

Teaching EFL Reading and Writing in Georgia

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FOREWORD

In education, limited time resources have chronically been a problem. Teachers of all courses, both in schools and universities, normally complain that they do not have sufficient hours to attain the learning outcomes which fulfill the course requirements. Teaching English as a second/foreign language is not an exception. For these reasons, it has always had its ‘Cinderellas’: in the Grammar-Translation method these were definitely listening and speaking, in further methods, from Natural/Direct to Communicative, with oral language gaining its proper place, the role (and, proportionately to the time spent on it, the quality) of reading and writing has been decreasing. Any English teacher nowadays will confirm that they have students who fluently chatter in English, but, when it comes to reading, avoid longer texts. They are neither very motivated, nor very competent. As for writing, students make all kinds of errors imaginable, beginning with spelling and grammar, finishing with inappropriate style, poor text organization, and a lack of coherence and cohesion. Also, managers at companies where possessing English language skills is one of the most important requirements for a position often complain that they hire people, relying on their perfect oral English skills, but later, when the hired employees have to undertake business correspondence in English, the managers discover just how far from perfect their reading and writing skills actually are.

The goal of this publication is to contribute towards returning reading and writing to their deserved place. Teachers’ knowledge on how to provide their efficient acquisition often has to be updated, and more research into their teaching has to be carried out. In the book the authors did their best to overview the contemporary approaches to and methods of teaching reading and writing, and they conducted researches on the issues they found of particular interest. Although the title of the book indicates that it deals with the teaching of reading and writing in Georgia (the researches themselves did take place in Georgia), the materials should be interesting to English teachers around the globe.

PART ONE:
TEACHING READING

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Reading should be listed first among the language skills a person has to acquire throughout his/her lifetime. As Prado & Plourde (2011, 34) define, reading is “probably one of life’s most important skills that children must master.” This statement can actually encompass all age groups, and claims that reading is the skill learners of English as a foreign language (hence EFL learners) most urgently have to sharpen in order to reach a high level of language competence. Developing reading skills in English as a foreign language has priority over other skills, as EFL learners “rarely need to speak the language in their day-to-day lives but may need to read it in order to access the wealth of information” available to them (Eskey, 2005, cited in Lin & Sirivothin, 2008, 12).

Reading in a foreign language as a source of information is one of the main goals of teaching a foreign language in general. Reading is something that usually even the weakest language learners can do. It is an easier skill than listening, speaking and writing from many viewpoints.

If we view the grid of language skills below, we can see the reason for this:

Language skills		
	Oral	Written
Productive (=output)	speaking	writing
Receptive (=input)	listening	reading

In general, reception is easier than production, as we do not need to create anything, which is always difficult. On the other hand, listening (as a receptive skill) to a foreign language utterance deals with a great many difficulties: perception of sounds, words, grammatical forms and structures, drawing borders between words, clauses and sentences, synthesizing several levels of comprehension—and all of this done with such an ephemeral text, which is heard just once. Add to that unclear pronunciation or background and technical noise (if it is a recording) and you will understand how difficult listening in a foreign language is. Reading is much easier. You are not limited in time (unless in an exam). You may read and reread the text several times. You may use a dictionary

or a grammar book or ask somebody for help when you do not understand. You may even use translation software, which will not necessarily provide an adequate translation, but will, at least, give you some idea about the text.

We need to keep in mind that “receptive” does not mean “passive” (as it was once termed). Both reading and listening are intensive intellectual activities in which the decoding of obtained signals occurs. Mueller, Friederici, and Männel (2012) revealed in their study that babies begin with passive perception of their parents’ speech, but while listening, adults, even in their native language, are effective only if they are mentally active.

Reading teaching is also something that is very much available to students. The teacher can do it even for large classes, as after some explanation learners can work independently. To teach reading no special equipment is needed. Now, with the widespread availability of the internet, teachers have no problems getting hold of interesting, authentic and contemporary reading texts for their learners. The resources are limitless.

