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## *Estrategias para la comprensión lectora*

### *Strategies for Reading comprehension*

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**Resumen:** Contribuir a una mayor comprensión de los textos es una tarea de primer orden que deben enfrentar con dedicación todos los docentes y, en especial, aquellos que se encuentran en proceso de formación pedagógica. La comprensión lectora es la capacidad de entender lo que se lee en referencia al significado de las palabras que forman un texto. Es el proceso productivo que permite utilizar enfoques nuevos y diferentes a los que se han venido empleando además de elaborar un significado al aprender las ideas relevantes de un texto y relacionarlas con los conceptos que ya tienen un significado para el lector.

**Palabras clave:** Comprensión lectora; Comprensión del texto; Estrategias; Formación pedagógica

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**Abstract:** Contributing to a better text comprehension is a first order task that must be faced with devotion by all the professors, and specially, those that are in training to be future educators. Reading is the skill to understand what's on a text and the meaning of the words that made it up. It is as well the productive process that allows new and different ways to focus on obtaining meaning from the most relevant ideas of a text and relate that meaning to the already existing concepts in the intellect of the reader.

**Keywords:** Reading comprehension; Reading of text; Strategies; Educators

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### **Introduction**

Reading is a process of interaction between thought and language, the reader needs to recognize letters, words, and phrases. However, when reading is not always able to understand the message contained in the text; it is even possible that it is understood in the wrong way. As an intellectual skill, understanding involves capturing the meanings that others have transmitted through sounds, images, colors and movements.

Understanding a text serves to prepare us for the continuous changes that we must assume and to better glimpse the diverse faces that men show in their slow passage through life. A good reading trains us in the attentive listening of the deep beats of the life of the world, it allows us to understand the cause of the transgression of the limits, it sharpens our ears and makes us feel the vision, and they make us more and more sensitive to the diverse human problems

It is essential to review the problems presented by the reading and comprehension of texts at the upper secondary level, an important situation having as a starting point what methods and procedures could be more effective for the achievement of this objective.

Current problems with reading and comprehension of texts at the high school level:

- Insufficient development of reading skills and habits.
- Little "voluntary" reading practice due to lack of motivation.
- Poverty of vocabulary (general and specific), which causes psychological rejection when thinking that they cannot understand the text.
- Difficulties to establish due to lack of knowledge (possible formation gaps), the contextual relationships between cultural references in general with other artistic manifestations, or direct, ironic or figurative allusion to recent events of the most diverse type.

Many language specialists consider the comprehension, analysis and construction of texts as motivating agents of learning.

That means that reading goes beyond the recognition of the words that make up the text since reading is participating in an active process of reception. Knowing how to read is knowing how to advance along with the text, knowing how to detect patterns, clues, being able to establish relationships, integrating knowledge, experiences, feelings, experiences of understanding and, easily, elaborating an interpretation.

Reading is first of all to test a process of hypothesis and interpretation, which is understood as penetrating, boring into the text in the quest to deduce, making ideas of what could be

and is not or vice versa, corroborate or refute the approaches of the author and evaluate them in a conscious way.

## **Development**

In the process of reading, the reader and the text enter into an intimate communion of dialogue, where each one contributes a set of information and socio-cultural burdens that become keys for adequate understanding/interpretation, that is, the author recreates and co - create the message that is expressed in the text.

From the study referred to the levels and the rules that participate in the comprehension of texts, the linguistic science is occupied that is known as Grammar of the text. It is in relation to the approach of the text from the perspective of textual grammar.

According to Roméu Escobar

The text includes all the forms of expression that man uses to emit meanings, with a communicative intention in a given context, and includes the use of any code: oral or written discourses, paintings, sculptures, films or, simply, the way we dress or how we live. From all this you can make a "reading" and attribute a meaning. Like any coherent communicative statement, the text is the bearer of a meaning, which is expressed with a defined intention and purpose, for which the issuer uses certain functional communicative means (Roméu, 2007, p.27).

Taking into account what is stated, reading implies:

- Knowing what is being talked about.
- Learn something new.
- Decode what others transmit.

**Semantic, syntactic and pragmatic orientation of text comprehension as a communicative process**

**Pragmatic orientation**

- It has to do with the adequacy of the text to the context, since the texts are not coherent in an abstract way, without the context.
- The author constructs the text according to the interpretation he makes of the communicative situation, of his social environment,
- The knowledge, opinions, beliefs and assumptions of the issuer are evident in the text it builds.

The questions related to this orientation will be aimed at students discovering in the text:

- Referent: pragmatic aspect that frames the complementary meaning and the sector of reality recreated in the text.
- Communicative intention: deliberate and conscious action that leads the author or author to produce his text.
- Context: set of variables or circumstances that give meaning to certain situations; the issuer adapts the linguistic signs to the context and conditions in which the verbal activity is carried out. The participants (sender-recipient of the text), roles, attitudes and relationships among them must be taken into account.
- Author or authors, time in which he lives, political and ideological position and its impact on the text object of understanding.
- Knowledge of the world or encyclopedic knowledge: previous knowledge of the reader or the reader that facilitates the understanding of the meanings of the text. Understanding a text is the result of the challenge that exists between the textual knowledge, on the one hand, and the knowledge background of the reader / reader, on the other.
- Frame: the type to which the text belongs. Each type adopts a peculiar form, content, social functioning.
- Implications: not explicit information contained in a statement and that the reader and the reader infer from the content of the statements.

