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DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AMONG THE STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Reading is the basic comprehension skill to locate the intelligibility and proficiency level of a learner at a certain academic level. It is generally perceived that writing is a divine process that every learner must master to excel in his educational career but the fact is that only a good reader can write precisely. English is taught as a compulsory subject to the second language (L2) learners till their graduation level with only emphasis on writing skills but they are unable to comprehend their target language texts even at the higher-level studies in Pakistan. There is a dire need to address the issue of providing solutions to the graduates because this comprehension skill helps the learners to acquire knowledge and understanding of given texts not only throughout their educational career but also to succeed in professional

vocation. It is difficult to identify the problems of reading skills (receptive skill) that learners encounter in the classrooms but still a yardstick to measure students' compatibility of reading skills is a reading comprehension text with direct and indirect questions. Therefore, the researcher has addressed the issue faced by the students at graduation level from the Department of computer sciences (CS), Bahauddin Zakarya University. For data collection, *Tizon, (2013)* proposed a method of reading comprehension, so a test tool was carefully designed and administered through a pilot study before it could be applied to the target population. The test contained two questions to check the level of reading comprehension of the selected students. The reading questions were given with a time limit to the students as prescribed for each question. To check the comprehension ability of a student, the sub-genres of reading skills (skimming, scanning, inference and extensive reading) were carefully observed and calculated through written responses to the given questions. The results indicated the scarce knowledge, limited vocabulary and inadequate interpretation level of the learners in applying reading techniques to the given texts. These issues could be minimized by applying certain reading techniques (skimming, scanning, inference and extensive reading) to excel the speed of reading which is highly needed by the learners during their study occupancy.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan, being the sixth most populous country in the world comprises of many different cultures, civilizations and numerous languages. Here, Urdu as a national language is used along with many other regional languages and numerous dialects; English is learned as a second/target language for the learners. With the attainment of its independence in 1947, Pakistan is determined to select Urdu (L1) as its national language and English (L2) as a second language. However, the necessity to use English overshadowed Urdu due to the common medium of instruction at all levels of social life for interaction. Because the federal and provincial authorities have promoted the use of English, the learners are not at ease while communicating in English (Warsi, 2004). Especially the teachers at primary, elementary and secondary levels teach English in traditional ways (grammar-translation method) which do not fulfill the need for developing reading competence of English text which is needed at the university level. In the Pakistani milieu, writing is given separate status as a useful skill in a poor relevance of reading that is directly influencing the writing ability of the learners. Reading comprehension is an essential skill for learners of English that enables the learners to grasp, interpret and understand any text. It is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in their career. Learners of English can make greater progress in other areas of language learning if the teachers improve the reading comprehension of the students inside the classroom other than just asking them to speak the text loudly. Reading is an active and fluent process that involves the reader interpreting and understanding the given text. Teaching students how to utilize the all needed skills and knowledge brought from their first language to develop vocabulary skills, improve reading comprehension and monitor students' improvement are just some of the elements that teachers must consider in preparing for English language classes. Learning to read in a second or foreign language is a process that involves learning new vocabulary and its structures, and cultivating the ability to transfer skills from the classroom to the real world, where English may be used. Recent research work on reading has focused on the process of

comprehension and has identified three main factors which account for successful comprehension, namely, prior knowledge, text structure and strategies (Koda, 2005).

What Is Reading?

The ability to assign meaning and comprehend or interpret the text for analysis is called reading skills. Where learners are unaware to get the essence of any text in a quick way and spend a lot of time either to comprehend the text or they may re-read the given text several times. speed reading, vocalization, reading in poor light, reading only the beginning and end, reading with poor posture, judging the book only by its cover, flipping pages, again and again, mental state e.g. anxiety, anger, happiness or tire and distractions like Mobile phones…. etc. Traditional study plans such as SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) and PQ4R (Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review) are a few guided reading strategies that are often used to help students who struggle to excel in their reading speed. Through the implementation of guided reading strategies, students become aware of how print works (Kasten, Kristo, & McClure, 2005), and students struggling with reading comprehension are better able to create meaning. "In guided reading, teachers show students the "tricks of the trade," then provide focused support to help them become independent readers and writers," (Kasten, Kristo, & McClure, 2005, p. 286). Teaching guided reading strategies to students provides them with the tools to enhance reading comprehension.