According to Stephen Krashen (1981), both listening and reading are valuable inputs. But the problem is that, unlike second language learners, foreign language learners can listen only to recordings or materials (live or recorded) on a computer, which quickly makes the listener tired (it is not recommended to listen to recordings for more than 20 minutes, as the concentration one needs for it quickly disappears). With reading, however, for those who have mastered it and are interested in the material in front of them, several hours may pass unnoticed.

Irrespective of all talk about globalization, most people do not very often listen, speak and especially write to foreigners. At the same time, reading in a foreign language today is available in any lost corner of the world through the use of libraries and the internet. However popular it may be to learn a foreign language in order to travel abroad, to talk to foreigners in their native tongue, or to get a good job in a joint venture, most people still learn a foreign language – especially if this language is English, the language of the internet - in order to receive all kinds of new information through reading.

Although the emphasis in contemporary target language teaching is on speaking, reading skills remain essential, as they help develop vocabulary,

improve grammatical comprehension and production, and provide rich topics and materials for speaking and writing. Reading in a foreign language (especially English) today is an obligatory component of academic education. Nowadays a lot of people go to study abroad, and that itself is unimaginable without high-level reading skills. Reading is a good tool for cultural awareness, critical thinking, creativity, etc. Reading in a foreign language (again, especially English) is the basis of continuous education and self-development, both personally and professionally, as the internet provides inexhaustible resources for both. Last, but not least, reading can be a source of so many positive emotions, upon condition that the reading skills of a person are at the relevant level for the material being read.

1.2. THEORETICAL ISSUES IN TEACHING READING

EKATERINE PIPIA

It is widely accepted that second and foreign language reading comprehension entails highly complex and dynamic processes with a number of components, dimensions and interactions among reader factors and contextual factors. As Eisterhold (1983) states, EFL/ESL reading theory has been strongly influenced by Godman's famous approach that sees reading as a "guessing game" in which the "reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer" (554). Reading is an interactive process with multileveled, hypothesis generating stages. Early work in second language reading assumed reading to involve passive linguistic decoding and to be a bottom-up process which aimed at progressing from the lowest level of reading - recognizing the printed letters and words, to higher level processes - the assigning of meaning to words. In bottom-up reading, readers are required to check orthoepy, individual words, and the structure and meaning of larger syntactic units. This approach proved its effectiveness in the Grammar-Translation Method - making sense of verbal constructions by employing the native language. From this point of view, therefore, the reading process was viewed as just decoding written symbols, rules and codes aiming at detailed linguistic analysis. Theories that stress top-down processing point out that readers generate hypotheses and based on their previously formed knowledge build inferences (Hudson 1998). As Hudson (1982) states, in the top-down teaching strategy the problem of linguistic deficiency can be tackled with a high degree of background knowledge and consequently, it tends to provoke effective reading comprehension. Readers focus on the contextual information from the text through predicting, inferring, and focusing on meanings (William 1991).

The reading process involves the readers who, based on their language and background knowledge, construct a meaningful representation of the context, that is, a representation of its words and sentences. According to Slavin (1988), humans receive information and organize it around the

schemata which have been formed and developed previously. As Anderson and Pearson (2002) state, a schema in reading refers to organized knowledge of the world, which provides information for comprehension, memorization and acquisition. To understand comprehension the reader focuses on the relationship between input (what is on the printed page) and the immediate perception of the situation that the reader is in. This interactive process between text and background knowledge is reflected in the schema theory of world knowledge, which is viewed as a structural network of mental information. Every reader's experience and, therefore, the cognitive process provokes its own unique sets of schemas, which makes different text interpretations feasible. The above-mentioned interactive process that comes from schema theory is regarded as a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing. While comprehending the text when the input is presented, the reader is in the bottom-up mode, or a "data-driven" mode (Eisterhold 1983, 231). The top-down processing is brought to mind when the reader strives to form an elaborate network of mental structures provoked by prior knowledge. This process is conceptually-driven, as the reader reflects high-level thinking skills to process information to bring forth a schema. The focal issue in these types of processing is that both should be applied and activated simultaneously. It is obvious that both modes are used concurrently, but the main emphasis is on readers' background knowledge for successful comprehension.

