

Reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners: The case of English-majored students at Bac Lieu university

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ABSTRACT

No one denies the important role of reading comprehension in the reading learning process of a language learner. It is assumed that the learners who are unable to read and comprehend face many challenges during their studies and after graduation. This study aims to investigate what common difficulties may influence on reading comprehension and suggest some appropriate solutions to help learners overcome these difficulties. The subjects were 90 first-year students majoring in English Language Studies at Bac Lieu University. The results demonstrated that all of the participants showed the positive attitude towards reading skill, but all of them still had some difficulties in the field of vocabulary, prior knowledge, prediction skill, and decoding at word level in learning reading. The paper also discussed the results, suggested some solutions to get over these kinds of difficulties and recommended some ideas for further research in the field.

Keywords: reading difficulties, comprehension, EFL learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the interference and merging on cultures and economies between countries demand people to have proficiency in using foreign languages. Talking about proficiency in learning a foreign language, people usually appreciate highly proficiency in the other skills of language - writing, listening and speaking rather than reading. They believe that the main function of language is used for communication, not just for knowing. The question here is that what role of reading in the process language learning is. Many education experts highly appreciate the role of reading in language learning. In fact, reading is often referred to as the most important of the four language skills for EFL learners [1] because it enables learners to gain exposure to the target language and receive valuable linguistic input to build up language proficiency [2]. Rose [3] claimed that without the ability to communicate and learn effectively through reading, learners are severely disadvantaged for life. Similarly, Moats [4] remarked that reading is

the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. This role lies in supporting the other skills of language. Reading helps the language learners so many aspects that will then enhance the development of other skills of language. For example, without reading, a writer would not know how and where to use words and the way sentences are formed. Without reading, a writer would be virtually powerless; even if they had the tools the needed - the letters and words - for they would not have the knowledge to put it into practice.

The reality of teaching English at Bac Lieu University (BLU) revealed that the first-year English majors usually has some difficulties in their academic reading and most problems come from their intrinsic factors. This research primarily aims to investigate the reading comprehension difficulties that the students have and hinder their abilities to understand the reading texts or materials. It also attempts to

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discover the causes which inhabit behind those problems. The solutions and pedagogical implications will be proposed and suggested for learning and teaching reading comprehensions. Hopefully, this study can be used as reference to know the real teaching scenario of BLU. From the results, some discussions and practical suggestions of reading teaching will be contributed so that English instructors may have a chance to look back their professional practices to improve their own teaching career. The research questions are formed as follows:

- (1) What are the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by the first-year English majors?
- (2) What are the most and least common reading comprehension difficulties encountered by the students?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Reading comprehension is the result of complex interactions between text, setting, the reader, the reader's background, her reading strategies, her L1 and the L2, and the reader's decision making" [5]. Fitriani [6] especially mentions that reading comprehension is a kind of thinking process requiring readers to make inferences from the text. Thus, readers may not attain any or all the information and may not wholly understand the text without using their thinking processes. In this sense, it is obvious that reading comprehension involves a process of extracting information from the text and constructing comprehension through the interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge. To obtain excellent comprehension of the text, the reader needs to develop and reflect some of the ideas in the text.

A number of leading experts and specialists in reading field have developed many reading approaches or models to promote reading outcomes of EFL learners at any level. Firstly, the top-down approach building up basic units and sentential levels is the way in which learners use their knowledge of the genre to predict what will be in the text [7]. Secondly, the bottom-up

approach functioning the best for higher levels directs to skimming the gist of a text and this approach is a prosody by which language learners use schematic knowledge (i.e. linguistic knowledge and background information) that they have already known to make a good prediction of the text's meanings while performing their reading tasks [8 - 9]. Thirdly, the interactive approach combines the interactions between readers and text with the bottom-up and top-down elements [10 - 11].

Reading comprehension difficulties have been a popular issue in EFL teaching-learning settings for a long time. Numerous studies have shown the problems that caused most EFL students not to understand the texts well such as insufficient vocabulary, problems understanding linguistic complexity including lexical and syntactic knowledge, language inaccessibility, poor reading skills and lack of schemata [12 - 16]. There were also studies on factors affecting reading comprehensions [17 - 19] such as reading strategies (cognitive and meta-cognitive), textual complication, environment conditions, anxieties, interests, encouragements, medical problems, or decoding, etc.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research participants

The present study was conducted at Bac Lieu University, Bac Lieu Province. In the 2019 - 2020 academic year, BLU has 130 first-year students majoring in English Linguistics and Literature. Based on the result of the entrance examination, the university arranged into three separate classes which were considered to have similar level of proficiency language. Their age ranged from 18 to 20. The researcher randomly took one class for piloting the research questionnaire, so the participants in this study were 90 students in the remaining classes (43 students in English class A and 47 students in English class B).