Classroom activities can maximize learners' reading speed and efforts. They do not tell anything about how language is used to communicate ideas (Kurland, 2013). In the history of pedagogic reforms, reading has gained its importance to identify the real content and general content in given texts. The present study is also an attempt to describe the specific genre of English for computer science and the language used in it as taught in university in different semesters to improve the students' reading comprehension skills which are selected from both kinds of texts like textbooks and authentic material. Partridge (2004) says that the fusion of textual and socio-cultural knowledge makes the identification of the exact knowledge a difficult task. Another limitation is that of over-focus on the reader and its needs while paying less attention to learner expression (Gao, 2007). So the researcher has chosen different texts from their textbooks to design a reading test for collecting the data of students' comprehension.

Significance Of Reading and Writing Skills in English

Reading and writing are two basic language skills that score the proficiency level of any learner. It is generally perceived that a good writer can write clearly and effectively. Also, much of professional communication is done in writing: proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews and e-mails. Even if students manage to learn the material in their classes without knowing how to write well, they won't be able to express their knowledge to the people who are making the big decisions.

Statement Of the Problem

English is taught throughout the educational span of a student in Pakistan. But students remain still unable to grasp the meaning of the text even at the university level. The language of computer studies in Pakistan is English. Students are supposed to perform all academic tasks in English. However, the students do not have the required competence in reading skills. The reasons need to be investigated scientifically for recommendations to address the situation. The learners of the English language are unaware of using reading strategies even when they have theoretically taught inside the classrooms. Writing skills can only be improved through exact reading input. The present study is going to find out the issues of English language Learners at the department of computer sciences in Bahauddin Zakariya Univesity Multan and try to provide fruitful suggestions to minimize the problem.

Objective of the Study

➢   The main objective of the study is to identify and rectify the problems of reading skills faced by the students of the Department of Computer Science while dealing with English language texts by applying different strategies and activities inside the classroom.

Research Question

❖   What is the proficiency level of reading comprehension of the students of computer sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and how can it be enhanced by applying different strategies and activities inside the classroom?

Significance of the Study

University students are considered to have at least the basic knowledge of reading strategies but actually they face many problems as far as their learning strategies are concerned. Students from the Department of Computer Sciences claim that most of the teachers deliver their lectures in Urdu which proves to be contradictory to the language in their books which they have to read and the technical field activities which they encounter through mechanical tasks in the classroom situations. So, there is a need to facilitate the students by using computer devices to enhance their quick reading skills. The findings will be useful for the existing language learning practices in university.

To get good grades, competence in reading and writing English guarantees better performances in future academic and professional settings. Through this research, problematic areas will be highlighted and recommendations will be made for improving the reading skills of the learners. The findings will be useful for upcoming teachers and researchers to consider the prevailing issue and to create awareness among the teachers to design activity-based lesson plans for the students.

Delimitation of the Study

As this study is only specifically applied to computer science students so it can be identified into the category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Moreover, only the students of first to fifth semesters of the study year 2015 are selected for the study because they showed an inadequate level of proficiency during the pilot study than that of higher-level students but still the suggestions could be helpful and applied to all semesters for getting the better results and benefits from the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Hutchison and Waters (1987) see ESP as an approach rather than a product by which they mean that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. They suggest that the foundation of ESP is the simple question: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? The answer to this question relates to the learners, the language required and the learning contexts and establishes the primacy of need in ESP. Need is defined by the reasons for which the student is learning English which will vary from study purposes.

Robinson also accepts the primacy of needs analysis in defining ESP. Her definition is based on two key defining criteria and a number of characteristics, i.e.

❖   ESP is normally *goal-oriented*
❖   ESP courses develop from a needs analysis that aims to specify closely *the student's needs.*

Here characteristics are that ESP courses are generally forced by a limited time period in which their objectives have to be achieved and are taught to adults in homogeneous classes in terms of the work and specialist studies that the students are involved in. Robinson's theory is going to be the basis of the following research as it is also done on the same age group adult students of BSCS all working sessions of 2014 from BZU, Multan.

