Investigating the Effect of Scaffolding Hypothesis on Pre-, during, and Post-reading strategies

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nidham Sheet Hameed
Assist. instructor Lina Laith Younis
University of Baghdad
College of Arts

Abstract
The current paper is concerned with the most important activity in studying a foreign language like English. It is one of the learning skills of acquiring a language represented by the activity of reading comprehension. Reading is often regarded as a direct way of teaching or learning a foreign language. It is direct in the way students or readers receive and produce information from a written text. The aim of the present study is to shed light on the old well known strategies of learning that shows how the process of reading is direct. Those strategies are no more direct. They are changed in the teaching and learning aspect in terms of applying the scaffolding hypothesis that turns the role of the teacher and the learner into an active, communicative and productive one. The process of reading nowadays requires pragmatic abilities in order to communicate any written text with the teacher or other students.
Introduction

In the last fifteen years the interest in the second language reading comprehension has increased. We all live in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural world. People become more connected with the global media so they are in need of having the experience of practicing reading. They usually read for various purposes. The process of reading especially for second language readers is a complex process because it reflects the complex cognitive ability to process reading. Readers of L2 do not share the same social and cultural assumptions and the background knowledge that the L1 readers have. Another factor may interfere and affect the process of reading represented by the motivation of the reader, whether he is enforced to read certain text for an academic purpose or he has a real interest in reading. L2 readers usually come from different languages that use different orthographies or ways to encode information in orthography. This can be regarded as one of the most important obstacles in front of the readers. L2 readers have and use bilingual mental lexicon, structure, semantic interpretations. It is important to put under the researcher’s considerations that the proficiency in a certain language with all its aspects would affect the proficiency in reading. In this case if the reader has no previous knowledge in the linguistic areas of vocabulary and grammar. Thus, for all the afore-mentioned reasons readers of second language texts have problems in acquiring the reading skill and comprehension in language (Carrell and Grabe, 2002: 233-6).

Reading can be defined as the process of perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done in two different ways. One way can be done silently, the moment the written text is understood the process is called reading comprehension. The second way is done orally when the written text is said aloud; it is done with or without understanding of the contents (Richards & Schmidt, 2003: “reading”).
Types of Reading Comprehension:
Different types of reading comprehension can be distinguished according to the readers’ purposes in reading and the type of reading used:

- **Literal comprehension:** is a type of reading in order to understand, remember, or recall the information explicitly contained in a passage.

- **Inferential comprehension:** is the reading in order to find information which is not explicitly stated in a passage using the readers’ experience and intuition to infer the intended information.

- **Critical or evaluative comprehension:** is the reading in order to compare information in a passage with the readers’ own knowledge and values.

- **Appreciative comprehension:** is the reading in order to gain an emotional or other kinds of valued response from a passage (Richards & Schmidt, 2003: “reading”).

Properties of L2 Readers:
The second language reader has been characterized by different factors that play significant roles in affecting the readers’ comprehension. Here listed all the possible factors that characterized the readers’ ability and comprehension:

- **Word Recognition:** in terms of the orthographic hypothesis, L2 readers are exposed to a different orthographic system from his first language. One of the difficulties the L2 learner may face is the gap of matching between the graphemes and
the phones in the target language system. For example Arabic speakers learning English depend on the consonants in their word recognition reflecting the emphasis of consonants in their L1 in the lexical structure and orthography. Green and Meara (1987) concluded that L1 writing system has a deep and lasting effect on the ways in which L2 materials are processed.

Guessing vocabulary: in order to get what the L2 reader exposed to, it is necessary to have a sufficient vocabulary storage. Some questions can be raised to examine this idea. How much lexis does the L2 reader need, what is the significance of the dictionary use and the role of context. All of the aforementioned questions are of great help to see the success of the process of reading comprehension. The L2 reader would be able to guess as much vocabulary as possible if he has knowledge about them and it would be easy to guess the whole intended meaning. If the reader has no previous knowledge of certain kinds of words then he is enforced to go back to the dictionary to get the meaning. In the most complex cases when there is no chance to use dictionary the reader would make use of the meaning of the surrounding words called context. The guessability of the meaning through a context can be achieved by guessing the meaning of words or the factors such as subject, verb and function. So a written text cannot only be predicted by guessing the
meaning of words but it can also be possible by the structure of that text.