3.2. Research instruments

3.2.1. Questionnaire

This questionnaire was adapted and modified from Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova [20] which

contained 20 items with 5-likert scale as an evaluation system that number 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree". Focusing on students' reading difficulties, the items were grouped into 4 different problems: (1) vocabulary size, (2) prior knowledge, (3) prediction skill, and (4) decoding. In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was assessed and examined by 3 experienced English teachers from Foreign

Language Division of BLU and also read by 3 English majors to make sure whether they understood exactly the content of each item or not. Those ambiguous, unrepresentative and repetitive items were screened out. As for reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test was used to test the consistency of the data collected where Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was as high as 0.89 which is acceptable. The following table will specifically show the items.

Table 1. Questionnaire's items in selections including four clusters

Items	Aims	Cronbach's alpha
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	To survey difficulty in vocabulary size	0.90
6, 7, 8, 9, 10	To survey difficulty in prior knowledge	0.89
11, 12, 13, 14, 15	To survey difficulty in prediction skill	0.88
16, 17, 18, 19, 20	To survey difficulty in decoding	0.89

3.2.2. Interviews

The interview questions were developed after getting the results from questionnaires to be used for gathering more information for additional interpretation of results. Those semi-constructed interview questions were consisted of two main sub-sections for ten students and five teachers with different questions and purposes. Before officially used in the study, the interview questions were shown to BLU's five English-major students and three experienced English teachers who are not among the participants of the current study. The purpose of these pilot interviews was primarily to find out the problems about the word's choices and sequence of the questions. The pilot study indicated that these questions were comprehensible and apparent.

3.3. Procedures of the research

The following table gives an overview on the whole procedures.

As shown in **Table 2** to collect data on students' reading comprehension difficulties, the questionnaire was delivered to the participants in the two reading classes at the end of the reading course. After questionnaire collection, data were input and computerized to analyze with factor analysis in order to discover the most prevailing difficulties. The data on students' reading comprehension difficulties were also collected from interviewing both students and reading teachers at the beginning, during, and the end of the course for further investigations to find threads of evidence or reasons to sustain the results of the questionnaire.

Table 2. Procedures of the research

Time	Research activities	Subjects
At the beginning, during and the end of the reading course	Interview reading teachers and students	5 reading teachers and 10 students in each reading class
At the end of the reading course	Questionnaire for students	90 students in 2 reading classes

3.4. Procedures of data analysis

This study generated two types of data: quantitative and qualitative data. The former obtained from closed-ended items in questionnaires were analyzed by using SPSS to

do descriptive statistics. The latter garnered from interviews were analyzed by using content analysis approach, i.e., by dint of three steps, viz. familiarizing and organizing, coding and recoding, and summarizing and interpreting.

4. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1. Data analysis

4.1.1. The difficulties in reading comprehension of the first-year English majors at BLU

As seen from **Table 3**, the category, namely prediction skill ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.48$) was the biggest factor hindering students' reading comprehension. Noticeably, prior knowledge ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.49$) also contributed to students' low reading comprehension, followed by decoding ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 0.58$) which was not a serious factor causing students difficulties in reading comprehension. Vocabulary size ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.59$) was noticed to be the least difficult factor influencing participants' reading comprehension.

Table 3. Areas of difficulties in EFL reading comprehension

No.	Areas of difficulties	n = 90	
		M	SD
1	Vocabulary size	2.27	0.59
2	Prior knowledge	2.78	0.49
3	Prediction skill	3.06	0.48
4	Decoding	2.6	0.58

With respect to the qualitative data garnered from interviews, it was revealed that all teachers confirmed that their students had some difficulties when learning reading. They com-

pletely agreed that the limitation of vocabulary, poor general knowledge, prediction skill, and word recognition were their students' common difficulties in reading learning. The result showed that 80% of reading teachers said that their students had difficulties at pre-reading stage. They all agreed that their students' most popular difficulty was prediction skill. Furthermore, interviewees also mentioned that their students did not face any difficulties in understanding the vocabulary used in the text as they were English majors. A particular example of this is that one teacher confirmed that "Well, the vocabulary problem is almost nonexistent, they do that part very well".