Importance Of Needs Analysis in ESP Course Designing

All ESP practitioners have come to the same agreement that Munby's model is the opening of a new era in ESP research, particularly that which concerns needs analysis/course design relationship. This is illustrated by Coffey (1984: 7) who writes: "It telescopes two operations, needs analysis and course design, into one-and these must, obviously, be linked in the way that Munby showed." For Coleman (1988: 155), "Probably the most influential of all needs analysis procedures currently available is Munby's "communication needs processor". Munby proposes an instrument which is supposed to enable the needs analyst to draw up an accurate profile of an individual language learner. The instrument then provides detailed lists of "language skills" and "sociogenetic functions" so that the needs analyst can identify those skills and functions which the learner is likely to need." (Rosa, 2008)

The specific needs work as an inclusive term to fulfill the needs, lacks & desires of learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1989; pp.55-57)

Importance of Reading Skills in Pedagogical Reforms

In the history of pedagogic reforms, reading has gained its importance to identify the real content and general content in ESP. the present study is also an attempt to describe the specific genre of English for computer science and the language used in it as taught in universities in different semesters to improve the students' language skills

Reading comprehension is an essential skill for learners of English. For most learners, it is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in learning. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English tend to make greater progress in other areas of language learning. Reading should be an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Teaching students how to utilize the skills and knowledge they bring from their first language, develop vocabulary skills, improve reading comprehension and rate, and monitor students' improvement are just some of the elements that teachers must consider in preparing for an English language reading class. Learning to read in a second or foreign language is a process that involves learning skills, learning new vocabulary and patterns, and cultivating the ability to transfer skills from the classroom to the real world, where English may be used.

"Recent research on reading has focused on the process of comprehension and has identified three main factors which account for successful comprehension, namely, prior knowledge, text structure and strategies (Koda, 2005). That is, comprehension occurs when the readers extract and integrate various pieces of information from text and combine it with what is already known. Koda (2010), therefore, suggests that explicit training on the effective use of knowledge during text comprehension be incorporated in foreign language reading instruction. Likewise, Anderson (2008) states that teachers should explicitly teach students strategies to use when they do not understand what they are reading. These reading strategies which are commonly defined as processes consciously controlled by readers to solve reading problems can make readers become more proficient (Hudson, 2007)."

"The language input EFL students receive is mostly from the classroom. Students do not often take any initiative to locate foreign language resources outside of class or engage in reading beyond a course requirement. Educators attribute the decline of students' reading engagement to the advent of multimedia (Li & Renganathan, 2008). In recent years, classroom teaching and research has increasingly focused on extensive reading. Researchers such as Day and Bamford (2008) and Hunter (2009) have identified a significant impact of reading on academic achievement. Reading can empower students with extensive vocabulary, syntax, and other language expertise that will enrich their use in the target language. Hence, teachers play an important role in providing sufficient reading materials for students."
(Guo S. -C., August, 2012)

"An English reading comprehension test was developed to determine the students' ability before and after learning. The readings in the test were developed by the researcher based on EN111 course objectives and students' proficiency level in terms of length, vocabulary and grammatical points. The test covered four levels of comprehension including 1) literal, which is what is actually stated; 2) interpretative or inferential, which is what is implied; 3) applied or evaluative, which is applied to concepts or ideas that go beyond what is discussed; and 4) creative, which allows the reader to create new ideas or new ways of expression with the use of whatever understanding he/she gets of the text (Tizon, 2013)".

"These students come unprepared for the academic literacy requirements that typically characterize college coursework (Pugh, Pawan, & Antommarchi, 2000) and that may very well be a part of their upcoming job responsibilities. Assuming that there are multiple factors responsible for these difficulties, such as linguistic or cultural differences and inadequate or inappropriate educational preparation, educators are pressed to determine answers to the following questions: How can we approach these students' problems with effective instruction and academic support that allows for meaningful and appropriate comprehension strategy development? How do we, as professors and facilitators, motivate self-direction and personal literacy strategy development? These questions directed the development of a new syllabus for college reading classes that I taught at a private 4-year institution." (Falk - Ross, Dec, 2001)

