



AJER
AKADEMIC JOURNAL OF
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

ISSUE 4

**AKADEMIC JOURNAL
OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (AJER)
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL**

April 2025

WWW.AJERUZ.COM



International Scientific Journal
AKADEMIC JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (AJER)
April 2025

Tashkent 2025

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES IN SUPPORTING READING FLUENCY AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

Axrorova Munisaxon Nodirxon qizi

Student at the Tourism Faculty of Chirchik State Pedagogical University

+998900067762

zulfiyabaxtiyorovna@gmail.com

Annotation: *This study explores the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in enhancing both reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. Drawing on a quantitative research design, the study involved 60 intermediate-level students who were exposed to a range of comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing over a 10-week period. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to assess changes in reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in both areas, indicating that systematic use of comprehension strategies not only fosters better understanding of texts but also accelerates vocabulary growth. These findings suggest that integrating comprehension strategies into reading instruction can serve as a powerful tool for language development in EFL contexts.*

Key words: *reading comprehension strategies, reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, EFL learners, language development*

Introduction: Reading comprehension is a cornerstone of language proficiency, serving as a critical predictor of academic achievement and lifelong learning. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, the dual challenges of developing reading fluency and expanding vocabulary are particularly pronounced, often impeding learners' overall language acquisition. To address these challenges, educators have increasingly turned to explicit reading comprehension strategies—such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing—as tools to enhance both fluency and vocabulary growth. The global literacy landscape underscores the urgency of effective reading instruction. While the worldwide literacy rate has risen to approximately 87% as of 2022 (World Literacy Foundation, 2024), significant disparities persist, especially in developing regions where up to 70% of children are unable to read a simple text by age 10 (Mastermind Behavior, 2024). These statistics highlight the critical need for instructional approaches that can bridge literacy gaps and support language learners in diverse settings.

Empirical research supports the efficacy of reading comprehension strategies in promoting language development. A meta-analysis examining the relationship between reading interest and vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners found a strong positive correlation, with a pooled correlation coefficient of 0.485 (Xu, 2022). Additionally, studies have demonstrated that structured reading programs incorporating comprehension strategies can lead to measurable improvements in both reading fluency and

comprehension (Education Endowment Foundation, 2023; Ngoc, 2022). Despite these promising findings, there remains a need for further investigation into how specific reading comprehension strategies impact both fluency and vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically examining the effectiveness of targeted reading strategies over a 10-week instructional period with intermediate-level EFL learners. By analyzing pre- and post-intervention assessments, the research seeks to provide evidence-based insights into the role of comprehension strategies in facilitating language development, thereby informing pedagogical practices and contributing to the broader discourse on effective EFL instruction.

Literature Analysis: The effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in enhancing reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners has been widely documented. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses suggest that the implementation of targeted reading strategies significantly improves learners' reading performance and linguistic development. For instance, a meta-analysis synthesizing 57 effect sizes from 21,548 participants revealed that the overall application of reading strategies had a moderate positive correlation with reading comprehension ($r \approx 0.40$). Notably, monitoring strategies showed a stronger association with comprehension in first language contexts compared to second language contexts (Swanson et al., 2019). Similarly, elaboration and organization strategies were identified as essential components contributing to improved comprehension skills.

In terms of vocabulary acquisition, extensive reading has been consistently linked to vocabulary growth. A meta-analysis covering 21 empirical studies and 1,268 participants indicated that extensive reading programs—particularly those lasting less than three months—led to substantial vocabulary gains, with an average improvement rate of 22% compared to traditional methods (Nakanishi, 2015). Moreover, graded readers and comprehension questions were found to enhance the retention of newly learned words. Direct strategy instruction has also shown measurable benefits. A study conducted on 51 Turkish EFL students over a 10-week period demonstrated that explicit teaching of strategies such as previewing, scanning, inferring, and summarizing resulted in significantly higher post-test scores in both reading fluency and vocabulary knowledge compared to a control group that received conventional instruction (Solak & Cakir, 2015).

The interrelationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has been further validated across various educational levels. A meta-analysis focusing on Chinese EFL learners revealed that vocabulary knowledge was a strong predictor of reading comprehension across primary, secondary, and tertiary education, although the strength of this relationship slightly decreased with advancing educational stages (Li & Kirby, 2015). Predictive trends suggest that as digital reading environments become more prevalent, the integration of comprehension strategies into technology-assisted learning will further amplify vocabulary acquisition rates by approximately 15–20% over the next

decade (OECD, 2023). Therefore, incorporating structured strategy instruction into both traditional and digital reading practices remains crucial for optimizing EFL learners' reading outcomes.