Additionally, from the student interviews, I received different opinions but the first difficulty in reading my students (100%) mentioned was prediction skill. A student explained more her failure in reading because of the wrong guess of meaning of the text content. 90% of interviewees answered their background knowledge was not good enough to comprehend the texts well. 70% of students said that they usually felt hesitated with strange words. When they met these words, they usually stopped reading. As a result, they did not fully understand the content of the reading.

a) Vocabulary size

Table 4. Students' difficulties in vocabulary size

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
1	Your present reading ability is still not good because of the limitation of vocabulary size.	2.37	0.57
2	You are not satisfied with your vocabulary size.	2.26	0.60
3	Your English vocabulary size affects deeply on how much you understand a reading lesson.	2.58	0.46
4	When you see so many new words in a reading text, you cannot understand it.	2.06	0.68
5	English instructors should teach all new words before asking students to read.	2.08	0.67

Table 4 of category of vocabulary size indicates that participants found less difficulties in vocabulary size because they still believed that their English vocabulary size did not affect deeply on how much they understand a reading lesson (item 3: $M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.46$) and that the limitation of vocabulary size did not lead to their bad present

reading ability (item 2: $M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.60$) as well as that they were satisfied with their vocabulary size (item 1: $M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.57$). It was noticed that they could understand a reading text having so many new words (item 4: $M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.68$) and disagreed with pre-teaching all new words of English instructors (item 5: $M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.67$).

b) Prior knowledge

Table 5. Students' difficulties in prior knowledge

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
6	When you have a strange topic in reading class, you feel uncomfortable.	3.34	0.38
7	When you read a familiar topic, you understand the text easily.	3.37	0.35
8	You do not know well about the reading topics in reading text book.	2.9	0.56
9	When starting reading a text, you know what you are going to read and to do.	2.77	0.51
10	You can read and understand the text well although you have a little prior knowledge about the reading topics.	2.12	0.65

As observed from **Table 5** containing items of prior knowledge, participants self-reported that they understood the text easily when reading a familiar topic (item 7: $M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.35$) and felt uncomfortable with a strange topic (item 6: $M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.38$); and they were not sure whether they knew well about the reading

topics in reading text book (item 8: $M = 2.9$, $SD = 0.56$). Additionally, it was found out that participants knew what they were going to read and to do (item 9: $M = 2.77$, $SD = 0.51$), but could not read and understand the text well in spite of having a little prior knowledge about the reading topics (item 10: $M = 2.12$, $SD = 0.65$).

c) Prediction skill

Table 6. Students' difficulties in prediction skill

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
11	When reading, you usually translate it into Vietnamese.	3.55	0.35
12	Before reading a text, you usually want to know what that text is about.	3.65	0.34
13	When reading, you usually guess what the text talks about, what it is going to happen.	2.14	0.65
14	You usually read and find the ideas to compare with your guessing about the content in the text.	2.01	0.77
15	When you have not read the text yet, you feel difficulty to predict what it is about.	3.95	0.29

The next area of difficulties is prediction skill as seen in **Table 6**, which reveals that students usually translate the reading text into Vietnamese when reading it (item 11: $M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.35$) and usually want to know the content of the text before reading it (item 12: $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.34$). Nor do they usually guess what the

text is about and what it is going to happen (item 13: $M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.65$) as well as read and find the ideas to compare with their guessing about the content in the text (item 14: $M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.77$). They realized that they had much trouble in predicting the content of the text without reading it (item 15: $M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.29$).

d) Decoding

Table 7. Students' difficulties in decoding

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
16	When reading, you usually read word by word.	3.34	0.38
17	Your reading is not slow and hesitant.	2.06	0.68
18	For difficult sentences, you usually reread them.	3.01	0.48
19	You do not usually group words in the sentence to read and stop at punctuations.	2.01	0.77
20	You sometimes do not understand the meaning of a long sentence.	2.58	0.59

As shown in **Table 7**, it was discovered that students usually read word by word (item 16: $M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.38$) and even might reread difficult sentences (item 18: $M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.48$). They affirmed that their reading was slow and hesitant (item 17: $M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.68$) and they grouped words in the sentence to read and stopped at punctuations (item 19: $M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.77$). Moreover, it was noticed that they had difficulties in understanding the meaning of a long sentence (item 20: $M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.59$).