Students' reported habits showed that they spent far more time reading texts in Urdu than English for being former as their native language. But the consequences indicated that these participants spent a significant amount of time on the Internet and mass media, which is congruent with Hendel and Harold's findings (2004) on students' frequent usage of the Internet to read material that is not perfect in its structure, and far less time on reading printed materials (Pitcher, Albright, Delaney, et al, 2007). The reason these students spent little time on reading could have been a lack of motivation on required readings or any readings. It could also be a result of flourishing technology and media attraction. The results also illustrated a sizable gap between Urdu reading and English reading. The study found that students did have a reading habit in relation to Urdu texts, e.g., reading Urdu newspapers, novels and magazines…etc and students were not motivated to read English. A better measure needs to be taken to foster students' motivation to read English. In addition, English teachers in Asian contexts are likely to face challenges as they encounter large class sizes, an inflexible syllabus, insufficient class time, and the scarcity of authentic materials especially for teaching language structures. While class time and size may be hard to alter in a short time, teachers could change or supplement materials more easily. Textbooks, especially imported ones, may be too costly to change at once. They could also be limited in the scope and presentation of all linguistic aspects in real-life language. Because today's students show more interest in online information, teachers could adopt more materials from the Internet. As suggested by Teeler & Gray (2000), the Internet is a great resource from which teachers can easily find topics and useful language of interest to

students. A massive number of materials can be accessed at no cost. Although many of the authentic materials on the Internet are linguistically demanding, many materials that teachers can choose are suitable for various levels. Teachers need to include students' voices in material selection. In addition to their needs, levels, and interests, text comprehensibility and relevance to students' lives are important factors to assure a positive reading experience.

Extensive reading materials provide substantial linguistic input (Bell, 1998), which is required for language learning. So, extensive reading provides a rich source for developing learners' linguistic competencies for reading as well writing which can only be improved by applying careful reading strategies. Researchers point out the importance of extensive reading skills, but what does extensive reading entail? Successful extensive reading requires the following attributes (Maley, 2009):

- Reading often and in a large quantity
- Reading of a wide variety of topics and genres
- Reading content that is interesting, compelling and persuasive
- Reading books which students should themselves select
- Reading for pleasure and information
- Reading is compulsory to improve all other skills namely listening, speaking and writing skills

Many studies have shown that reading has positive effects on a variety of students' language skills and directly influences writing skills. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found a correlation between extensive reading and reading ability among children, and a study by Greenberg, Rodrigo, Berry, Brinck, and Joseph (2006) attained similar results with adult learners. Lee's study (2008) with children in Taiwan on sustained silent reading reveals that the longer the students read, the better the reading results and so would be the writing output.

Importance Of Schema Theory in Reading Comprehension:

Reading is a self –done process that involves the reader's intention and careful observation of a text. Whatever has been read, it settles in our mind with proper order termed as schemata. This is a way to organize and to order the content in a learner's mind. Bartlett first highlighted the term in the early 20th century when the prevailing theory was behaviorism, which was largely concerned with observable stimuli and behavior only. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) – credited as the first to create a cognitive development theory that included schemas. He explained that new information is assimilated into current schemas. Cognitive dissonance is caused by new information which cannot be easily integrated. So, schemas are forced to change or accommodate this new information just like the folders and sub-folders in a computer. This theory is important in receiving and memorizing new information in the reading process as it develops cognition and knowledge to produce linguistic competency in written form. David Rumelhart (1975) posed that there is an underlying grammar of stories and that knowledge would help in the understanding of new stories. In the latter half of the 20th century,

psychologists began to focus more on human cognition and less on behaviorism which paved the way to believe more in cognitive theories and the student-centered learning procedures than that of behavior adoption alone. As mentioned earlier, reading is a complex skill to adopt that involves different stages so its competency is measured through productive responses in written form for example through comprehension exercises. The following research is also conducted to check the competency level of the learners at graduation level studying in university.

Schema theory reinforces the importance of prior knowledge to learning and the use of tools such as advance organizers and memory aids to bridge new knowledge to older knowledge stored in schema (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007).

"An English reading comprehension test was developed to determine the students' ability before and after learning. The readings in the test were developed by the researcher based on course objectives and students' proficiency level in terms of length, vocabulary and grammatical points. The test covered four levels of comprehension including 1) literal, which is what is actually stated; 2) interpretative or inferential, which is what is implied; 3) applied or evaluative, which is applied to concepts or ideas that go beyond what is discussed; and 4) creative, which allows the reader to create new ideas or new ways of expression with the use of whatever understanding he/she gets of the text (Tizon, 2013)".