- **Background knowledge**: it has a great significance in accomplishing the process of reading comprehension for the L2 learner. This kind of learners lacks the appropriate cultural background knowledge. Such knowledge would be of great help in facilitating L2 reading. The background knowledge is regarded as the text content that affects the process of reading comprehension. Background knowledge is also connected with another factor called topic interest. Sometimes the reader has no interest in the topic he is reading. This leads him to be less concentrated on what he is reading. Thus, if both factors are integrated then the student would perform his reading in a perfect way.

- **The role of context**: linguistic context plays an important role in helping the L2 learners to guess the meaning of what they read. L2 learners have little vocabulary stored knowledge. So they are in need of making use of the context so that they can guess the total meaning of a written text. There are other factors that may contribute in the guessability like subject, verb, and function that are regarded as grammatical devices help in guessing and comprehending a text.
Meta-cognition & Strategies of Reading:

Reading comprehension strategies are sequences of procedures readers are encouraged to use in order to help understanding texts. Reading strategies are often divided into three stages:
- Before reading: (pre-reading) e.g. preview, set purposes for reading.
- During reading: e.g. monitor comprehension, adjust purposes.
- After reading: e.g. summarize, evaluate text (Richards & Schmidt, 2003: “reading strategy”).

Meta-cognition is a category of learning strategy which involves thinking about mental processes used in the learning, monitoring learning, and evaluating learning after it has occurred. For example meta-cognitive strategies a learner may use when he is starting to learn a new language including planning the way of remembering new words found in conversations with native speakers. They have to decide which approaches to working out grammatical rules are more effective. They finally evaluate their own progress and make decisions about what to concentrate on in the future (ibid, “metacognitive strategy”).

The purpose of using reading strategies is to aid comprehension. This can be proved by Paris Wasik and Turner, 1991 who claim that “strategic reading is a prime characteristic of expert reader”. In terms of Block 1986, there are four abilities by which we can differentiate between the proficient and non-proficient readers; their
ability to integrate information, to recognize aspects of text structure, to use general knowledge, personal experiences, and association, to address information in the text rather than respond personally (Carrell and Grabe, 2002: 246).

Scanning is another strategy of reading comprehension, used when the reader wants to find the location of a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of the text in the passage. The reader may read through a chapter of a book as rapidly as possible in order to find information about a particular date or event such as when someone was born. Sometimes this strategy is overlapped with the strategy of skimming. Skimming-reading is a type of rapid reading used by the reader to find the main ideas from a passage (ibid).

What is usually known about the process of reading comprehension is being direct. In our schools and universities as the foreign language teaching institutes, students are often exposed to a passage required to read it, then they are asked to answer a number of question that following the passage. Such process is described as being direct. But what is different nowadays and regarded as more effective is the interactional way of measuring reading comprehension. So even the reading strategies would be different and more effective in the process of interactional communication between the readers and the written text they read. In the current paper it is hypothesized to apply the scaffolding theory on those strategies in order to gain the best degree of strategic reading comprehension.

Scaffolding Hypothesis:
Scaffolding hypothesis is defined as being the support that provides to the learners to enable them to perform tasks which are
beyond their capacity. In language learning, learners may be unable to produce certain structures within a single utterance, but may build them through interaction with another speaker (Richards & Schmidt, 2003: “scaffolding”). In the interaction hypothesis, social interaction plays a mediating role that facilitates the provision of input. This in turn provides acquisition. In the scaffolding hypothesis, the social interaction provides the substantive means by which learning occurs. This hypothesis depends on sociocultural hypothesis by Vygotsky in the 1930s which claims that social interaction is the most important stimulus for the process of learning. Thus, scaffolding refers to the way in which learners with support from others can reach levels of achievement which they may be unable to reach independently (Littlewood, 2006: 519). For example the following exchange:

“Oh, this an ant”, across five turns:
Child: Oh!
Mother: What?
Child: This (points to an ant).
Mother: It’s an ant.
Child: Ant.
Later the child was able to produce structure “it’s an ant” in single turn.