4.1.2. The most and the least common difficulties in EFL reading comprehension

Among thirty-two difficulties in EFL reading

comprehension, it was discovered (**Table 8**) that the top five most common difficulties in EFL reading comprehension students encountered were that they did not understand the text easily when reading a unfamiliar topic (item 7: $M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.35$) and felt uncomfortable with a strange topic (item 6: $M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.38$). Besides, students usually translate the reading text into Vietnamese when reading it (item 11: $M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.35$) and want to know the content of the text before reading it (item 12: $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.34$). Finally, they had much trouble in predicting the content of the text without reading it (item 15: $M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.29$).

Table 8. Top five most common difficulties in EFL reading comprehension

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
6	When you have a strange topic in reading class, you feel uncomfortable.	3.34	0.38
7	When you read a familiar topic, you understand the text easily.	3.37	0.35
11	When reading, you usually translate it into Vietnamese.	3.55	0.35
12	Before reading a text, you usually want to know what that text is about.	3.65	0.34
15	When you have not read the text yet, you feel difficulty to predict what it is about.	3.95	0.29

Table 9. Top five least common difficulties in EFL reading comprehension

Item	Content	n = 90	
		M	SD
4	When you see so many new words in a reading text, you cannot understand it.	2.06	0.68
5	English instructors should teach all new words before asking students to read.	2.08	0.67
14	You usually read and find the ideas to compare with your guessing about the content in the text.	2.01	0.77
17	Your reading is not slow and hesitant.	2.06	0.68
19	You do not usually group words in the sentence to read and stop at punctuations.	2.01	0.77

Meanwhile, the top five least common difficulties in EFL reading comprehension (**Table 9**) participants faced were the lack of understanding the text consisting of many new words (item 4), the need of being pre-taught new words before reading the text (item 5), comparing the ideas found in the text to what students guess before reading it (item 14), the reading speed (item 17) and reading without grouping words in the sentence and stopping at

punctuations (item 19). This implies that student's difficulties in vocabulary size and word-decoding were not serious during their reading comprehension process.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examines reading comprehension difficulties among EFL students. According to Nezami [21], the most noticeable issues faced by the teachers today is insufficiency in reading

comprehension among students of higher institutions of learning. This deficiency might affect their academic performance. Researchers pointed out that the degree of learners' vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, and grammatical knowledge are some of the significant factors influencing the reading comprehension [17, 22].

The analyzed data of this study indicates that the students had difficulties in all surveyed aspects in reading comprehension. They included the lack of vocabulary size, poor prior knowledge, prediction skill, and word decoding. Normally, students easily feel bored when they have difficulties in learning a certain subject. The result of the study showed that the mean score of students' attitude towards reading in general is still positive ($M = 3.44$). An explanation for this is that their major is B.A English at Bac Lieu University. The data also showed that the standard deviations of three kinds of difficulties = 0.59, 0.49 and 0.58, respectively. It means that the level of difficulties among students is unequal.

Normally, students feel difficult in vocabulary used in the reading passage. Contrary to this fact, the data indicated that the total mean score of vocabulary size is below that average a little bit - a level on which we cannot conclude that students have a few difficulties in vocabulary size. The level of this kind of difficulty, however, is lower than the others. The reason why the total mean score of prediction skill is above the average is that students get used to making prediction assigned by teachers in pre-reading activities available in the reading textbook. What reading teachers should do to help students make prediction successfully will be mentioned further in the next part below.

The information gathered from the interviews of both reading teachers and students revealed that most interviewees like reading skill and their most common kinds of difficulties are the prediction skill and limited general knowledge of the word.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

Reading is an important skill that learners need to master in learning any language. The purpose of the study was to investigate some common students' difficulties in reading comprehension. The result of the study showed that although all participants in both English classes had a positive attitude towards reading skill, they still had difficulties in reading comprehension. Their difficulties in reading comprehension came from the intrinsic factors which correspond to hypotheses such as the limitation of vocabulary, poor background knowledge, prediction skill and word-decoding. Additionally, it was noticed that prediction skill was the biggest factor hindering students' reading comprehension and the least difficult factor was vocabulary size. Although the research has reached its aims, there are still some unavoidable limitations. Firstly, this study surveyed only on some factors that influence reading comprehension. The results of the survey should not be generalized to all reading classes at my school. Secondly, the research only stopped at identifying some kinds of difficulties in reading comprehension and the roots of these difficulties are not concerned. Finally, the reliability of the piloted questionnaire used to collect official data was not always stable. That might partly affect the result of the study.

