

READING COMPREHENSION AS A KEY FACTOR IN ACHIEVING ADVANCED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is a very important skill for learning English and reaching advanced levels. It helps learners understand, think about, and explain what they read. Good reading comprehension also improves vocabulary, grammar, and overall communication skills. This study looks at why reading comprehension is key for learning English. It examines strategies, challenges, and teaching methods that help learners understand texts better and become fluent. The results show that regular practice, exercises, and guided reading can greatly improve English skills.

Keyword: Reading comprehension, English proficiency, language learning, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, teaching strategies, text understanding, guided reading, self-study

Introduction: Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills for learning English, especially for students who want to reach higher levels. It is more than just knowing words or grammar; it is the ability to understand, think about, and explain the meaning of what you read. Good reading comprehension helps learners find main ideas, details, and connections in a text. It also improves other English skills, like writing, speaking, and listening.

Students with strong reading comprehension learn new words faster and understand grammar better. They can read different types of texts, such as stories, articles, or academic materials, without always needing help from teachers. Reading comprehension also helps learners think critically, solve problems, and understand complicated ideas. These skills are very important for success in school, work, and everyday life.

However, many learners find reading comprehension difficult. Some have little practice reading English texts, some do not know how to understand words or sentences, and some do not study regularly. Teachers and learners can use different strategies to improve comprehension. These include guided reading, intensive reading (reading carefully for details), and extensive reading (reading longer texts for general understanding). By practicing reading comprehension regularly, learners can move from beginner or intermediate levels to advanced English fluency. In this way, reading comprehension becomes a key skill for learning English successfully.

Material and Methods: Learning English effectively requires both the right methods and consistent practice. Among all language skills, reading comprehension plays a central role in helping learners reach advanced proficiency. Reading comprehension is not only the ability to read words but also to understand, interpret, and analyze the meaning of texts. It strengthens vocabulary, grammar, critical thinking, and overall communication skills. To investigate the role of reading comprehension in achieving English fluency, this study focuses on methods, materials, and practical strategies that support learners at different levels.

This study examines two main approaches to English learning: **self-directed learning** and **learning in educational centers**. Self-directed learning involves learners studying independently, without a formal classroom environment. Learners select their own materials, such as graded readers, novels, news articles, and online resources, to improve reading comprehension. They practice summarizing texts, answering comprehension questions, and noting new vocabulary. One of the advantages of self-directed learning is flexibility. Learners can choose topics that interest them and study at their own pace. This method also encourages independence, responsibility, and intrinsic motivation. However, beginners often face challenges in self-directed learning, such as choosing appropriate materials, understanding complex texts, or assessing their own progress accurately. Without guidance, learners may feel overwhelmed or lose motivation.

Learning in educational centers provides a structured approach, where lessons are guided by experienced teachers. Educational centers offer a combination of textbooks, exercises, and interactive activities designed to develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Teachers can explain difficult concepts, clarify misunderstandings, and provide immediate feedback. They also encourage classroom discussion, group work, and peer-to-peer interaction, which are important for reinforcing comprehension and communication skills. Moreover, educational centers use systematic progression, gradually increasing the difficulty of reading materials as learners advance. This structured approach ensures that students develop foundational skills before moving on to more complex texts.

Both self-directed learning and educational centers emphasize reading comprehension as a core component. In self-study, learners often focus on **graded reading materials** that match their current level. Beginners start with simple stories and short articles, while intermediate learners read longer passages with more complex vocabulary and sentence structures. Advanced learners explore novels, academic articles, and authentic texts that require critical analysis and inference. Learners practice identifying main ideas, understanding supporting details, and connecting ideas across sentences. Writing short summaries or reflections on the texts further strengthens comprehension. Self-directed learners can also use online exercises, quizzes, and discussion forums to test understanding and practice applying new vocabulary in context.