Contemporary professional literature puts forward Krashen's Input Hypothesis as one of the most valuable theories that highlights the key role of comprehensible input in enhancing reading ability. "Input Hypothesis is of crucial importance since it attempts to answer a question that is important both theoretically and practically: How do we acquire language?" (S. Krashen 1981, 32). According to Krashen (*ibid.*), the language acquisition is in process if the learner receives and comprehends the language input. The key factor is "acquisition" not "learning", as the received input provokes the natural effectiveness of the teaching/learning process. According to Input Hypothesis, by receiving sufficient comprehensible input, the language learner is one step beyond his/her current level of linguistic competence "i" and promotes the level to the next level in the order, or "i+1" (S. Krashen 1981). It is notable that Input Hypothesis entails three focal stages of development: a) the language input should be comprehensible; b) the input should reflect learners' grammatical competence and c) the input should be great enough in quantity, because "if there is enough input, 'i +1' will be covered automatically". It is noted that the input is an inevitable part of reading comprehension, and if the input is provided in large quantities, learners

intake the knowledge of language effectively and gradually acquire high order thinking skills. According to Krashen: “the more comprehensible input, the greater second language proficiency” and “lack of comprehensible input delays language acquisition” (1985, 64). The theory emphasizes the importance of input in reading comprehension that consolidates the linguistic competence.

Comparison of bottom-up and top-down modes of reading

	Bottom-up mode	Top-down mode
Characteristic Features	the reader focuses on background knowledge (knowledge about language and literacy, cultural values and beliefs) to understand the text	the reader focuses on textual features and information to understand the text
Process Feature	data-driven	conceptually-driven
Outcome	The reader matches the data and a schema	

According to Eisterhold (1983) and Carrell (1984), there are different types of schemata. The Content Schema refers to general knowledge provoked by the reader’s background. The Formal Schema (or textual schema) refers to the rhetorical patterns and structures of the text and stresses the importance of understanding different text types, genres, text organization techniques, language structures and register. Linguistic (or language) schemata refer to coherence and cohesion. It is notable that first language readers have an instilled ability to overgeneralize the guessing techniques while meeting with the unfamiliar words in the text, and it might not have originally been in their language schema. Consequently, readers’ first language and mental schemata shape their understanding of the text being read, while second language readers’ comprehension input is provoked by their native language and cultural background (Mikulecky 2002). It is thought-provoking that second language readers’ understanding of a text is based on their different expectations about language and culture.

One of the reasons why contemporary students are reluctant to read paper materials is their preference for computer-based learning. That is why it is essential that the internet and the computer are factors in dealing with the nature of contemporary reading skills. According to Mayer (2002), multimedia principles are the foundation for a multi-coding theory, involving Multi-Touch Tablets and the newest generation of e-textbooks

to help support struggling readers in reading and learning from textbooks. The Dual-Coding Theory deals with the role of visual and auditory information in learning. As mentioned above, while reading, we mostly apply the visual channel of obtaining information, however, in a way we internally pronounce what we read and listen to ourselves, so the auditory channel does play a role in the development of reading skills. Mayer's Multimedia Principle entails that the application of multimedia will be effective for learning if it takes into consideration the peculiarities of human brain functioning. E-textbooks that are visually comparable to the internet and the software applied on smartphones permit students to develop their comprehension strategies, to use electronic dictionaries, encyclopedias, translation programs, illustrations, audio texts, etc., to support reading comprehension, make it easier, more emotional, enjoyable and, eventually, more beneficial. Reading from e-textbooks and multimedia involves visual (text, illustrations, simulations, animations, videos), and auditory (word pronunciation, audio text files) signals and tactile relationships with the educational materials (touch-screens), and it has every imaginable additional resource (dictionaries, reference books, encyclopedias, discussion and interest groups). This is why it is especially efficient.

1.3. ARE YOU A SKILLED READER?

NATELA DOGHONADZE

People who say they can read may put a variety of meanings into these words. A small child who has just learned letters and knows letter-to-sound correspondence and who can slowly, letter by letter, read aloud inscriptions on shop windows (probably without understanding what they stand for), etc. can proudly say s/he can read. Well, s/he is right in a way, because this is what we expect a preschooler or a first-grader to be able to do.