6.2. Recommendations

The result of the study showed that the students had difficulties in all surveyed factors including vocabulary size, prior knowledge, prediction skill, and decoding at word level. Thus, teachers need to find effective ways to tackle this problem in order to engage learners in a meaningful reading experience. In order to help students, get over these difficulties in reading learning, some suggestions can be used as reference as the followings:

a) Vocabulary growth

For vocabulary, no one denies its important role in reading. A successful reader requires being able to identify words and know their meaning. Therefore, encouraging students to have a sufficient vocabulary size is always prerequisite in teaching reading. If students want to increase their vocabulary by learning by heart mechanically all new words in the texts, they will forget them very soon. Besides, asking students to learn vocabulary as a separate lesson may become an unexpected burden in language learning to them. For these reasons, when giving suggestions to overcome this kind of difficulty, the integrated ways are much better than separated solutions. The followings are some suggestions to develop students' vocabulary size in my reading classes.

b) Using discussion in classroom

Using discussion in classroom is one of techniques to overcome the lacking vocabulary. Through discussion, students have opportunities not only to recall words they have already known but also to learn new words they do not know from their friends. From these interactions that students will be activated their passive vocabulary into active ones. Discussion can be used as an important way for vocabulary learning and teaching. Students with little or no knowledge of some new words in a text are often able to know that knowledge from their classmates' exchanges. To promote students' vocabulary, reading teachers are able to encourage students in discussion around the text, using tools such as journals, maps and drawings.

Discussion can be used as initial step before asking students to read the texts. To activate discussions in class, teachers give students hints relating to the topic of the reading lesson on the board at first. These hints may be the ideas, statements, arguments around the reading passage. Next, teachers can ask some individuals

to talk about their opinions on the hints. Then, teachers divide class into pairs or groups for discussion. Finally, teachers have some representatives report what they have already discussed with their partners in front of class.

c) Semantic Mapping

According to Zaid [23], the students who use semantic map manifest considerable improvement reading comprehension written expression and vocabulary development. To begin instruction, students are presented with a concept that is central to understanding a selection or subject. They are then brainstormed or freely associate words that are related to that concept. As students are brainstormed, the teacher writes their suggestions on the board, adding words they need to learn. For example, for a unit on weather, the teacher targets the words meteorology, global, precipitation, barometer, and hurricane in the text students are about to read.

d) Using Internet-based tasks

Compared to the previous editions of the reading textbook, this Interactions I (Silver edition) has many noticeable improvements. One of those improvements is the use of the Internet to complete the tasks relating to the content of reading lessons. Asking students to use the Internet to complete tasks is one of the most effective ways to widen their vocabulary size. When they surf on the web the information they need, they will encounter new words that they have to discover to complete their tasks. The Internet-based tasks can be used as the post reading activity to consolidate of the reading lesson. To practice this suggestion, teachers first assign students tasks relating to the reading. For example, in the chapter 6, Cultures of the World, on page 126, students are asked to use the Internet to search for at least five things that students learn about a certain culture. It can be anything like food, language, sports, music, types of greetings, gestures, money, and

architecture. Next, teachers ask students to complete the tasks in groups. Finally, students report the differences and similarities to their own culture.

e) The enrichment of students' prior knowledge

When students lack the necessary prior knowledge in reading the text, the following major considerations and suggestions I think reading teachers should pay attention are (1) knowing how much level of students' prior knowledge, and (2) teaching vocabulary as a pre-reading step.

f) Knowing how much level of students' prior knowledge

It is clear to know that students come from different places with different background. It is necessary for reading teachers to know how much level of students' prior knowledge is through different reading texts. When teachers already know that, they may have appropriate instructions to activate students' prior knowledge. Generally, students fall into three categories (much, some, or little prior knowledge). In each instance, the teacher will make specific instructional decisions based on what is discovered in the prior knowledge related to the content of the reading lesson. To check out what prior knowledge exists in a topic, teachers may do some of the following activities:

- Brainstorm the topic by writing all the information solicited from the students on the chalkboard, a piece of paper, or transparency;
- Ask specific and/or general questions about the topic. See what responses are given.