In the given research, a conscious effort was done to check the proficiency level of the learners that was based on course objectives which also evaluated the reading proficiency of students, vocabulary and grammatical competency. The main four contents of the test contain: 1) literal, that is denotative; 2) interpretative, that is connotative; 3) applied, and that is to evaluate text in multiple dimensions; 4) creative that evokes a reader to create innovative ideas for the expression of written text as presented and created by Tizon (2013) for finding the comprehension level of the learners.

Many studies have shown that reading has positive effects on a variety of students' language skills and directly influences writing skills. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found a correlation between extensive reading and reading ability among children, and a study by Greenberg, Rodrigo, Berry, Brinck, and Joseph (2006) attained similar results with adult learners. Students spend between 11-13 years (6 years in primary school and between 5 – 7 years in secondary school) learning English, but a portion of students are still not able to master the language skills. There are various factors that could have contributed to this failure –learners' learning methods, motivation, perceptions, teachers' teaching methods and/or approach, syllabus and lesson plan, among others.

English is omnipresent in any curriculum taught at university, and some departments require its use more than others according to its field prerequisite. This is the case of the department of computer science where the specificity and the requirements of this particular discipline emphasize the importance of

the English language but with its own technical field terminologies. These demands and requirements have resulted in the expansion of one aspect of English language teaching, namely the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Needs analysis (also known as needs assessment) has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course, whether it be English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or general English course, and its centrality has been acknowledged by several scholars and authors (Munby, 1978; Richterich and Chancerel, 1987; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Johns, 1991; West, 1994; Allison et al. (1994); Seedhouse, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Iwai et al. 1999; HampLyons, 2001; Finney, 2002). Also, the importance of carrying out a needs analysis for developing EAP tests is emphasized by Fulcher (1999), McDonough (1984), and Carrol (1980, cited in Fulcher, 1999) within this approach, it is proposed that any ESP course should obey a strategy of predetermined objectives based on a needs analysis which aims to identify what students are requiring the foreign language for; which in turn helps to specify as closely as possible and what exactly students have to learn in that language. The present work aims at studying whether such an analysis of needs is present in the students at the Department of Computer Sciences; and in the affirmative, how far such needs are taken into consideration by the students in the learning of that language.

METHODOLOGY
Tests as Research Instruments measure the knowledge, proficiency, skill, feeling, intelligence or aptitude of an individual or group. It produces numerical results that can be identified, classified or evaluated by test takers (Gay, 1996). The researcher has observed the problems faced by the students of computer science at graduation level in Bahauddin Zakarya University, ranging an age group from 18 to 24 years who were selected from 1st to 5th semesters in the study year of 2015. A test has been designed as a research tool to determine the facts on a quantitative basis for finding the reading competency of the target population. *Random sampling technique* was adopted to select the students from each class as it was almost impossible to collect responses and calculate the results of each semester's enrolled students. The results have been generalized to the whole population as they were almost at the same level of proficiency even after being taught main strategies of reading skills in their early study tenure. Fifty students were selected randomly from the BSCS department to collect the data from the language test adapted from their own technical field. The test contained two questions that were designed to check the reading comprehension level. As to find the comprehension proficiency of a student, the sub-genres of reading skills observed through questions were: *skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive reading and inference*, where each question had to be solved in a given time slot as specified in IELTS Test criteria. Each question was carefully designed keeping in mind the skill to be focused and to be measured through response. Objective type test items (MCQs, True/false, Matching the column) formulation became prominent during the 1960s and led to changes in assessment practices. This type of objective testing put a constraint on how reading comprehension could be measured reliably. So, it was seriously realized at the beginning of the 1970s, that it is not possible to assess reading

comprehension through objective testing. Therefore, communicative competence and communicative language teaching laid emphasis on the suitability of integrative reading assessments (Grabe & Jiang, 2014). Later on, during the 1980s bulk of cognitive researches was conducted on reading abilities and identified several sub-skills of reading comprehension. To measure the student's capacity of comprehending a text is definitely a tough job as it is a very complex and critical observation by keeping the target audience in mind (Kendeou et al). Standardized assessment and classroom-based assessment are the primary focus of reading assessment during the recent era and have the greatest impact on test-takers (Grabe & Jiang, 2014). The researcher has chosen the selected sub-skills as these were focused and emphasized in the study occupancy for improving the reading skills of the target population.

