IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SCAFFOLDING AND READING STRATEGIES.

Toshxujayeva Muxtaram Jamolxon qizi,

Student of Namangan state institute of foreign languages

Email: muxtaramtoshxujayeva712@gmail.com

Abdusattorova Muxarram Sharifjon qizi,

Teacher of Namangan state institute of foreign languages, scientific advisor

Email: abdusattorovamuxarram929@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. *This study looks at how engaging texts and reading strategies can help students improve their reading skills in English. The scaffolding approach was used, along with strategies such as skimming, scanning and identifying the main idea. The results showed that students improved their reading when they worked with engaging texts and appropriate strategies. The study also highlights that motivation and choosing suitable texts are important in the reading process.*

KEY WORDS: scaffolding, skimming, scanning, comprehension, engagement, difficulty, unfamiliar words.

ANNOTATSIYA. *Ushbu tadqiqot o'quvchilarning ingliz tilida o'qish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda qiziqarli matnlar va o'qish strategiyalarining qanday yordam berishini o'rganadi. Tadqiqotda scaffold yondashuvi hamda skimming, scanning va asosiy g'oyani aniqlash kabi usullar qo'llanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, o'quvchilar qiziqarli matnlar va mos strategiyalar yordamida yaxshiroq o'qiy boshladilar. Shuningdek, tadqiqot motivatsiya va to'g'ri matn tanlash o'qish jarayonida muhim ekanligini ta'kidlaydi.*

KALIT SO'ZLAR: bosqichma-bosqich qo'llab-quvvatlash, tez ko'z yugurtirib o'qish, kerakli ma'lumotni qidirib o'qish, tushunish (o'qib tushunish), faollik, qiziqish, qiyinchilik, notanish so'zlar.

АННОТАЦИЯ. *Данное исследование изучает, как интересные тексты и*

стратегии чтения помогают учащимся развивать навыки чтения на английском языке. В исследовании использовался подход «scaffolding», а также такие стратегии, как skimming, scanning и определение основной идеи текста. Результаты показали, что учащиеся лучше читают при использовании интересных текстов и подходящих стратегий. Также исследование подчеркивает, что мотивация и правильный выбор текстов играют важную роль в процессе чтения.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: поэтапная поддержка (скэффолдинг), просмотровое чтение, поисковое чтение, понимание (понимание прочитанного), вовлечённость, трудность, незнакомые слова.

INTRODUCTION. Reading is one of the most effective ways to explore the world. Because students can learn about different countries through reading even if they stay in their classroom. When students read engaging texts, they not only enhance their English skills but also get insight into life beyond their classroom. In this way, reading becomes a window to the world.

BACKGROUND. Grabe and Stoller (2013) explain that reading involves not only taking information from a text but also interpreting it.[1] Nuttall (2018) identifies several key aspects of reading comprehension, including identifying the main idea, finding specific information (scanning), making inferences, and understanding unfamiliar words. These are often challenging for students.[2]

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk underlined the importance of reading as follows: “I was poor as a child. When I had two dimes, I would buy a book with one dime. Otherwise, I would not be able to do any of these things.” (Granda, 1973, p.267). As stated by Ataturk, this idea shows that reading is an essential skill in a person’s life and plays an important role in personal development.[3] Research shows that reading is influenced by

[1] Grabe and Stoller (2013), The Effect of Applying English Authentic Reading Materials on The Eleventh Grade Students’ Reading Comprehension Achievement at SMAN 1 Tanjungbalai, Journal of Science and Research Volume 4 Issue 2 July 2023 Page 85-95 https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/50b7/9c838ae4a6215381665df8cc58fdcf0a7bbc.pdf

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factors such as the reader, the type of text, and the purpose of reading (Lorch and van den Broek, 1997; van den Broek and Kremer, 1999).[4]