However, reading skills are much more sophisticated than that, and they have several levels. Reading skills are receptive and written (reading aloud involves oral skills as well). The transitions from reading aloud to silent reading, reading a word, a simple sentence, compound and complex sentences, short paragraphs, and brief (3-5 paragraphs) texts all deal with mastering reading techniques, which are related to meaning but do not place too many requirements on it, as the sentences/texts used are normally simple in meaning. Here we are more interested in such aspects of reading as its speed, eye movement, recognition of words, their contextual semantization (which demands the splitting of the sentence into syntagma), the recognition of a sentence/text structure and the morphology involved all the way to eventually grasping the meaning of the sentence/paragraph/text on both the vocabulary and grammatical levels.

Having a rich vocabulary helps to read faster and with better comprehension. On the other hand, reading more enriches the language learner's vocabulary a lot (Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad 2016). Having a good deal of background knowledge makes reading comprehension easier and, vice versa, reading is the main source of gaining abundant background knowledge on various topics. Thus, to be a good reader, one needs to have a vast vocabulary and general knowledge and to practice reading regularly.

Having a good reading technique in L1 generally provides for the relatively speedy formation of reading technique in L2, however, much

depends on the application of the same, similar or different graphic systems. This is why, if starting to read in L2 soon after basic L1 reading techniques are formed, children take a long time before they reach native-like speed in L2 reading, while adults normally quickly grasp L2 reading techniques, unless the graphic system is too difficult (letters vs. hieroglyphs).

Reading authentic texts requires a reading technique which does not create any obstacles to reading comprehension when complete attention is shifted to meaning. Unfortunately, many L2 and even L1 students tend to move their lips in the process of silent reading, which not only decelerates the reading process, but also impedes comprehension.

While reading, many students depend too much on the understanding of each word, they are stuck and unable to continue until the meaning becomes available to them through teacher/peer assistance or a dictionary. Today authenticity is so strongly emphasized that even elementary and beginner L2 readers are offered relatively simple authentic texts. This makes reading not just challenging, but also stressful for many of them. Unless they are taught to continue reading without an understanding of some (although not *key*) words, reading becomes torture, and the main argument for the application of authentic texts – student motivation – is undermined.

Reading with detailed comprehension is normally taught at school. Unfortunately, this is not exactly the case with fast reading (reading for gist or skimming and scanning reading) either in native or foreign language classes. L2 classes, at least, normally include some tasks for reading by skimming and scanning. But, having no such skills in L1, many students have problems working out corresponding strategies. Some students form these skills intuitively, knowing what is possible to skip and where/how to look for information, while the majority of students need their teacher's explanations on these strategies followed by abundant practice.

Reading comprehension of explicit information demands that the student be able to find certain factual information from the text (names, places, age, time, etc.). Meanwhile comprehension of implicit information (cause/result, relationships and attitudes, values, etc.) demands a much more thoughtful reading, as the information may not be given directly and can be gained only as a result of analysis.

Furthermore, a person may be a skilled reader of texts describing everyday life, but could be unable to read science and newspaper publications not only due to a lack of corresponding background knowledge and terminology, but also because s/he has no experience or strategies in how to read such texts.

Text genres also impact the quality of reading skills: narrative is easier to comprehend, as it contains mainly factual information, while description demands detailed comprehension and is relatively boring. The genre in which the student has reading experience is normally easier for him/her in terms of comprehension, and is consequently more enjoyable/motivating. Thus, one's skill in reading, say, detective stories, may be higher than that in descriptions of paintings.

We believe that the highest level of reading comprehension deals with "reading between the lines" while studying fiction. Deep comprehension of fiction requires, besides all of the above, knowledge of stylistic devices (similes, metaphors, hyperbole, understatements, metonymies, antithesis, etc.) and a very deep knowledge of, or even "feeling" for, language (synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, paronyms, etc.) as well as history, geography, etc. (to notice allusions). It involves not simply comprehension, but also interpretation.