Scaffolding is thought to be one way in which a learner acquires new linguistic structures. But in fact it is not necessarily new, sometime old or previously known information need to be practiced by speakers in order to be established in their mind. In terms of scaffolding hypothesis, both the teacher and the learner are engaged in a collaborative problem-solving activity. In such sort of activity, the teacher’s role is represented by providing demonstrations, support, guidance, and input until the learner becomes independent in producing and comprehending language. What proves the
scaffolding hypothesis is the belief of the psycholinguist Bruner that language learning depends on providing appropriate social interactional frameworks for learners (Richards & Schmidt, 2003: “scaffolding”).

**Types of Scaffolding:**
- Vertical scaffolding involves the extending of the child’s language by asking further questions.
- Sequential scaffolding is found in games such as those played with children at meal time.
- Instructional scaffolding refers to an important aspect of formal instruction.

The first type of scaffolding match what is known as questioning devices. This can be shown clearly in the process of reading comprehension. As it is agreed upon today reading comprehension is no more a direct way of eliciting the students’ understanding of a passage. Questioning is of great help to bridge the gap of interaction in the process of learning achieving and proving the scaffolding hypothesis.

**Reading Strategies through Scaffolding:**
- Annolighting a text: This active reading strategy links concept of highlighting key words and phrases in a text and annotating those highlights with marginal notes. This activity usually takes place during and after reading.
- Annotating a text: Annotating a text is an effective strategy to promote active and critical reading skills; this strategy provides number of useful acronyms that students can use to remember different elements of writer's craft when reading.
and annotating a text. This kind of activity usually takes place also during and after reading.

- Anticipating a text: Anticipation guides are typically used as a pre-reading strategy and help to engage students in thought and discussion about ideas and concepts that they will encounter in the text. This activity takes place before reading unlike the previous strategies.

- Checking out the framework: This strategy provides students with suggestions for previewing texts of different genre in order to read strategically based on their purposes for reading the text. This activity takes place before reading.

- Collaborative annotation: This strategy engages students in a process of co-constructing their interpretations of a text through a collaborative annotation activity. This activity takes place during and after reading.

- Conversations across time: This reading strategy helps students to develop deeper insights by making connections between and across texts from different time periods in response to a common topic, theme, or essential question. This activity takes place before, during and after reading.

- Dense questioning: The dense questioning strategy can be used to help students pose increasingly dense questions as they make text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world connections. This activity takes place during and after reading.

- Frame of reference: The frame of reference strategy teaches students how to create a mental context for reading a passage; this is accomplished by helping students to consider what they know about a topic and how they know what they
know. This activity takes place before, during and after reading.

- **Inferential reading**: The inferential reading strategy provides a list of the various types of inferences that readers make while reading even seemingly straightforward text; recognizing that there are different types of inferences helps students to analyze text more consciously and strategically. This activity takes place during and after reading.

- **Interactive notebook**: This highly adaptable strategy encourages students to use a two-column note-taking strategy. In the right column, they take notes to synthesize essential ideas and information from a text, presentation, film etc.; in the left-hand column, they interact with the content in any way they choose (personal connections, illustrations, etc.). This activity takes place before, during and after reading.

- **Key concept synthesis**: The key concept synthesis strategy helps students to identify the most important ideas in a text, put those ideas into their own words, and then make connections between among these important ideas. This activity takes place during and after reading.

- **Listening to voice**: This strategy helps students to analyze and interpret writer's voice through the annotation of a passage, with particular emphasis on dicitions, tone, syntax, unity, coherence, and audience. This activity takes place during and after reading.

- **Metaphor analysis**: This adaptable strategy teaches students how to analyze a complex metaphor and substantiate interpretive claims using textual evidence. This activity takes place during and after reading.
Parallel note-taking: The parallel note-taking strategy teaches students to recognize different organizational patterns for informational texts and then develop a note-taking strategy that parallels the organization of the text. This activity takes place during and after reading.

Question-answer relationship: The QAR strategy helps students to identify the four Question-Answer Relationships that they are likely to encounter as they read texts and attempt to answer questions about what they have read. These include "right there" questions, "think and search" questions, "author and you" questions, and "on my own" questions. This activity takes place before, during and after reading.

Question only: The questions only strategy teaches students how to pose questions about the texts they are reading and encourages them to read actively as they work to answer the questions they have posed. This activity also takes place before, during and after reading.