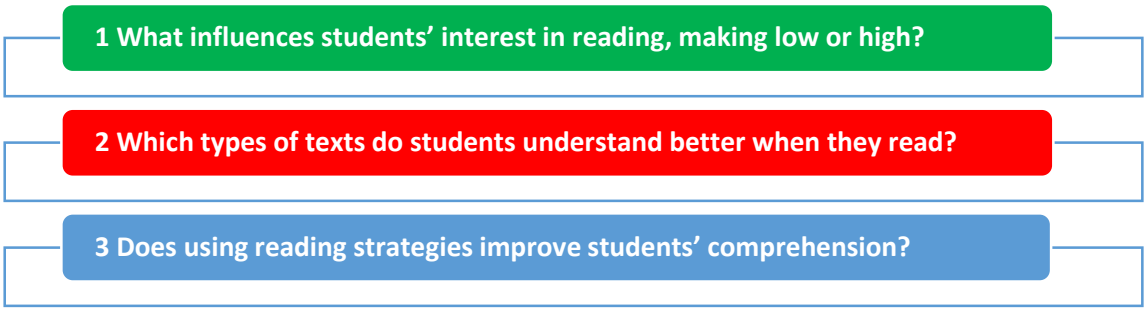
Zarei and Alipour (2022) also found that strategies like skimming and scanning significantly improve reading comprehension.[5]

AIM. This research is planned to explore ways of improving students' reading skills and comprehension. In addition, it is intended to explain and analyze learners' reading preferences, the difficulties they face in understanding texts and the effect of engaging reading materials on their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

This article will discuss effective reading strategies, types of texts that motivate students and the importance of choosing texts based on students' interests. It will also cover students' engagement during reading activities and the role of teachers in making reading lessons more enjoyable and effective.

OBJECTIVES

This research efforts to discover following issues and answer these questions.



RESEARCH PROBLEM. Despite the importance of reading in language learning, many students still have difficulty understanding English texts and they show low motivation to read too. Especially, they struggle with new unfamiliar words, identifying main ideas of the text. In addition, students do not want to read boring texts which leads to decrease students' engagement in the reading process. Therefore, this

[4](Lorch and van den Broek, 1997; van den Broek and Kremer, 1999), We Read but How: Research on Reading and Reading Comprehension Skills, Corresponding Author, mehmetbozan@aydin.edu.tr, Istanbul Aydın University 178 e-Kafkas Journal of Educational Research https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/3449682

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study focuses on students' interests in reading, the challenges that they face during the reading process and reading strategies that influence their level of comprehension.

At the beginning of the study, a survey was conducted among a group of students to identify their reading interests and preferred text types. Then, for a month, reading materials aligned with the students' interests were provided during the lessons, their comprehension levels and reading strategies were observed. As a result of these observations, the main challenges that students faced during the reading process and the factors influencing their comprehension and vocabulary growth were identified.

METHODS. In this study, I tried to find students' reading difficulties and explore effective strategies for improving students' reading comprehension, following the methodology outlined by Zarei and Alipour (2022).

This study was conducted with 13 students from grades 5-11 at a local secondary school No.60 in the Turakurgan district of Namangan region. The participants were randomly selected from a single English class. The students were between 12 and 17 years old and had an elementary level.

The data for this research consisted of students' questionnaire responses about their reading preferences and comprehension difficulties. The survey included 10 multiple-choice questions. It focused on how often students read English texts, the types of them and topics they prefer, and the challenges they face during reading. It also explored factors that help learners understand texts better, their learning outcomes and the classroom activities that make reading lessons more engaging.

In this study, I used scaffolding approach during the reading lessons. This approach was used as the main teaching method during the lesson. I organized the lesson over a month, starting with simple and short texts and gradually moving to more complex ones. During this process, I taught students reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and identifying the main idea of the text.

Based on the survey result, I selected reading materials according to students' interests. This approach helped to increase learners' motivation to read and increase their activity in the lesson. Special attention was also paid to learning and consolidating new words based on the texts.

For students who had more difficulty with reading, I gave them simplified versions of the same texts. This differential approach helped them understand the topic better and allowed them to actively participate in the same topic without falling behind their classmates. At the end of the study, I analyzed learners' comprehension,

engagement and attitudes based on questionnaire results and classroom observations. These findings demonstrate that reading skills can be effectively developed through a step-by-step and interactive approach, taking into account students' interests.



DATA ANALYSIS. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The



questionnaire results were summarized using percentages to identify students' reading preferences, difficulties, and learning outcomes. Pre- and post-survey results were

compared to observe changes in students' reading habits and comprehension levels. In addition, classroom observations were analyzed to support the questionnaire findings and to better understand students' progress during the intervention.