A skilled reader has effective metacognitive strategies for reading: s/he should be able to plan the reading process, to monitor the comprehension, to apply the thinking-aloud, questioning and self-regulation strategies and, finally, to evaluate the material read (Channa, et al. 2015). While planning the reading process, the EFL learner needs to clarify the goals: getting information, improving pronunciation, vocabulary and structures, finding out the state of the matter, etc., and, according to the posed goals, apply the adequate reading type and strategies. In the process of reading sometimes it is necessary to return to the previous pieces of text in order to provide better comprehension. Choosing to use or not to use a dictionary (and, if using one, when to do so) is also important. And, of course, a skilled reader will analyze (to a certain degree, at least) the credibility and the usefulness of the text read.

Aydin, Erdağ and Taş (2011) held a descriptive comparative evaluation of native and EFL reading skills in the most successful countries involved in the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) project, and in Turkey. PISA checks 15-year-old students' reading skills from the point of view of text types and knowledge processing skills. The texts used were

paragraph-based continuous texts (narratives, articles, discussions) and non-continuous texts (lists, forms, graphics and diagrams). The reading skills were analyzed on 5 levels:

- Reaching explicit knowledge,
- Drawing knowledge with certain criteria within the text,
- Determining the main idea of the text (analysis)
- Making implicit knowledge explicit
- Working on implicit ideas in the text (Ibid. 666).

This is very much in alignment with our views on skilled reading. The researchers (Ibid. 671) came to the conclusion that most students in the top-five countries (Finland, Korea, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) demonstrate high-level skills in determining the main idea of the text, making an analysis of the parts, thinking critically and relating what was read to their daily lives. Turkish students (28th out of 57 in the ratings) show rather lower results when measured by the same parameters. In the leading countries female students showed better results, while in Turkey male students did. We wonder where Georgia would have been in that list, had it taken part in PISA, but, unfortunately, we do not expect it to be high on the list, as practice shows that mostly lower level reading skills are taught at schools in Georgia and rote memorization is more often emphasized than critical analysis and deep understanding.

We would like to conclude that a skilled reader is a person who can not only read at reasonable speed and with adequate comprehension necessary to reach the practical goals of the types and genres of texts s/he is reading, but also enjoys the process. Someone for whom the process is not hard work, but an exciting journey.

1.4. TEXT SELECTION

NINO TVALTCHRELIDZE

Reading can be defined as a socio-cultural act (Hiroshi and Mari 2003) debated between text and reader. The cognitive process of reading involves, on the one hand, knowledge of letters, vocabulary and structure, and on the other hand, familiarity with the society and culture. Thus, when it comes to selecting a text for teaching reading comprehension the teachers' primary goal is to merge two areas of concern, readability and cultural relevance.

1.4.1. Readability approach to text selection

Text complexity is now having its day in reading instruction. There are two aspects to text difficulty: textual/linguistic demands, which include decodability of the words, complexity of the sentences and text organization, clarity of the formatting, and content demands, which refer to the way in which subtle ideas are presented in the given text. *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing* (Harris and Hodges 1995) defines readability as “the ease of comprehension because of style of writing”. It means that though readability involves the current skills of readers, it goes deeper into the analysis of the style of writing.

So, teachers must be conscious of the aspects mentioned above while selecting texts for their students. They should select texts that are neither too difficult nor too easy but appropriately challenging based on their cognitive capabilities, as books and other materials are primary motivators of reading. Readability is an important issue and finding the right fit between students' reading abilities and text difficulty is a demanding task for teachers (Fry, 1977a).

Due to the need for readable texts we have to return to the issue of text authenticity (texts not created for educational purposes) or inauthenticity. Martinez (2002) listed the advantages and disadvantages of applying authentic texts as follows. Advantages: Students practice reading real language, which is motivating; they often perceive the texts as reading for

pleasure, not as chores; there are fresh facts in most of them, so they have a cognitive value; the variety of styles, genres and the degree of formality in authentic texts prepares students for authentic reading and continuous education. Disadvantages: Authentic texts may be difficult to understand because of both language and a culture gap, the vocabulary may be not exactly what the students need; preparation of activities based on the texts is often demanding and time consuming for teachers, the materials may become outdated quickly (news), so teachers need to constantly find new texts, which is time-consuming for them. Nematollahi & Maghsoudi (2015) carried out a comparison study involving 74 Iranian EFL learners aged 17-32 who had the same level of English skills in a PET exam. The findings revealed that the selection of authentic or non-authentic texts had no impact on EFL learners' vocabulary retention ability, so, probably, the selection of authentic texts and their specific adaptation/shortening is a better idea than directly submitting to the students authentic texts, especially for students whose skills are lower than advanced and whose cultural awareness is low.