- Presuppositions: non-explicit information because the issuer assumes that the receiver or receiver knows it. They are beliefs not expressed in the textual basis, that is, the surface of the discourse, but which are necessary for the construction of a coherent mental model. Some presuppositions are depending on the context; others are detached from the semantic structure of the text.

To understand a text, the communicative situation must be taken into account, which means answering the following questions:

1. What does the text say?
2. Who says it?
3. Where does he say it?
4. When does it say it?
5. Why he says it?
6. What do you understand of what was said?
7. Who is it for?
8. How do you say it?
9. Where does it say it from?
10. With what intention does it say it?
11. What is the use of what the text says?

### **Semantic orientation**

It has to do with the discovery of the semantic macro-structure of the text and the decomposition of this into macro-propositions and propositions. The reader must analyze the ideas based on the communicative intention of the author and the situational context.

The questions related to this orientation will be aimed at students discovering in the text:

- Key concepts

- Meanings of words and phrases
- logical, semantic and descriptive figures (metaphors, similes)
- Semantic propositions
- Subtopics
- Global theme of the text

### **Syntactic orientation**

It is aimed at discovering how sentences are structured and the connections between them.

It is also related to the organization of what you want to communicate in texts that are governed by the rules of each language.

The questions related to this orientation will be aimed at students discovering in the text:

- Structure: the texts should not be monolithic blocks, they have to organize the ideas in different sections. The organization must be patent even for its spatial distribution. These divisions are called paragraphs. Each paragraph must have an internal unit and, at the same time, be linked with the others, since they all provide the overall meaning of the text.
- Cohesion procedures: they are basically syntactic resources that facilitate understanding of the overall meaning of the text. They relate the expressions and sentences that make up a paragraph.
- Punctuation marks: they structure the different parts of the text, they delimit the sentences, and they mark the syntactic turns and the intonation. The understanding of the semantic relationships expressed by the connectors is determined not only by the processing of the connector, but also by its combination with the punctuation marks selected by the writer.
- Sentence patterns: the sentence order is usually associated with a type of text: logical (scientific text), affective (according to interest or preference) and rhythmic (poetic text).

In the process of reading, the reader goes through different levels, most of the specialists agree that this is the case, however there is no total agreement on what those levels are,

since each one calls them differently, however they exist, In our opinion, coincidental points.

### **Levels:**

- First level of understanding: the reader must make an intelligent reading of the text, discover the three meanings of the text (literal, implicit, complementary or cultural). Answer the question, what does the text say
- Second level of understanding: the reader assumes an attitude towards the text, corresponds to critical reading, and answers the questions: what do I think of the text? What can I do about the message?
- Third level of understanding: the reader establishes relationships between the content of the text and reality, with experience, with other texts. The text leads to other possible texts. It corresponds to the creative reading and answers the question: what is the text for?

The word strategy comes from the Latin *stratēgeia*.

Defining the concept of strategy has been the task of many scholars, one of them, Domínguez (2003) expresses:

A strategy is the ability to direct an issue. It involves dexterity, expertise, practice and experience.

### **Reading strategies:**

- They are actions through which it is possible to obtain, evaluate and apply the information.
- Strategies are tools to support knowledge, allow the subject a certain way of acting on the world, a procedure, an attitude, a way of transforming the situations it faces.
- They can be cognitive and metacognitive.

The strategy for reading comprehension is the art or way of facing the reading or reading process that affects reading, are the skills that the reader uses when interacting with the text to obtain, evaluate and use the information (pp. 56-57).

The reader of any text performs actions that guide him in the search and retrieval of interesting data. Among these strategies of reading or reading comprehension are:

- Sampling strategy: it allows investigating in a very general way about aspects related to the text, author, type of text, thematic addressed.
- Prediction strategy: favors the anticipation of textual ideas, once the text has been probed.
- Inference strategy: it is carried out fundamentally during the reading and allows completing the information, based on certain previous knowledge that the reader has.
- Self-correcting or self-control strategy: as a way to verify, while reading the text, if what has been understood is correct, once the information obtained is verified. It is associated with the correction of errors that may have been committed in the understanding of the text.

### **Algorithm or methodological steps to understand the text**

#### 1. Before reading

When it is proposed to read a text, the textual elements (of the text) and the contextual elements (of the reader) activate our knowledge schemes and, without intending to, we anticipate aspects of their content. The hypothesis is formulated and predictions made about the text (how will it be? How will it continue? What will be the end?) The answers to these questions are found as they are read.

What has been anticipated or said to happen, must be confirmed in the text for which it is necessary to look for evidence in it. You can not invent. In order to confirm this hypothesis, we must look for clues of all kinds: grammatical, logical and cultural in order to verify the certainty of our forecast. When predictions are used, the risk is taken, since making a prediction does not imply accuracy in what is formulated. When students are asked to formulate hypotheses and make predictions, it is necessary to keep in mind that the student

must feel safe in the classroom without risk of being censured for venturing to make a prediction.