In educational centers, teachers implement a variety of strategies to enhance reading comprehension. Lessons usually begin with pre-reading activities, where students discuss the topic, predict content, and review relevant vocabulary. While reading, teachers guide students to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, and understand the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. Post-reading activities often include questions that require analysis, interpretation, and personal response. Some centers also use **interactive reading sessions**, where students read aloud, discuss in small groups, and present their understanding to the class. These strategies develop not only comprehension but also communication skills, confidence, and critical thinking. Teachers can adapt the difficulty level according to student progress, ensuring that each learner is challenged but not overwhelmed.

Research shows that combining reading comprehension practice with vocabulary and grammar exercises enhances overall language proficiency. In self-directed learning, learners can create **personalized reading journals**, noting new words, phrases, and ideas. Reflecting

on texts, summarizing stories, and answering comprehension questions independently strengthens both memory and understanding. In educational centers, structured exercises and guided discussions provide similar benefits but with added support and correction. Teachers can identify common mistakes, explain grammar usage in context, and provide examples that learners might not encounter on their own.

Motivation is another critical factor in improving reading comprehension. Self-directed learners are often more motivated when they choose topics that interest them, such as hobbies, news, or literature. Educational centers maintain motivation by providing interactive lessons, positive feedback, and recognition of progress. Both approaches can complement each other: for instance, learners can practice independently at home and consolidate their understanding during classroom sessions. This blended approach often leads to faster and more effective learning.

Another important element is **intensive and extensive reading**. Intensive reading focuses on understanding every detail of a text, including grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures. This method is commonly used in classrooms with teacher guidance. Extensive reading, on the other hand, involves reading longer texts for general understanding, often done independently. Both methods contribute to reading comprehension, but they emphasize different skills. Intensive reading improves accuracy, while extensive reading improves fluency, speed, and confidence. Learners who combine both methods tend to achieve advanced English proficiency more quickly.

Technology can also support reading comprehension, without relying on AI. Online dictionaries, language learning websites, and digital articles provide learners with easy access to materials at their level. Teachers often recommend using online news articles, blogs, and educational platforms to supplement classroom learning. Learners can highlight new vocabulary, take notes, and review their understanding through quizzes or discussion forums. Self-directed learners also benefit from audio-books and podcasts with transcripts, which allow them to follow along with the text and reinforce comprehension through listening.

Finally, both self-directed learning and educational centers help learners develop **critical thinking and analytical skills**. Reading comprehension is not just about understanding words; it is about interpreting meaning, identifying arguments, making predictions, and connecting ideas. Advanced learners use these skills to analyze complex academic texts, literature, and professional documents. Self-study encourages independent reflection and personal analysis, while classroom learning offers structured guidance, collaborative discussion, and teacher feedback. By practicing regularly and using effective strategies, learners gradually move from basic understanding to advanced mastery of English.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes that reading comprehension is a central factor in achieving English fluency. Self-directed learning provides flexibility and independence, while educational centers provide structure, guidance, and interactive practice. Both approaches rely on reading comprehension strategies, intensive and extensive reading, and motivation to enhance learners' skills. By combining these methods, learners can effectively improve their vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and critical thinking. Therefore, reading comprehension remains the foundation for progressing from beginner to advanced English proficiency, making it an essential focus for learners and educators alike.

Conclusion: Reading comprehension is very important for learning English well. It helps learners understand, think about, and explain what they read. This skill also makes vocabulary, grammar, and communication better. Both studying alone and learning in educational centers help students improve reading comprehension. Studying alone gives learners independence, freedom, and the chance to choose their own materials. Learning in educational centers gives structured lessons, teacher support, and group activities. Good strategies, like reading carefully (intensive reading), reading for general ideas (extensive reading), guided exercises, and using real-life texts, improve understanding and fluency. Motivation and regular practice are very important to continue learning. When learners use both self-study and classroom learning, they can improve reading comprehension, thinking skills, and understanding of texts. Reading comprehension is the base that helps students move from beginner to advanced English. This makes it very important for both learners and teachers who want long-term success in learning English.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

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