There are key features to consider when choosing books for readers: for independent reading time (home or classroom) text that is read at a rate of 95% or higher with a comprehension level of 90-100% as measured by follow-up questions is a good fit. For reading instruction (students reading with assistance from the teacher), text read accurately at a rate of 90-94% and with a comprehension rate of 75-89% is perfect. Students who read a text with 89% accuracy of decoding or less, and whose comprehension level is less than 75% are considered to be at frustration level because the number of errors interferes greatly with meaning. Teachers should avoid assigning students frustration-level books. They have to provide students with enough challenges to focus on their problem-solving skills without losing the meaning of the writing.

Many publishing companies have "leveled" books to help teachers determine text difficulty and encourage teachers to select materials that are just right for their students, but they should not be used without the teacher's input. There are different kinds of leveling systems and they are rather subjective. Only teachers are aware of those factors that really matter in choosing texts for their students: the interests of their students, their knowledge of specific genres, reading strategies that their students have been taught, and the motivations and temperaments their students have towards reading.

Readability studies are classified under quantitative, qualitative and mixed readability approaches. The quantitative approach determines readability using mathematical formulas, cloze test, and checklists and scales. They measure text variables such as word length (polysyllabic words), frequency, sentence complexity and sentence length.

Readability formulas (for example, Fry, 1977b) predict a text's difficulty level by measuring sentence length and the number of sentences within a 100-word sample text.

The Cloze procedure is based on a person's ability to complete incomplete words, images or thoughts (Rudell, 2005; Vacca & Vacca, 2005). This test estimates how well each student functions when they interact with the text.

Irwin and Davis' (1980) "Readability Checklist" and Singer's (1992) "Friendly Text Evaluation Scale" are the best known scales to deepen evaluators' knowledge about the texts.

The qualitative approach to readability focuses on the quality of the writing style, and measures important text variables such as structure, coherence and cohesion, and important reader variables such as prior knowledge, interest, motivation and purpose for reading. Alvermann and Phelps (2002) give teachers a framework to develop their own checklist. The framework has four headings: content, format, utility and style. Each heading has its own open-ended questions.

The combined quantitative and qualitative approach is new in the field. Here, a readability formula can be used as a starting estimate (free software is available at <http://www.readabilityformulas.com/>). Then, teachers can judge the text based on a checklist and benchmark passages.

Thus, readability is an important aspect of text complexity but does not yet give the full picture. Pre-taught vocabulary, a dab of phonics and some visualization will not help a reader with the assumptions of background knowledge, sophisticated sentence structure and the complex ideas of a text. Deep comprehension, which is the primary goal of reading, comes from understanding nuances and inferences. Teachers should expose their students to different types of texts, to a variety of genres, and they should ensure that a selected text is rich in its depth of ideas and information. Teachers should use both literary texts (narratives which portray a story, or fiction/non-fiction and poetry) and informational texts (expository writing, pieces that argue in favor of one position or another, and procedural texts

and documents) to teach reading comprehension, as stories with strong literary merits and informational texts that are accurate, well-written, and engaging are a good choice.