Based on students' answers, teachers find out what the students know about the topic. Once the information is collected, a decision about the appropriate forms of instruction can be made:

- Present information which builds: background ideas, concepts, principles;
- Use multi-media, graphics;

- Use outside resources, trips and speakers;
- Tell about topics from your experience;
- Use any combination of the above.

g) Pre-teaching vocabulary

Pre-teaching vocabulary has three purposes, each resulting in greater comprehension (1) to activate students' prior knowledge about a topic before starting a new lesson by generating words and concepts that will assist in understanding the text, (2) to ensure the fluency by making sure that students can move through the text without being stuck on unknown words; and (3) to engage students with the text by helping them predict and verify as they read. Only a few words are taught per lesson to increase learning from text materials. The words teachers choose to present at pre-reading activity (normally from 5 to 10 words) should be essential for students understand the text.

h) Prediction skill

In order to help students make logical prediction about what they think they will learn from the reading, reading teachers should elicit them by putting questions, using clues such as the pictures, text headings, illustrations and features like maps, diagrams, captions and tables.

i) Decoding

Phonics instructions

For the last difficulty many students had, I suggest some solutions to solve this. Teaching students the necessary skills to recognize words in context increases the chances for students to read the texts effectively. These skills include the ability to sound out words and to recognize word chunks. The ability to understand a reading passage is greater when the reader can easily recognize or decode words.

In order to build decoding skills, students are able to match sounds to letters of the alphabet and blend the sounds to make words. This is phonics instruction. The primary focus of

phonics instruction is to help readers understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns and to help them learn how to apply this knowledge in their reading. Phonics instruction may be provided systematically or incidentally. With incidental phonics instructions, the teacher does not follow a planned sequence of phonics elements to guide instruction but highlights particular elements opportunistically when they appear in text.

Because of the limited time of the reading course, I think incidental phonics instruction is appropriate for my own case. Normally, when I teach reading, I also teach students phonics by embedding phonics instruction in text reading. The other simple way to instruct phonics integrated in reading is through spelling words phonemically.

The above-mentioned solutions can be used to help students overcome difficulties in reading comprehension effectively. It is recommended that future research employs a qualitative approach to observe EFL classrooms in Bac Lieu and explore how reading lessons are conducted. The close observations of the classroom will be useful in identifying the barriers faced by the teachers in teaching reading besides providing insights into the current practices in the classroom. Future research should also examine the students' reactions to the approaches employed by teachers in order to understand their coping strategies in dealing with reading difficulties.

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Khó khăn trong việc đọc hiểu tiếng Anh của người học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ: Trường hợp của sinh viên chuyên Anh Trường Đại học Bạc Liêu

Nguyễn Trúc An

TÓM TẮT

Không ai phủ nhận tầm quan trọng của khả năng đọc hiểu trong tiến trình học đọc hiểu của một người học ngôn ngữ. Người ta cho rằng những người học không có khả năng đọc và hiểu phải đối mặt với nhiều thách thức trong quá trình học và sau khi tốt nghiệp. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích khảo sát những khó khăn phổ biến có thể ảnh hưởng đến khả năng đọc hiểu và đề xuất một số giải pháp thích hợp để khắc phục những khó khăn này. Đối tượng khảo sát là 90 sinh viên năm thứ nhất chuyên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh tại Trường Đại học Bạc Liêu. Kết quả cho thấy một kịch bản học đọc đáng kể tại trường đại học này. Tất cả các học viên đều thể hiện thái độ tích cực đối với kỹ năng đọc, tuy nhiên các em còn gặp một số khó khăn về vốn từ vựng, kiến thức trước, kỹ năng dự đoán và giải

mã ở cấp độ từ trong học đọc. Bài viết cũng thảo luận về kết quả, đề xuất một số giải pháp để vượt qua những khó khăn này và đề xuất một số ý tưởng để nghiên cứu thêm trong lĩnh vực này.

Từ khóa: *khó khăn khi đọc, khả năng hiểu, người học tiếng Anh như ngoại ngữ*

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