ESL Learners' Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension

Ching-i Shen, Syou-rung Tsau

E-mail: srtsau@mail.dyu.edu.tw

ABSTRACT

Reading performance is determined by many factors. Some factors include readers' phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, grammar knowledge and background knowledge. First, phonemic awareness refers to the ability of hearing and orally handle the separate sounds for words. Students with sufficient phonemic awareness are good at reading words aloud and more capable of reading fluently. Second, fluency means the speed and accuracy of a reader's reading. A fluent reader is identified with quick and correct text-reading and with appropriate stress, intonation, phrasing and emotion. Fluent readers reach a certain level of automaticity to the extent that they can concentrate their efforts on comprehension instead of getting stuck in recognizing words and decoding the text. Third, vocabulary is essential part for reading. Basically, understanding the words in the text determines how fast and well a reader constructs meaning from the text. Fourth, grammar knowledge involves the abilities to recognize syntactic roles of words, divide sentences into meaningful chunks, and identify the syntactic structure of a sentence, which consequently play a vital role in the construction of text meaning. Last, background or prior knowledge provides a schema, a framework or structure of a certain context, which helps understanding the text while reading. The study tries to know how crucial oral reading fluency is to the comprehension of the text with regards to other essential factors for reading comprehension.

Keywords: ESL Learners, Oral Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Gram...