1.4.2. Cultural approach to text selection

Matching students to texts based solely on levels assumes that the “diversity of students’ social, cultural and experiential backgrounds can be whitewashed” (Dzaldov and Peterson 2005, 222). Instead, texts can be chosen that take students’ social and cultural backgrounds into account. The culturally relevant approach to selecting texts means helping students from diverse backgrounds gain greater access to texts. It may mean that the text communicates an important message or historic event that reflects diversity in classrooms today. It can be particularly useful for helping marginalized readers obtain greater entrance to classroom norms by providing space for them to offer ideas and raise questions central for their lives and the lives of their peers (Dzaldov and Peterson 2005). This offers students an opportunity to see their own lives mirrored on the page and can therefore encourage and foster reading engagement. It is also important that students read about people who are different from themselves to learn valuable lessons about differences and similarities. When applying the cultural approach to text selection, students may improve in their studies and may increase their participation in classroom reading practices.

Therefore, texts have an important role to play in the acquisition of fluent reading knowledge, they can be treated as primary motivators for students’ engagement which leads to an improvement of their reading skills. There is sufficient evidence to argue that texts constitute one of the general critical variables that contribute to mastery of reading comprehension.

1.5. TYPES OF READING

NATELA DOGHONADZE

Miller (1990) speaks of oral and silent reading. The terms intensive and extensive reading are often used (Bell 1994). Sometimes they are termed “reading to study” and “light reading”. According to Tompkins (2006, 87), for reading, independent, aloud, guided and shared are types that can be differentiated between.

We classified reading types according to different parameters, such as:

- participation of voice: **reading aloud** and **silent reading**;
- perception: **synthetic** and **analytical** reading;
- teacher participation: **guided** and **independent** reading;
- freedom of choice: **compulsory** and **individual/optional** reading,
- existence of language difficulties: **prepared** (difficulties removed beforehand, vocabulary and grammar pre-taught) and **unprepared**,
- role of mother tongue: **with** or **without translation**,
- role of dictionary: **with or without a dictionary**,
- **intensive** (of relatively short texts, with complete and detailed comprehension) – **extensive** (of relatively long texts, including **skimming** – for getting the gist - and **scanning** – for finding concrete information).

Natural and communicative reading is normally silent, synthetic (reading and trying to understand the text as a whole, not dealing with separate words, grammatical forms and sentences), independent, individual, unprepared, without translation and the application of dictionaries and either intensive or – more often – extensive. Thus, these types of reading should constitute the goal of teaching reading.

Although analytical, guided and prepared reading are never done for communicative purposes, their reasonable application permits the achievement such a level of reading skills which will eventually enable the learner to use reading for communicative purposes. This is the sort of reading that B₂ and upper-level language learners should achieve. Some

analysis and teacher/peer assistance may be helpful, but too much turns the teaching/learning process into a mechanical, scholastic and dull one. Compulsory reading is not authentic, either, but in a classroom this is an “inevitable evil” (as the teacher has to deal with the whole class). Anyway, optional and individual reading should be stimulated on levels higher than A₁.

Reading aloud may be fulfilled by the teacher listening to the students (shared reading) or by students themselves. Reading aloud does not deal only with reading technique. It also reflects word/grammatical form recognition and comprehension on the level of correct chunking¹. To provide correct chunking, learners are usually given time to read the text silently, probably even to mark the pauses and then to read the text aloud, as reading aloud and the initial comprehension of a more or less complicated text is hardly possible simultaneously even in the native language. Thus, reading aloud may be used from time to time to maintain the achieved level of pronunciation skills and to control/improve them as well as to check comprehension (to make pauses in the correct places is impossible without it). It is easier/more adequate to correct any pronunciation errors in the process of reading aloud than in the process of speaking, as it does not cut the thread of communication. Reading aloud may also be used as a natural activity, e.g. role play “Mother reading to a child” or “School director reading the school board decision to the pupils”, etc. Such authentic situations, however, are rather rare.

Some people wrongly believe that, if we can translate a text, we understand it. It is not necessarily so. Ideally, we can make a good translation only if we understand - at least on the surface - what the text is about. Unfortunately, it does not always work this way. Professional technical translators are often rather incompetent in the sphere in which they have to do their translations. However, a very superficial understanding and a habit of translating texts in a particular sphere whose terminology they know is normally sufficient.