Structure of Test

The test was based on two questions which were divided into sub-parts; the division is described according to item-level analysis.

Item-level analysis based on comprehension skills	
1.	Reading comprehension passage (MCQs)
i.	Skimming
ii.	Scanning
iii.	Inference
iv.	extensive reading
2.	Reading comprehension passage (to write responses by themselves)
a.	extensive reading
b.	skimming
c.	scanning
d.	inference

Findings and Results

Table: Results of Reading Comprehension

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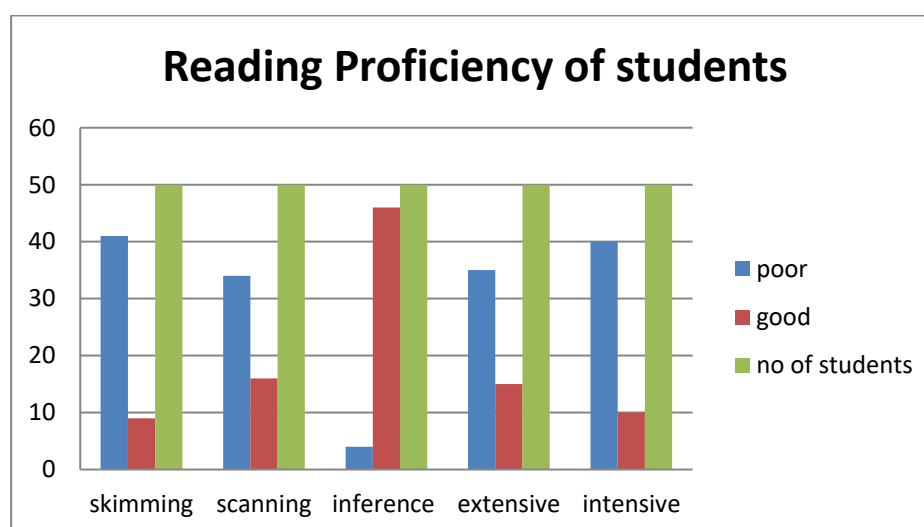
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS:
The final analysis is the combined result of all sub-parts of questions 1 and 2. The poor performance level indicates that more students fall under the inadequate competency of reading skills. The poor value contains all results below 60 marks for reading and good competence level means higher percentage in marks obtained more than 60%. The poor competence level is more than that of good or average marks obtained by the students so it means that more students fall into the incompetency level of reading skills and they need a special kind of treatment to improve their reading skills.

The reading problems identified here are only for the techniques of skimming scanning, inference and extensive skills (where writing problems are ignored). For both, the questions of reading in analyzing different sub-genres of reading, the mean of the two questions was taken to get an average of reading comprehension. The choices, developed on scale, were very poor (0-20) %, poor (21-40), inadequate (41-60) %, good (61-80) and very good (81-100) % to define individual student's mean for both questions. Individual analysis performance of each student identified that the weak area of performance was question number 1 which was a comprehension paragraph with multiple-choice questions (MCQs). And question number 2 was another comprehension paragraph, where the students were to respond in written form by themselves related to the given information. The writing errors of the students were ignored just to check the proficiency level of skimming, scanning, inference and extensive skills. That's why most of the students scored less in question number one as compared to question number two. After analyzing the results of individual performance, it was recommended to get the mean value of two questions in order to get one final value of each sub-genre of reading skills.

CONCLUSION
The main objective of the study was to identify and rectify the problems of reading skills faced by the students of the Department of Computer Science while dealing with English language texts by applying different strategies and activities inside the classroom. This is achieved

The results supported the fact that the students conceded low level of proficiency in reading skills than that is required to interpret the text in a quick way. The observation of the researchers added the fact that students re-read the given text several times for its understanding that affects their reading speed. It is suggested that conscious control of the common techniques may minimize the reading problems and readers can become more proficient in reading (Hudson, 2007). Comprehension occurs when the readers extract and integrate various pieces of information from text and combine it with what is already known. Koda (2010), therefore, suggests that explicit training on the effective use of knowledge during text comprehension be incorporated in foreign language reading instruction. Likewise, Anderson (2008) states that teachers should explicitly teach strategies to use when they do not understand any text. These reading strategies, which are commonly defined as consciously controlled processes by readers to solve reading problems, can make readers become more proficient (Hudson, 2007).

