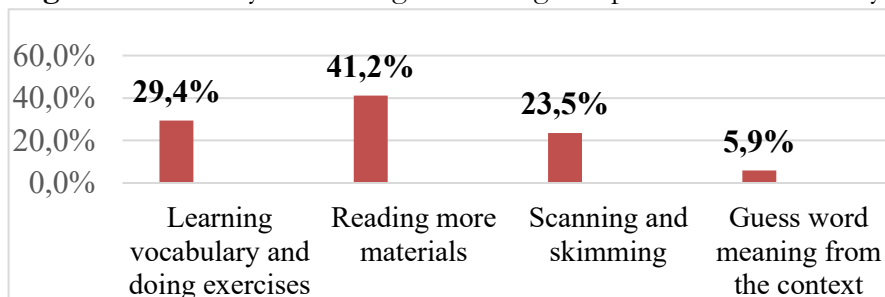
The rate the last exercise, “Filling in the blank” is 19.6%. Maybe students get many difficulties while doing this exercise since they do not have much background knowledge; also choosing the suitable strategies is their problems.

Through the data of the questionnaire and the result of the test, it is realized that students still cannot do exercises well. They need to understand the function of strategies clearly. Moreover, they also apply them flexibly. In addition, the time is also important, freshmen have to distribute the time suitably to complete all exercises well.

The ways to do English reading comprehension exercises effectively

Reading comprehension is an important subject for non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University. Some suggestions to help students studying this subject better are as the following.

Figure 13: The ways to do English reading comprehension effectively



Learning vocabulary and doing exercises every day (29.4% of students agree) help students to get higher and higher results. Students should improve their vocabulary and grammar by doing effectively some types of reading comprehension exercises such as “Matching”, “Filling in the blank”, “Question types”, etc.

Reading more and more materials written in English such as magazines, newspapers, bilingual books, watching news by English, etc. (41.2% of students agree) are also benefit. Because, extensive reading could be useful for them to enlarge their social knowledge, vocabulary, grammar and other skills. Therefore, students can do exercises of many topics and do effectively some types of reading comprehension exercises such as “True/False”, “Filling in the blank”, “Question types”, and “Matching”.

Trying to guess word meaning from context and setting a limitation in using dictionaries (5.9% of students agree) help students understand the reading text without knowing all of the new words. They can apply that to do “Matching” exercises.

On the other hand, to study this subject better, students should use scanning and skimming to save time when reading a text and exercises in reading (23.5% of students agree). In addition, students set up for themselves a good reading habit by not using dictionary too often. Moreover, to deal with different types of reading comprehension exercises, students should apply necessary skills as scanning to do “True/False, Question type” and skimming to do “True/False and question types” exercises. This could help them read faster and more accurately.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Reading comprehension plays an important role in English because it can offer large knowledge for students. However, it is not easy to read well. Therefore, this research is carried out with the aim to find the strategies to do effectively some common types of English reading comprehension exercises for non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University.

The literature review shows that students many get definition about reading and reading comprehension. In addition, it provides some information about strategies and some methods to do reading comprehension exercises by using strategies.

Through the results, it can be found that students consider reading comprehension as one of the most important subject. They learn it because of many reasons such as for getting information and supporting other subjects, etc. Most of students think that reading comprehension can help them to get pleasure and they think that skimming and scanning are the most important skills to do reading comprehension well, thanks to these skills, students can save time when reading and understanding the content of a reading text and can improve their reading speed as well as find out the necessary information for the exercises more quickly and more easily. In addition, students should guess word meaning from the context instead of using dictionary when they study reading comprehension to have good reading habit. The last, it is background knowledge, this knowledge belongs to the personal ability.

For each type of exercises, students have different ways to solve. Through the data analysis, students get good results in “Matching”, “Filling in the blank”, “True/False” and “Question types”. Reading comprehension is not an easy subject so students should read more books and materials daily, learn more and more words, practice more reading comprehension exercises to improve reading skills, etc. These can help students find out their most suitable ways to do English reading comprehension exercises effectively and get high scores. Hopefully students will have motivation and become more excited in studying English reading comprehension.

Suggestions

For teachers

Reading comprehension is an interesting subject because it provides a lot of large information and knowledge. However, some students do not like this subject; because, this subject has a lots of words and can make students feel bored, so teachers should have reasonable methods.

Firstly, teachers should give students bonus scores in class and add scores in homework when they can do the exercises correctly, the students would like to get it. When students can get

bonus scores, they will have motivations to study hard and feel more excited in attending reading comprehension class.

Secondly, teachers should organize games in study reading comprehension process. This can make students like and not feel bored of studying this subject.

For further researches

The further researches should be conducted in other kinds of exercises. In addition, the large participant size is recommended for further research. If more participants are invited, the research results can be more reliable.

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