If listening, speaking, reading and writing are the so-called primary means of verbal communication, translation and (oral, written) reproduction are believed to be the secondary ones. That is why they are not named as goals of foreign language teaching (except if we are training an interpreter). Translation is communicative only if the person who reads/listens to translation does not know the language in which the text is

¹ splitting into collocations, intonation phrases and clauses

written/spoken. That is why translation of texts is not recommended as a reading task or as a means by which to assess reading comprehension. However, translation of separate sentences in the process of reading can be used when comprehension cannot be achieved otherwise and when dealing with long and complicated sentences. Besides, a role play of a foreigner, an interpreter and a native speaker may be useful and enjoyable if used from time to time.

Teachers should help language users to work out a good strategy regarding the application of a dictionary. Should a learner use a dictionary if there is a chance to guess the meaning of the word through context and derivational analysis? Basically it is not recommended, however, some learners feel insecure unless they check the accuracy of their guess. Teachers should recommend them to underline the word and to look it up it after they finish reading the whole text. Unless there are too many words, especially key words, that the reader does not know, it is better to refrain from using the dictionary before the first reading is over. If there were more than just a couple of words that the learner needed to look up, it is a good idea to reread the text for better comprehension.

Reading texts written by the textbook writer for teaching purposes as well as adapted and abridged authentic texts is easier than reading authentic ones, but generally – unless the textbook author is a good writer and a delicate and thoughtful rewriter – it is dull and unnatural. That is why guided reading of authentic texts should start as soon as reading technique has been formed.

Unfortunately, in reality most adults spend more time reading instructions to domestic electrical equipment and medications, newspapers, journals and ads than they do reading fiction. Thus, if we want to follow the principle of authenticity, we need to provide enough appropriate authentic texts in language textbooks to form the ability to read them – at least with a dictionary.

Though silent reading is one of the goals of forming reading skills, it is seldom practiced in class for the sake of time economy. Silent reading is usually given as a home assignment. However, there are reasons why sometimes we should spare some time for it in class, as how can we otherwise know that the learners even read the text at all, read it silently (and not aloud), that they do not keep moving their lips while reading silently and what their rate of reading is. From time to time short texts for silent reading should be given in class and strict timing should be

observed. This, of course, should be accompanied by some reading comprehension and speaking tasks. Before such tasks the teacher can suggest some strategies.

Some language teaching experts speak about e-reading as a type of reading (Akbar, et al. 2015). We would not agree to the term, as, from a pedagogical point of view, both reading on-paper and reading from an e-book or on the internet can be silent or loud, with or without translation, intensive or extensive (somehow, e-reading tends to be extensive), compulsory or optional, etc. The activities fulfilled in both cases are also the same. The difference is mostly in the reading rate and the availability of various tools, which is definitely higher while reading electronic resources. That is why Akbar and his colleagues (2015, 200), although they call it e-reading, came to the conclusion that the participants of their research (40 Kuwaiti female freshman students studying in the College of Basic Education, in the English Department) started reading faster with e-resources, however, about 32.5% claimed that app reading had (or may go on to have) a negative effect on their eyesight as a result of staring at a small, bright screen for long periods of time, and around 27% claimed that their lack of experience in using the application resulted in a general lack of enjoyment of app reading (68.8% did not think that they were good with electronic devices). When reading a paper book, most participating students stated that they understood the text (62.5%), whereas with an e-resource only 46.9% of the participants said so, which is somewhat strange, and the only possible explanation might be a lack of concentration when using an e-resource (ibid, 202).

An interesting term is “reader stance” – the way in which reading is done, the focus of attention while reading. Chi (2009) links this with the way female and male students read, what sort of texts they like and how they react to the same texts, depending on their topics and the ideas expressed in them. The textual stance focuses on the students’ knowledge of typical text structure, the epoch presented in the text, the author’s biography and style, and the topic of the text. It turned out that boys do not like texts dedicated to topics like motherhood and romantic relations, while girls are not happy with texts dealing with war, sports, and politics. While choosing texts, this has to be taken into consideration. If we choose too many texts which are uninteresting for one of the genders, students will not be involved in the related activities and may lose motivation. Thus, mostly gender-neutral texts should be selected, while the ratio of texts interesting only for boys or girls should be equal and be minimized. The evaluative stance deals with text interpretation. It involves learners’