



Ain Shams University

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## **Learning Strategies to Develop Reading Comprehension Skills for Business**

### **Administration University Students**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in  
Education (TEFL)**

To

The Department of EFL Curriculum and Instruction Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University

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### **ABSTARCT**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of a program based on the FIVES reading strategy on developing Business Administration university students' reading comprehension skills. The study adopted the mixed research one-group pre-posttest design. Participants comprised a voluntary group (N = 25) from second level, Business Administration Department, Faculty of Management, MTI University. The following instruments were used in the study: the FVIES reading comprehension skills checklist (Facts, Inference, Vocabulary, Experience and Summary) and the reading comprehension skills pre-posttest. A training program based on the FIVES strategy with a student's book and a teacher's guide. The program was taught to students in a twelve-week period (12 hours). Paired t-test was used to measure the effect of the training program on the ESP students' reading comprehension skills and performance. Results revealed that the program was effective in developing ESP students' reading comprehension skills as there were statistically significant differences between the pre and post administration of the test at the level of (0.05). Finally, a set of pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research were proposed.

**Keywords:** learning strategies, reading comprehension skills, Business Administration university students.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Background and Problem**

Reading in a foreign language has been a significant component of language learning over the past years. This significance has made reading education an important issue in educational policy and practices for English language learners. However, reading is a complex, interactive cognitive process of extracting meaning from texts. In the reading process, the reader is an active participant, constructing meaning from clues in the reading text. Reading is also an individual process, which explains the different interpretations of different readers.

Most learners have reading problems because they lack the specific strategies necessary for efficient reading. When reading is a laborious, unpleasant, and unsuccessful process, readers are often unwilling to read in the target language. This explains why most EFL learners do not enjoy reading in English. They simply do not understand what they are reading. In addition, most EFL learners encounter difficulties in reading texts. Consequently, EFL students need to master sufficient reading strategies to construct the meaning of the text. In non-native English speaking countries, the high school English curriculum often adopts a reading skill-oriented textbook that focuses on vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar. The content primarily consists of articles with exercises to extend vocabulary and sentence patterns.

Nevertheless, most students lack knowledge of appropriate EFL reading strategies, or they use such strategies inadequately. The use of sufficient EFL reading strategies is considered to be one of the important factors contributing to successful language learning (Ikeda & Takeuchi, 2006). Oxford and Crookall (1989) suggest that ESL/EFL learners use reading strategies to develop more efficient and effective language learning. Using these strategies provides ESL/EFL

provides ESL/EFL learners with good models for writing, caters for opportunities to introduce new topics, stimulates discussion, and allows the study of linguistic components such as vocabulary, grammar, and idioms (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Reading strategies can also help ESL/EFL students to overcome reading difficulties. These strategies provide constructive suggestions, such as having teachers help “correct” poor EFL readers’ strategic knowledge and help them deal effectively with the academic reading they face. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the EFL reading strategies that students currently use to find out what reading strategies they need to use to comprehend what they read, to develop reading skills, and to unconsciously increase their vocabulary and syntactic knowledge.

### **1.1. Reading Strategies**

As stated by Shea and Roberts (2016), preparing students for their future has increased where career opportunities have become on demand. Therefore, teachers should teach students how to construct and apply knowledge to reason, learn, adapt, innovate, collaborate, communicate, and be comfortably flexible. Then they should ensure that discrete separated facts and isolated skills are mastered. In addition, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) call students to read increasingly more complex texts, to read widely, deeply and reread as needed (CCSSO & NGA, 2010) to enhance the following skills:

- Understand the authors’ message.
- Construct meaning from the reading comprehension text.
- Cite text evidence as a rationale for their thinking.
- Identify key ideas and significant details.
- Analyze sophisticated and technical vocabulary for contextual meaning.

- Identify the author's point of view, bias, opinions, or purpose.
- Use visual aids in a reading text.
- Use text structures effectively to support comprehension (p. 18).

In order to enhance the previous skills, there is a need to be appropriately described, taught, reinforced, and practiced across all disciplines. There are many reading strategies taxonomies; the most famous of which are those advocated by O'malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990). However, the most recent strategy is the one called the FIVES which aims at helping students realize how collected content can be applied to extend academic writing. This competency is important for success in the classroom and on formal tests. It is also essential for universities and careers. Furthermore, Shea and Roberts (2016) mention that the FIVES gives protocol, integrating research-tested skills, and strategies that have become internalized and self-initiated by students across text genres and reading purposes. They also add that as students read for academic and pragmatic purposes, they also should be encouraged to read for pleasure.