RAFT: This is a flexible post-reading strategy that helps students to analyze and reflect upon their reading through persona writing. Based on suggestions provided by the teacher or generated by the class, students choose a Role, an Audience, a Format, and a Topic on which to write in response to their reading. This activity is different from all the aforementioned strategies it takes place after reading.

Reciprocal teaching: The reciprocal teaching strategy enables students to activate four different comprehension strategies - predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing - which they apply collaboratively to help each other
understand a text they are reading. It takes place before, during and after reading.

- **Sociogram:** A sociogram is a visual representation of the relationships among characters in a literary text. Students can make use of pictures, symbols, shapes, colors, and line styles to illustrate these relationships, to understand the traits of each character, and to analyze the emerging primary and secondary conflicts. It takes place during and after reading.

- **Think aloud:** Skillful readers unconsciously use a range of strategies to make meaning from text. The think aloud strategy involves modeling these strategies by "thinking aloud" while reading and responding to a text. By making explicit for students what is implicit for more expert readers, it becomes possible for students develop and apply these strategies themselves. It takes place during and after reading.

- **Transactional reading journal:** The name of this reading strategy is inspired by the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978), who explained reading as a transactional process that occurs between the text and the reader. The Transactional Reading Journal builds on this concept (via Jude Ellis) and provides a flexible framework for engaging students in a process of active and personally meaningful interaction with a text. This strategy is completely different from others in the period it takes place that is during reading only.

- **Writer craft seminar:** This reading strategy teaches students how to analyze text through close reading in order to formulate an interpretive thesis that is supported through assertions and textual evidence. Students present their
interpretations to the class through a seminar format. This activity takes place before, during and after reading (http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/reading%20strategies%20index.htm)

Thus, in order to reach the most ideal and comprehensive form of reading, the above reading scaffolding strategies will also be more effective if they are accompanied with the second part strategy of reading known as comprehension strategies. The process of comprehending a written text also needs strategies so that the process can be achieved in a successful way.

**Comprehension Strategies:**

- Making connection: students make personal connections with the text by using their schema (background knowledge). There are three main types of connections we make while reading text.

  - **Text-to-Self (T-S)** refers to connections made between the text and the reader's personal experience.
  - **Text-to-Text (T-T)** refers to connections made between a text being read to a text that was previously read.
  - **Text-to-World (T-W)** refers to connections made between a text being read and something that occurs in the world. It is important to activate student's schema (background knowledge) before, during, and after reading.

- Questioning: Questions help students clarify and deepen understanding of the text they are reading. Teachers should
model coding of the different types of questions. Codes for questions vary according to different authors and books on comprehension strategies. Use codes that suit your students' needs. You can even create your own codes with your students' help! Another questioning strategy that is similar is Question-Answer Relationships (QAR).

- **Visualizing**: Mental pictures are the cinema unfolding in your mind that makes reading three-dimensional. Visualization helps readers engage with text in ways that make it personal and memorable. Readers adapt their images as they continue to read.
- **Inferring**: Usually referred to as "reading between the lines". This strategy usually involves: Forming a best guess using evidence-context clues, picture clues, etc. Making predictions, Drawing conclusions, and Finding meaning of unknown words.
- **Determining importance**: People are bombarded daily with information. Knowing the purpose for reading helps determine what important. Reader’s need to distinguish between is: Fiction and nonfiction and Important from unimportant information. This strategy works great in conjunction with a nonfiction unit of study.
- **Synthesizing**: Thinking evolves through a process. Reader's thinking changes as they gather more information. New information makes the reader re-evaluate their schema to form new schema.

(http://www.busyteacherscafe.com/teacher_resources/literacy_pages/comprehension_strategies.htm)
Conclusion

In the light of the aforementioned studies and recently discovered strategies, it can be concluded that the process of reading is no more a direct way of receiving information from a piece of a written text, instead it is an interactional way of comprehending text by communicating its content. Attracting the students’ attention towards certain points that are required in a text makes them curious to scan, find, understand, exclude, use and comprehend such information. When the students experience interactive reading that includes questioning, discussing and exchanging information, they will have a sufficient experience in communicating text and such information would be established in their long memory rather than reading in a direct way. Such kind of reading deals with pragmatics. As long as they have to communicate what they read they need the communicative and pragmatic devices so that they can fill the space of understanding.
Bibliography


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