In response to the outcomes, the researcher is going to propose a few suggestions to the authoritative bodies and learners to get the maximum output from the class activities and to enhance and boost up their reading skills for their educational and professional careers.

The purposed lesson plan consists of objective-based learning skills which have three distinct divisions:

- Learning Strategies
- Teaching Methodology
- Lesson Plan

Learning Strategies

The students must have to focus on their learning strategies especially not considering reading as a burden but as pleasure and a duty to excel in their career. It is generally observed that twenty percent of students of every class are normally good readers, twenty to thirty percent are average and the rest sixty percent needs special attention towards reading skills. Reading is placed at the secondary level in language learning skills whose importance can be understood by the phrase when Francis Bacon says *reading maketh a ready man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man.* So, the end product of all skills is writing which can never be improved without intensive and extensive reading habits and the ultimate skill to excel in exams and in a professional career. Following are a few suggestions for the students to improve their reading skills in a quick way to score high grades smartly:

i. They should apply all reading strategies to the given text as quickly as possible

ii. Look for the main idea of the given text

iii. Try to read and anticipate what the text is about only by paying close attention to the striking features (bold letters, headings, sub-headings, italicized words or sentences…etc)

iv. Try to locate the possible meaning of the difficult vocabulary items rather than get indulged in the denotation of the term until it becomes important.

v. Look for specific information as required and leave out details if it is not important.

vi. Do not waste your time in daydreaming about the textual ideas and involve yourself with the writer's thoughts to get maximum understanding in the first reading.

vii. Re-read the text twice or thrice if you have ample time to interpret the whole thing in the given text.

viii. Increase your regression span to read quickly. Do not spend much time on a single thing as it may take off your attention from the text.

ix. Skim your book or given text and then scan your required information.

x. Pay close attention to abbreviations, acronyms and shorthand language words and memorize them for the future as it may decrease the reading speed.

Teaching Methodology

The traditional teaching method just announces the main topics and the general objectives to be attained after the completion of each course which unfortunately remained an untouched heavenly document not to be told to the learners at the university level. But now with the advent of computer-assisted learning, the teaching and learning methods have been changed with the requirement of learner's proficiency in the fieldwork. The employer needs professionals with high proficiency skills in relevant field that is only possible through new teaching methodologies to be adopted inside the classroom. An outline of every course must be revised with its sub-skills to be mastered and the outcomes to be achieved till the end of the respective semester. The teacher should design a course with objective-based learning that should produce related outcomes and should also focus on the required skills from the learners. Following is a proposed way to create a lesson plan for each subject in which clear objectives and outcomes are mentioned not only for teacher's guideline but also to show the roadmap to the learners for their future skills to be mastered in their relevant field.

Lesson Plan

For this reason, a sample of the lesson plan for the course of "Functional English" is attached that can be completed according to the requirement of each subject.

Objective-based Course Description

No of weeks	Topic of discussion	Objectives to be attained	Sub-skill to be emphasized	Activity	Outcome
1	Comprehension paragraph	Understanding and memorizing technical terms	Skimming, scanning	Write down the answers to the given text	The students would be able to locate the striking features and specific details of the text
2	Précis writing	To interpret the text, and to write precisely and correctly	Skimming and scanning + creative writing	Write down the summary of the given text.	The students would be able to understand and write correctly.
3	Paragraph paraphrasing	To enhance inference and identifying details of the text	Skimming, scanning and Inference	Write down the details of the paragraph	The students would be able to entail the information based on existing

					knowledge.

Reading skills can only be improved and developed while reading some text and remaining involved with books and other written materials. Reading skills are abilities that pertain to a person's capacity to read, comprehend, interpret and decode written language and texts. Exceptional reading skills can be highly beneficial to assimilating and responding to written communications like emails, messages, letters and other written messages. Using reading skills in the workplace can also be important for ensuring effective written communication, which can result in less miscommunication or misunderstanding of expectations.

Essential skills needed for reading comprehension include:

- Decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Inference
- Retention

Not only teachers play a key role to improve their students' skills but it seems obvious that this decoding skill needs more effort of an individual.

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