#### Activation of previous knowledge

The activation and development of prior knowledge is important when:

- A text is read, which requires the knowledge of certain concepts to understand it.
- The language used in the text requires preparation to understand it.
- A subject is unknown by the reader.

#### Actions

a) Previous questions and formulation of purposes.

- Inquiries about the subject
- activating what's known about the theme.
- wondering what the text is for.
- Determining why to read.

b) Concept associations.

- Brainstorm (Possible words)
- Conceptual maps
- Semantic relationships of synonymy or antonymy

c) Preliminary look and predictions based on the structure of the texts.

- Determining the type of text by its superstructure.
- Imagining what the title implies (main title, subtitles, news headlines)
- Examining if the text has forewords, prologue, epilogue, or any element anticipating content.

- Observing the images if the text has them, the design of the cover or some parallel information, cover, drawing, photo.
- Last phrase. Knowing the last sentence (of the story, of the news), you can conjecture about what can it be about.
- Other data. From other relevant data (author, textual gender, addressee, more details of the text can be anticipated (intention, main ideas, tone, content).
- Other stimuli. From other sources related to the text (music, noise, objects, other texts, etc.), predictions are made.

d) Discussions and comments.

- Expose my predictions and compare them with those of my classmates

e) Reading out loud (aloud) the preliminary elements of meaning: the title, foreword, the dedication, and so on.

f) Formulation of purposes

- Before reading: What do I know about this topic? What I want to learn?
- While reading
- After reading: What have I learned?

To understand does not mean reading word by word, or line by line. What must be done is to search directly in the text what interests us, skipping the rest. Sometimes, we read two or more times to find different things. For this, two basic strategies are used:

"Browse or take a look (skim). The eye explores the writing: it looks for the important parts (titles, highlights, bold or capitalized words, beginning of paragraphs, etc.). Jump back and forth to get a global idea (type of text, subject, focus, parts, etc.).

- Sweep the text (scan). When we detect a fragment that interests us, the eye reads word by word, once or several times, to analyze everything: tone, irony, implicit, connotations, etc. We use this strategy to find and find specific data.

## Inferences

Strategies used to be an expert reader:

- I make inferences of different types.
- I ask questions about the text.
- I formulate hypothesis.
- I highlight essential ideas.
- I make a sketch, a summary, a map.
- I check and double-check my own understanding.
- Re- reading.
- I make appropriate decisions when faced with errors or "gaps" in understanding:
  - shared reading
  - questions about the text, to classmates, to the teacher.
  - I check what I read
  - I read again paying more attention.
- Relate. I make analogy and contrasts with what I read and other texts that I know. (announcements, descriptions, advertising) with the corresponding drawings or photos (of houses, people, products, etc.).
- After reading

There are several levels of understanding: we can read the lines (the literal), between the lines (the implicit) and behind the lines (the ideology or the point of view, the values and the budgets).

It is very important to reach this third level of understanding by having access to discourses that come from different cultures, languages, communities, religions and races.

**Actions to achieve this level of understanding:**

1. Who is the author? From the careful reading of the text, the author must be conjectured as to whether he is male or female, and why he says what he says. If the writing is colloquial, the geographical origin of the author can be inferred from some dialectal variants.
2. Agreements and disagreements. You should look in the text two or three agreements between you and the author, and the same number of disagreements.
3. Ask questions. You should ask questions about various aspects of the text: unclear arguments, incomprehensible reasoning, doubts, etc. It serves to facilitate metacognitive control over understanding, since you must be aware of what you do not know.
4. Parallel texts. They are texts referring to the same fact or topic. It can be news in different newspapers, two biographies of the same character, two narrations of a fact, etc. The exercise consists of comparing these texts to infer from them the author's position, the main differences, points of view, interests, etc.
5. Paraphrasing. Consists in saying the contents of a text with own words. Its importance lies in the fact that it obliges to reorganize the elements of the text in a personal way and provides information on what is thought about the meaning of the text.

Steps:

- I think about the text that I just read.
- I reorganize the information mentally or with the help of notes.
- I express it orally or in writing.
- I compare my paraphrase with that of my companions.
- It is determined among all the elements which should not be forgotten.

1. Expand the text. Assumptions are made about what the text would be like by changing some variable (place, moment, situation, protagonist, etc.). Even more creative actions can be made from imaginative phrases:

- If I were the journalist I would have said it like this: ...

- If the narrator were X, the story would have been narrated like this: ...
- If instead of a journal it were a report it would read like this: ...

## **Conclusions**

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what is read in reference to the meaning of the words that form a text. As a productive process, it allows us to use new and different approaches to those that have been used, in addition to elaborating a meaning when learning the relevant ideas of a text and relating them to concepts that already have a meaning for the reader.

Through understanding we have the possibility of educating values, it also requires penetrating into the inner world of the subject that is educated, working and developing feelings of identity related to the context that surrounds them, learning to defend what is theirs and belong to them.

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