RESULTS. The pre-survey was conducted among 13 students to identify their reading preferences and difficulties in reading English topics. For reading frequency, 46.2% of students read English texts in every lesson, 23.1% sometimes read and 30.8% rarely read. Regarding text types, 61.5% of students preferred stories, 15.4% short articles, 7.7% dialogues and 15.4% news. In terms of topics, 53.8% of students were interested in adventure stories, 23.1% in daily life topics, 15.4% in culture and countries and 7.7% in science and technology. The main difficulty was new vocabulary (53.8%), followed by understanding the main idea (30.8%) and grammar (15.4%). Students reported that interesting topics (46.2%), simple words (30.8%), and teacher explanation (23.1%) help them understand texts better. Most students (69.2%) understood texts better when the topic was interesting. Students also found that reading helped them mainly learn new vocabulary (46.2%) and new information (53.8%). Short texts (46.2%) and stories (38.5%) were easier for students to understand. The most motivating factors were interesting topics (53.8%) and group work (38.5%), while pictures/videos were selected by 7.7%. Finally, students preferred answering questions (46.2%), finding new words (30.8%), and discussing the text (23.1%).

QUESTION	A	B	C	D
1.question	46,25%	23,1%	30,8%	0 %
2.question	61,5%	7,7%	15,4%	15%
3.question	23,1%	15,4%	53,8%	7,7%
4.question	53,8%	0%	15,4%	30,8%
5.question	30,8%	46,2%	23,1%	0%
6.question	69,2%	7,7%	15,4%	7,7%
7.question	46,2%	53,8%	0%	0%
8.question	46,2%	38,5%	7,7%	7,7%
9.question	53,8%	38,5%	7,7%	0%