Methodology: This research adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in enhancing both reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners. A mixed-methods design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding by combining the depth of qualitative insights with the generalizability of quantitative findings.

Research Design: The study was structured as a longitudinal intervention lasting 10 weeks, during which participants received systematic instruction in specific reading comprehension strategies. These strategies included previewing, predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and inferencing techniques, all of which have been recognized in the literature as critical for successful reading development (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). The design integrated both formative and summative assessments to monitor progress over time.

Participants: Participants consisted of intermediate-level EFL learners enrolled at a university language center. The selection criteria required a minimum proficiency equivalent to a B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Students were randomly assigned to either an experimental group, which received strategy-based reading instruction, or a control group, which continued with traditional reading practices focused primarily on translation and comprehension questions.

Instructional Procedures: In the experimental group, strategy instruction was explicit, following the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), which emphasizes direct teaching, guided practice, and independent application. Lessons were designed based on the principles of the Schema Theory, which posits that activating learners' prior knowledge facilitates better comprehension of new texts (Anderson, 1977). Activities included collaborative reading tasks, metacognitive discussions, and the use of graphic organizers to visualize textual structures. The control group received a more traditional curriculum, centered around intensive reading of passages followed by vocabulary exercises and comprehension questions, without an explicit focus on strategic reading behaviors.

Data Collection Methods: Data were collected through multiple sources to ensure validity and reliability:

- **Reading Fluency Measures:** Students were assessed using leveled reading passages, focusing on accuracy, speed, and prosody. Fluency benchmarks were adapted from current EFL standards outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

- **Vocabulary Assessments:** Both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge were evaluated through a combination of multiple-choice tests and productive vocabulary tasks, ensuring a holistic view of lexical development.
- **Comprehension Tests:** Text-based assessments were utilized, featuring inferential and critical thinking questions rather than solely literal comprehension, in line with PISA reading assessment frameworks (OECD, 2021).
- **Qualitative Data:** Students' reflective journals and post-intervention interviews were analyzed to explore their perceptions of strategy use and its perceived impact on their reading habits.

Data Analysis Procedures: Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including paired samples t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention scores within groups, and ANCOVA to control for initial differences between the experimental and control groups. Effect sizes were calculated to determine the practical significance of findings. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, allowing the extraction of recurrent themes related to strategy awareness and reading confidence. Furthermore, triangulation of data sources was employed to enhance the credibility of the findings, ensuring that observed changes were attributable to the instructional intervention rather than extraneous variables.

Results and Discussion: This section presents the findings of the study regarding the impact of reading comprehension strategies on reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects.

1. **Improvement in Reading Fluency:** After ten weeks of instruction, the experimental group showed a significant increase in reading fluency compared to the control group. Pre-test fluency scores for both groups were statistically similar. Post-test results indicated a notable divergence: The experimental group showed a significant increase in reading speed, improving from 92.4 words per minute (WPM) to 121.5 WPM, with an error rate decrease of 23%. The control group showed a slight increase, from 90.8 WPM to 98.2 WPM, with a 8% decrease in error rate.

Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference in reading fluency between the two groups, with a large effect size. Qualitative data from student journals supported these findings, with 83% of experimental group participants expressing more confidence in reading aloud and reporting that comprehension strategies helped them read faster and with better understanding.

2. **Gains in Vocabulary Acquisition:** Vocabulary acquisition was assessed through receptive and productive vocabulary tests: The experimental group showed a significant increase in receptive vocabulary, improving from 57% correct to 78%. The control group showed a modest improvement, from 58% correct to 64%.

Similarly, for productive vocabulary: The experimental group showed a notable increase, from 51% to 73%. The control group showed a more modest improvement, from 50% to 59%. Statistical tests confirmed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in both receptive and productive vocabulary post-intervention. Additionally, thematic analysis of interview responses indicated that strategies such as clarification and questioning helped students improve their vocabulary awareness.

3. Experimental vs. Control Group: The comparative performance of the experimental and control groups is as follows: The experimental group showed a substantial improvement in reading speed, increasing from 92.4 WPM to 121.5 WPM. The control group showed a smaller increase in reading speed, from 90.8 WPM to 98.2 WPM. The experimental group demonstrated a 23% improvement in accuracy, compared to only 8% for the control group. In terms of receptive vocabulary, the experimental group improved by 21%, while the control group improved by 6%. The experimental group showed a 22% improvement in productive vocabulary, while the control group improved by 9%. Overall, the experimental group showed significantly greater gains in reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition than the control group.

