**Module : Study skills Timing : Two hours**

**Instrutor : Dr. Nasri Chahira Level : first year**

**Reading skill**

**Objective :** by the end of the session, students will be able to understand the meaning of reading and to identify the different types and techniques of this skill.

**Introduction**

Reading is typically an individual activity, done silently, although on occasion a person reads out loud for other listeners; or reads aloud for one's own use, for better comprehension. From time to time people have wondered why reading is important. There seems so many other things to do with one's time.

**Nature of reading**

There are lots of definitions of reading. Thus, making a global definition of what reading actually is can be difficult if not impossible. In fact, Harmer (2007) asserted that reading is "an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain, the eyes receive and the brain then has to work out the significance of these messages" (p. 153). This definition grouped the main components of reading which are word recognition and comprehension. Alyousef (2005, p. 144) claimed that reading is an interaction between a reader and a certain text. At this point, the reader can use different types of knowledge to reach an acceptable level of understanding such as using his/ her prior knowledge to interpret passages or through using his / her linguistic knowledge.

In the same context, Davies (1995, p. 1) believed that reading is a process of reconstructing what a writer has encoded to get meaning. He added that to be successful in decoding what others say, who are surely far in space and time from a reader, he/she needs to rely on strategies that pave the way for understanding. Among them there are guessing, inferring and skimming (Grabe, 1991, p. 377).

**Types of reading**

To process a certain text, readers have to select which type of reading is appropriate to reach their purposes. According to Davies (1995, p. 136), types of reading are the selected kinds of reading that a reader adopts in a particular reading task. They are grouped according to concentration and speed which are stated by a certain purpose. In this context, Alyousef (2005, p. 145) stated that there are two types of reading, extensive reading and intensive reading.

**1. Extensive reading**

There are lots of studies that have been conducted on extensive reading (ER). Consequently, a lot of definitions were made (Hedge, 2003, p. 202). Some researchers said that extensive reading is a matter of skimming and scanning activities. Others believed that reading extensively is beneficial in that learners of L2 can develop their levels through being exposed to large amounts of data that contributes to enlarging students’ vocabulary as well as assists the in overall understanding (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989, p. 5).

Bamford & Day (2004) wrote “extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language. They choose their own reading material and read it independently of the teacher” (p. 1). They added that learners can stop approaching a text if they feel it is not appealing or hard to be perceived since they read for general information and enjoyment.

Studies have shown that reading in general is a good way to build up vocabulary either for native speakers or S/FL learners. It assists in improving students’ levels as well as provides them with opportunities to access any language especially FL/SL. Based on the previous view, reading extensively is one type of reading that refers to dealing with simple, interesting and easy materials that readers select independently. It may include reading to get a general idea about the material readers are reading and/or it may be about looking for specific details. Since it is an independent activity, readers are advised to skip ambiguous words that may hinder their ability to understand. They can even stop reading and change the material if they feel that this text is above their levels or if that text cannot meet their needs.

**2. Intensive reading**

Alyousef (2005, pp. 146-147) believed that intensive reading (IR) means extracting meanings of a given text with taking a great consideration to grammatical, syntactic and semantic elements .i.e. it is detailed understanding that is not limited to understand the general ideas but to how texts are organized including the structure and metacognitive strategies used by both authors and learner.

Bouaouina (2009, pp. 8-9) used the term study reading to refer to intensive reading.

According to her, it is a purposeful type of reading where a reader analyzes a text to construct meaning. In other words, (IR) is a careful and effortful reading where a reader focuses on different features of a text to make his own evaluation and interpretation. In addition, she stated that (IR) refers to reading beyond the lines. i.e. readers are in need to look beyond the literal meaning offered by the author.

**Reading techniques**

Selecting the suitable type of reading (whether intensive or extensive) that meets the students’ needs is dictated by reading techniques that are used which are (skimming and scanning). That is, when readers set their purposes and start reading, their selection of what technique they should work with determines their reading type. For instance, if they scan specific information, then they are reading intensively.

In respect of that, to be a skilled learner in L2, you need to master L2 skills. O'Donoghue (2006, p .I) assumed that knowing strategies and techniques is the best way to

study skills with less time and efforts. In addition, studies have shown that relying on such

techniques lead to considerable results on learning.

Smythe (2012) clarified more. He stated that studying skills involves habits that

combine between understanding and memorizing and that assist in extracting information.

Among those techniques there are skimming and scanning.

**Skimming**

According to Sutz & Weverka (2009, p. 166), skimming, scanning and prereading

are effective strategies through which a reader can process a text. They are helpful ways to

increase speeding rate as well as assist learners and native speakers to identify the different

elements that are worth reading.

Skimming is a type of reading which involves looking rapidly to get the general

idea of what you are reading to determine what is appropriate to be read (Smythe, 2012, p.

10).

For Grellet (1981, p. 18), skimming is a way of allowing your eyes to move quickly over a page for getting the main idea. Similarly, Sutz & Weverka (2009, pp. 166-167) pointed out that skimming refers to reading quickly for general understanding. According to them, the main aim of this strategy is to pick up few things that would clarify your understanding.

**Scanning**

According to Grellet (1981, p. 19), while scanning, readers move their eyes around the passage to look for specific information until they find it. That is*,* scanning is reading through a text, paying particular attention to some words and memorizing what is needed.

In other words, it refers to picking out particular information that is relevant to the readers’

purpose. Smythe (2014, p. 170) said that scanning is helpful to find specific name, date,

statistic or fact without referring to text.

In the same regard, Sutz & Weverka (2009, pp. 166-167) pointed out that this technique refers to extracting particular information in a rapid way. Readers set their purposes before they start reading then they use this technique to achieve them. A clear In the same regard, Sutz & Weverka (2009, pp. 166-167) pointed out that this technique refers to extracting particular information in a rapid way. Readers set their purposes before they start reading then they use this technique to achieve them. A clear example of that is using a dictionary. Learners remember the word that they have to look up it and use the dictionary to solve that problem.

When we scan, we read the required word, phrase or a number and move our eyes quickly over the text to find it. When we find it, we skim or we read this part in details. At this point, the reader’s main goal is to pick out that word. That is, readers often leave the overall understanding and focus only on their area of interest.

According to Sutz & Weverka (2009, pp. 173-174), the act of scanning includes using all the concentration of readers to find the information they need. Thus, readers should memorize those words to facilitate this process. Furthermore, authors often use the italic form to represent a new word or new explanation, so, readers can read those italicized words or explanations to find the needed input. It is advisable to use the table of content and the index to look for the required words to save time and energy.

To conclude, skimming and scanning are two important techniques through which

readers can develop their level of understanding. Any reader tends to set his purpose of

reading before starting. He will trace his path to reach the desirable results. Studies have

shown that both techniques are effective to improve reading speed. Readers can become

more fluent if they use them.

Based on what has been said, those techniques are not meant to be used all the time.Good readers are those who know when to use these techniques and what for. Furthermore, people who skim and scan tend to be purposeful and flexible because they use the appropriate techniques to reach their goal.

**Further reading**

Alyoucef, H. S. (2005). Teaching reading comprehension to ESL/ EFL learners. *The*

*Reading Matrix, 5(2),* 143-154.

Davies, F. (1995). *Introducing reading*. London: Penguin Group.

Grabe, W. (1991). Current development in second language reading research. *TESOL*

*Quarterly, 25 (3),* 375-406.

Hafiz, F. M., & Tudor, I. (1989). Extensive reading and the development of language

skills. *EFL Journal, 43 (1),* 4-13.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). New York:

Pearson Longman.

Hedge, T. (2003). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. UK: Oxford

University Press.