10.question	46,2%	23,1%	30,8%	0%

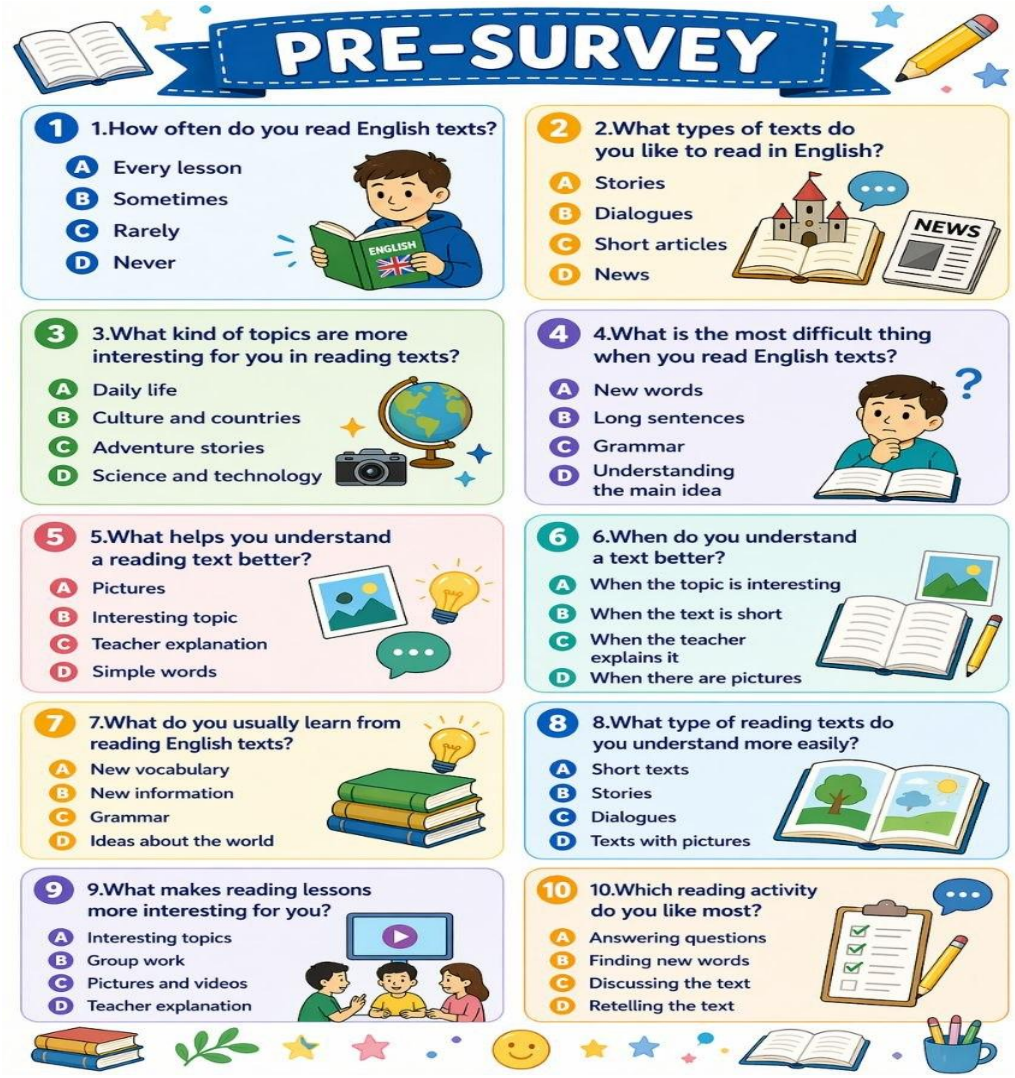
Post-survey Results

The post-survey was conducted among 13 students after the intervention. After the intervention, 76.9% of students read English texts in every lesson, while 23.1% sometimes read them. Regarding motivation, 69.2% of students said they enjoy reading much more than before, while 30.8% reported a little improvement. Reading became easier for 69.2% of students, 15.4% found it a little easier and 7.7% reported no change. Stories remained the most preferred text type (69.2%), followed by short articles (23.1%) and dialogues (7.7%). Adventure stories were still the most interesting topic (61.5%), followed by culture (23.1%) and daily life (15.4%). The main difficulty remained new vocabulary (53.8%), followed by understanding the main idea (30.8%) and grammar (15.4%). Students reported that interesting topics (61.5%) helped them understand texts better, while pictures (15,4%), teacher explanation (15,4%) and simple words were chosen by 7.7%. Most students (76.9%) understood texts better when the topic was interesting, while 7.7% chose short texts, teacher explanation, or pictures. Students found stories (46.2%) and short texts (38.5%) easier to understand. The most motivating factor was interesting topics (69.2%), followed by group work (23.1%) and pictures/videos (7.7%).

QUESTIONS	A	B	C	D
1.question	76,9%	23,1%	0%	0%
2.question	69,2%	30,8%	0%	0%
3.question	69,2%	15,4%	7,7%	0%
4.question	69,2%	7,7%	23,1	0%
5.question	15,4%	23,1%	61,5%	0%
6.question	53,8%	0%	15,4%	30,8%
7.question	15,4%	61,5%	15,4%	7,7%
8.question	76,9%	7,7%	7,7%	7,7%

9.question	38,5%	46,2%	7,7%	7,7%
10.question	69,2%	23,1%	7,7%	0%

Comparison and Conclusion. The results show a clear improvement in students' reading performance after the lessons. More learners now read English texts regularly (from 46.2% to 76.9%). Students also became more interested in reading and enjoyed it more than before. Reading became easier for many participants, and they understand texts better. Even if new words are still a problem, they are more active and confident now. In general, interesting and simple topics helped them improve their reading skills and motivation.





DISCUSSION. The results of this study showed that students' reading skills were greatly influenced by their interest and the type of texts they read. Participants understood texts that were interesting to them, especially narrative texts, more easily and effectively. This suggested that motivation plays a significant role in the reading process.

At the same time, some difficulties were observed. Many students had problems understanding new words, which affected their overall comprehension of the text. Some students also had difficulty identifying the main idea.

The scaffolding approach used in the lessons produced positive results. Starting with simple texts and gradually moving to more complex ones improved students' understanding. Strategies such as skimming and scanning were also helpful. However, not all students used these strategies equally which indicates they need more practice.

CONCLUSION. In conclusion, students' reading skills are significantly influenced by their interest, the type of texts they read and the teaching methods used in class. Interesting and student-friendly texts help learners understand the material more easily. To further improve students' reading skills, teachers should select texts that are relevant to students' interests and levels. It is also helpful to practice reading strategies such as skimming and scanning more often. In addition, the use of scaffolding and reading strategies supports the gradual development of reading skills. Overall, learners' motivation and reading performance can be improved by using appropriate, engaging, and well-chosen methods.

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