4. Prediction Based on Current Data: Given the positive outcomes observed in this study, it is reasonable to predict that continued use of reading comprehension strategies will lead to long-term improvements in reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in improving reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners. The results are consistent with existing literature and highlight the importance of integrating these strategies into language learning curricula. Impact on Reading Fluency: The significant improvement in reading fluency observed in the experimental group (from 92.4 WPM to 121.5 WPM) aligns with previous studies that emphasize the role of comprehension strategies in enhancing reading fluency. Research by Rasinski et al. (2020) found that comprehension strategies, such as predicting and summarizing, facilitate faster reading by helping learners focus on meaning rather than word decoding alone. The increase in reading speed of the experimental group was accompanied by a decrease in errors, demonstrating that comprehension strategies do not only accelerate reading but also enhance its accuracy. This result is particularly important given that reading fluency is strongly correlated with overall language proficiency (Snow, 2010).

The control group's modest improvement in reading fluency (from 90.8 WPM to 98.2 WPM) suggests that traditional reading methods without explicit strategy instruction may have limited effects on fluency development. These results support the notion that mere exposure to reading is insufficient for substantial fluency gains. The significant gap

between the experimental and control groups further underscores the benefits of targeted instructional interventions focused on comprehension strategies. Enhancement of Vocabulary Acquisition: The experimental group also showed substantial improvements in vocabulary acquisition, both in receptive (57% to 78%) and productive (51% to 73%) vocabulary tests. This is in line with the findings of Laufer (2005), who posited that vocabulary learning is greatly enhanced when learners are actively engaged with texts and employ strategies like inference, clarification, and context-based guessing. The large gain in receptive vocabulary (21%) suggests that the experimental group was able to integrate new vocabulary items more efficiently due to the active nature of the strategy instruction.

The control group's vocabulary gains were smaller (receptive vocabulary: 58% to 64%, productive vocabulary: 50% to 59%), which may indicate that conventional methods, such as rote memorization or passive reading, are less effective in promoting long-term vocabulary retention and productive use. The disparity between the groups emphasizes the power of comprehension strategies in deepening lexical knowledge, as these strategies not only promote word recognition but also foster word usage in productive contexts. These findings echo those of Grabe (2009), who highlighted that reading comprehension strategies create cognitive frameworks that help learners process, retain, and retrieve new vocabulary. Moreover, as students actively question and make connections with the words they encounter, they are more likely to retain and apply these words in different contexts (Beck & McKeown, 2007).

The Role of Strategy Instruction in Language Learning: The improvement observed in both fluency and vocabulary acquisition can be attributed to the specific comprehension strategies employed during the intervention. Strategies such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning were designed to facilitate active engagement with the text, which is a key factor in fostering reading comprehension and vocabulary growth (Snow, 2010). These strategies encourage learners to interact with the text on a deeper level, moving beyond basic word recognition to a more complex understanding of content. Additionally, the emphasis on metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring and reflection, likely contributed to the learners' ability to improve both their reading speed and vocabulary.

This is consistent with the research of Pressley and Afflerbach (1995), who argue that metacognitive awareness is crucial for successful reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The fact that the experimental group demonstrated more confidence in reading aloud further suggests that metacognitive strategies enhanced their awareness of their own reading process, which in turn may have facilitated better performance. Implications for Teaching Practice: The findings of this study have important implications for EFL teaching practice. Given the significant improvements in reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition observed in the experimental group, it is

recommended that reading comprehension strategies be integrated into EFL curricula as a regular part of instruction. Teachers should not only focus on providing reading material but also explicitly teach strategies that encourage learners to interact with texts in meaningful ways.

Moreover, the results suggest that vocabulary instruction should move beyond traditional methods and incorporate active reading strategies that encourage learners to engage with and reflect on new words in context. This approach could be particularly beneficial for intermediate learners, who may need more support in bridging the gap between receptive and productive vocabulary. Limitations and Future Research: While the study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies, there are several limitations that need to be considered. First, the study was conducted over a relatively short period (ten weeks), and long-term effects of strategy instruction on fluency and vocabulary acquisition remain unclear. Future studies should aim to track the learners' progress over an extended period to determine whether the gains observed in this study are sustained over time.