Accordingly, Shea and Roberts (2016) clarify that introducing the FIVES starts with a discussion on the what (content knowledge), how (procedural knowledge), and when (conditional knowledge — when to apply) correlated with each component of the strategy. In addition, the why, purpose, and destination must be clear and relevant. Also, the FIVES supports and promotes student success with the micro and macro aspects of reading comprehension and writing to learn through the integration of skills.

## **1.2. The Components of FIVES**

According to Shea and Roberts (2016), the FIVES is an acronym that represents a competency or skill for understanding concepts, the message, vocabulary in a reading text,

making personal connections with background knowledge and experiences as well as elaborating and expanding to build personal meaning and express it accurately. F stands for Facts that students recall accurately and distinguish key ideas from significant details; I stands for Inferences where students read between the lines; V is for Vocabulary where writers use precise words to explain their message clearly and decrease misunderstanding; E stands for students' Experiences i.e. their personal background knowledge, culture, and information to illustrate, explain, elaborate, evaluate, and make connections to comprehend deeply; while S stands for Summary, i.e. students should show their ability and skills to distinguish between main ideas and important details, and also their deep understanding and accuracy in expressing what they understand from a reading text.

### **1.3. ESP Courses and Reading Strategies**

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) elaborate that since 1960, ESP courses have become an essential and crucial way of teaching English as a foreign or second language. By the time, ESP courses and technical reading texts have been developed to be used all over the world. English for specific purposes (ESP) is a movement based on all language-teaching programs that should be designed to meet students' specific learning and language needs. As well as, ESP is an activity, which includes education, training, and practice and illustrates three major areas of knowledge: language, pedagogy, and the students'/participants' specialist disciplines of interest. Moreover, Basturkmen (2006, 2010) maintains that ESP courses have been taught to enhance and improve academic, professional and workplace environments linguistic efficiency not to gain general education.

Therefore, the role of ESP is to help language students to construct the needed desirable abilities and skills to be able to use and apply them in their major fields, careers, and workplace. In the same respect, Widdowson (1983, 1990) adds that ESP courses have a training program aim to provide students with controlled competent skills to help students to carry out the different defined tasks. From the previous opinions, Anthony (1997) argues that teaching ESP courses are based on the idea of a common core of language and skills related to all academic disciplines.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, 1992) clarify that ESP students are primarily adults with specific degrees of awareness concerning their language needs. Alongside, Basturkmen (2006, 2010) maintains that ESP courses aim to direct and help students to learn fast to be able to reach their specific objectives. Moreover, Robinson (1991) certifies that students need English for study or work purposes, not because they are interested in the English language or culture. On the other hand, Cotteral (2000) and Wenden and Holec (1987) state that independent students should be able to manage and control the process of learning, make decisions about what to learn, how to learn, when to monitor, and in what way to evaluate success or failure of learning. Furthermore, ESP teachers should be aware of the necessary knowledge and tools to be able to teach students their specialized majors effectively. Hence, teachers should prepare the necessary tools, frameworks, and principles of course design to apply them to new material. In addition, the material/ the content should be presented by the professors or experts in ESP courses. At the same time, the material should always be authentic, up-to-date and relevant to students' specializations.

Block, Gambrell and Pressley (2002), Harvey and Goudvis (2007) and Tompkins (2010) argue that there is plenty of research-based evidence for the selection of reading comprehension

strategies presented in the professional literature. Those strategies require different approaches for ensuring the integration of word reading and meaning processing. Consequently, when reading is complex, it takes time to master. In addition, Goldenberg (2008) says that to reach reading mastery, ELLs face difficulties to learn academic content and skills while learning a language. In the same vein, Zimmermann and Hutchins (2003) clarify that efficient comprehension protocols call for flexible, strategic integration of reading skills relevant to the situation, rather than using skills separately as practice in isolation. Shea (2012) adds that with sufficient instruction and enough practice, students start to flexibly self-initiate strategies that become a habit of mind when reading independently.

Shea and Roberts (2016) maintain that the FIVES calls for integrating different and new reading skills to be actively engaged with the reading text. The FIVES is a protocol that can be taught across grades in schools and universities, allowing consistency in the language and formats for comprehension instruction regardless of the text type or content area; it also provides authentic situations for developing metacognition at successive levels of sophistication. As well as, the FIVES provides a clear plan for decoding and comprehending texts and all students- regardless of their specializations- can use the FVIES effectively when it is well taught and they have had enough time for the guided and independent practice of active reading.

Coiro (2009) and Reid (2003) believe that the essence of reading comprehension is creating meaning which demands to move from focusing on “learning to read” to “reading to learn” and using a variety of cognitive and learning skills and strategies. Beside, Celece-Murcia (1991) illustrates that ESP reading courses underline both reading to learn and learning by doing. Reading to learn deals closely with the reading text to figure out the function of each paragraph which requires activities that stress understanding of a subject matter content. On the other hand,