Additionally, the study focused only on intermediate EFL learners, and the results may not be generalizable to learners at other proficiency levels. It would be valuable to replicate this study with learners at various proficiency levels, as well as in different cultural and educational contexts, to examine the broader applicability of the findings. This study provides strong evidence that reading comprehension strategies are effective tools for improving both reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition in EFL learners. The significant gains made by the experimental group demonstrate that strategy-based instruction can have a profound impact on learners' ability to read more fluently and retain vocabulary more effectively. Given the increasing importance of reading proficiency in language acquisition, educators should consider incorporating these strategies into their teaching practices to foster greater success in EFL learning.

Conclusion: This study investigated the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in enhancing reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition among intermediate EFL learners. The findings highlight the significant positive impact of these strategies, demonstrating substantial improvements in both areas for the experimental group compared to the control group. The results indicate that reading comprehension strategies, such as predicting, summarizing, and questioning, significantly enhance reading fluency by increasing reading speed and reducing error rates. Furthermore, these strategies facilitate vocabulary acquisition by improving both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, supporting existing theories that active engagement with texts is crucial for deep language learning. These outcomes underscore the importance of integrating comprehension strategies into EFL curricula. Educators are encouraged to not only focus on exposing learners to reading material but also to teach strategies that enable students to engage meaningfully with texts. The study's findings also emphasize the need for a

shift in vocabulary instruction, moving beyond passive methods to active reading strategies that foster vocabulary retention and productive use.

However, the study's limitations, such as the short duration and focus on intermediate learners, suggest the need for future research to explore the long-term effects of these strategies across various proficiency levels and in different educational contexts. Expanding this research would help further validate the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in diverse settings and provide more comprehensive guidance for language educators. In conclusion, this study contributes valuable evidence to the field of language education, affirming that reading comprehension strategies play a vital role in enhancing reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition. By integrating these strategies into language teaching practices, educators can support their students in becoming more proficient and confident readers, ultimately improving their overall language competence.

REFERENCES

1. Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (2007). Creating robust vocabulary: Frequently asked questions and extended answers. Guilford Press.
2. Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (2001). What reading does for the mind. *Journal of Direct Instruction*, 1(2), 137-149.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022219403253970>
3. Grabe, W. (2009). Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511811105>
4. Laufer, B. (2005). Vocabulary acquisition in a second language: Do learners really acquire most vocabulary by reading?. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 61(4), 567-587. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.4.567>
5. National Reading Panel. (2000). Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/reading/conditioninfo/Pages/teaching.aspx>
6. Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). Verbal protocols of reading: The nature of constructively responsive reading. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
7. Rasinski, T. V., Rupley, W. H., & Nichols, W. D. (2020). Fluency instruction: Research-based best practices. The Guilford Press.
<https://www.guilford.com/books/Fluency-Instruction/Rasinski-Rupley-Nichols/9781462540194>
8. Snow, C. E. (2010). Academic language and the challenge of reading for learning about science. *Science*, 328(5977), 450-452.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1182597>

9. Axrorova , M. . (2025). THE ROLE OF SCAFFOLDING IN TEACHING WRITING TO EFL LEARNERS. Журнал академических исследований нового Узбекистана, 2(4), 164–169. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/yoitj/article/view/49751>
10. Axrorova , M. . (2025). THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PODCASTS IN DEVELOPING EFL LISTENING SKILLS. Наука и технология в современном мире, 4(7), 13–20. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/zdift/article/view/48708>
11. Axrorova , M. (2025). THE ROLE OF ROLE-PLAY IN ENHANCING EFL WRITING DEVELOPMENT. Общественные науки в современном мире: теоретические и практические исследования, 4(7), 39–46. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/zdif/article/view/48706>
12. Axrorova , M. . (2025). THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS IN TEACHING EFL READING SKILLS. Наука и инновация, 3(10), 48–55. извлечено от <https://in-academy.uz/index.php/si/article/view/48702>
13. Axrorova , M. . (2025). HOW PERSONAL NARRATIVES IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS. Молодые ученые, 3(10), 43–49. извлечено от <https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/yosc/article/view/78357>



AKADEMIC JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (AJER)
international scientific journal
3-son

Nashr qilingan sana: 29.03.2025.
Shrift: "Times New Roman".

“ACADEMIC JOURNAL” MCHJ

Manzil: 700096, Toshkent shahri, Chilozor tumani, Bog‘iston ko‘chasi, 116/6.
www.ajeruz.com, info@ajeruz.com, +998950457172