Reading Comprehension And Communicative Approach Through The Use Of A Technology Themed Text As An Esp Material

Lamyae ZHAOUI[1], Laila ZHAOUI[2]
[1]IbnTofail University, Kenitra Morocco,Lamyae.zhaoui@uit.ac.ma
[2]Université Ibn-Tofail. Kenitra, lailazhaoui@live.fr

Abstract:
This article presents the results of a study conducted among a group of 1st year BAC scientific stream students (1BAC2) at Lalla Khadija High school in Lalla Mimouna, Kenitra Morocco to analyze the importance of using reading through English for specific purposes (ESP) materials under the criteria of the communicative approach. The aim of this study is to present the usefulness of the communicative approach in teaching comprehension texts for intermediate students and to promote their use of English for specific purposes to discuss and debate Technology themed topics. It also provides them with a set of vocabulary items that are targeted for their field of study which will help them increase their foreign language acquisition.
Keywords:English for specific purposes(ESP) ; Technology themed texts ;Reading comprehension; The communicative approach.

Résumé:
    Cet article présente les résultats d'une étude au profit d'une classe de la 1ère bac scientifique (1BAC 2) au lycée Lalla Khadija à Lalla Mimouna province de Kenitra Maroc. Cette recherche de terrain vise à analyser l'importance du recours à la lecture en anglais sur objectif spécifique (AOS) et cela dans le cadre d'une approche communicative. Le but de cette enquête est de mettre en exergue l'utilité de l'approche communicative en compréhension des textes pour Les apprenants ayant un niveau intermédiaire pour améliorer leur usage de l'anglais sur objectif spécifique afin de débattre et s'exprimer à propos de sujets et thèmes se rapportant à la technologie. Cela leur permet aussi d'enrichir leur vocabulaire et leur savoir dans le but de maitriser davantage la langue étrangère et mieux s'en servir.
Mots-clés:Anglais sur objectif spécifique(AOS); les textes de technologie; la lecture compréhension; l'approche communicative.

_____
*Lamyae ZHAOUI**mail:**Lamyae.zhaoui@uit.ac.ma____*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, students around the world learn English due to its popularity and high demand. It is portrayed as a passport to better education and employment opportunities. Its spread provides unlimited access to the modern world of science, information and communications technology (ICT), money, power, international communication, and intercultural understanding as well as entertainment and many more fields (British council 2013).

At the end of their studies, students are expected to possess a strong understanding of the English language to be able to build a profile fit for the work environment. In a world of specializations, people are experts in different fields of knowledge; the best way to obtain such knowledge is through being familiar with different languages, especially English because it is one of the most commonly used languages around the world.

About this issue, according to Butler-Pascoe (2009) "Today with the emergence of English as the prominent language in our increasingly technological and global society, the study of ESP has assumed a sense of urgency, especially in countries that are attempting to restructure the manner in which students learn and perform English."As this statement suggests, English for specific purposes is key to introducing an effective and specific approach to teaching. It provides students with just the amount of vocabulary they need to build an inventory of specialized words to help them better communicate in their fields of interest.

In this article, the researcher only focuses on reading comprehension, from a communicative approach, as a primary skill in the foreign language acquisition process since it motivates students to find more information of interest.

This study is conducted to analyze the change the communicative approach brings to teaching (ESP) texts in the field of technology, and its impact on students' discussions and debating performances. It is done through the exploitation of these two questions: to what extent does the communicative approach help in teaching reading comprehension? How does reading about topics of technology contribute to students' ability to debate and discuss

such topics? Results were collected through implementing a lesson plan and seeing how well students reacted to it.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW:

To build a strong foundation for our paper, the author first must clarify the following terms:

1.1) English for specific purposes (ESP):

ESP is based on designing courses to meet the learners' needs (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). It was first introduced in the 1960s as a result of pressing worldwide demands for fast-paced language training in occupations and professional settings (Robinson 1991).As its name entails, English for specific purposes can be defined in terms of "purposes" and the "specificity" of the purposes for which teaching of English is felt necessary (Salmani Nodoushan, 2020, pp. 135-146). In other words, it provides a learner-centered approach in which learners' needs are the number one priority rather than focusing on the language per se.

Since the purpose relatively means a targeted analysis of the learner needs, needs analysis is considered as a pillar of ESP.Teaching an ESP class or developing an ESP syllabus andcourse design requires a deep understanding of the learners' needs and an expertise in the subject matter. (John & Dudley Evans, 1991, pp. 297-314)

The main focus of this study is to look at ESP text materials as a fruitful source that will help students gain a specific understanding of the English language, and help them better face the world in a productive way (gatehouse 2001). Students are in dire need of personalized materials that would cater for their specific needs and interests.

1.2)Technology themed texts:

The richness and variety in written texts offers various benefits for language teaching and learning contexts. This structure of texts could lead to successful learning opportunities (Yıldız 2015) a text is anything that you see, interpret, and assign meaning to. Many students, the majority of their time is spent dealing with texts in all shapes and sizes and in different languages and subjects.

Among the different existing texts, rises a very interesting theme; Technology. This specific type can be described as an informative piece of writing that provides information for the students. The purpose of such texts is to discuss and educate students about a technological problem or phenomenon. It pushes them to build a strong base of background knowledge which will enable them to construct arguments and critique others' reasoning to engage in reasonable debate using evidence to back a position.

The main area of focus in this study is a technological text's impact on scientific students, and how it helps them collect a high density of vocabulary that is unfamiliar or that has specific technical meanings that differ from conversational ones which leads to future successful learning and work opportunities.

1.3)   Reading comprehension:

Reading comprehension refers to the process of making meaning from text. It aims at understanding what is described in the text rather than obtaining single isolated meanings from words or sentences. It is a flexible and on-going cognitive and constructive process (Woolley 2011). This skill relies on two interconnected abilities; word reading (decoding words written on a page) and language comprehension (understand the meaning of said words). While reading, students develop a mental model which is a mental representation of the actual text discourse. As they read, students connect ideas to their background knowledge to infer the meaning. They also derive meaning from context, or from similar words. In building coherent mental representations readers must also process meaning in literal, inferential, and problem-solving levels of thinking. For these operations to be effective the reader must set goals, monitor meaning and reflect upon their own understanding (Cain and Oakhill 2007).

1.4)   The Communicative approach to reading comprehension:

Communicative language teaching originated historically from the dissatisfaction of linguists to the traditional methods which emphasis on grammar (Richard, 2005, pp. 22-26). It rose a kind of enthusiasm and excitement when it first appeared in the 1970s.

This approach is developed in response to the growing demand for a language curriculum that would enable learners to use the second language in real life situations.It is ever known that there are two assumptions that underline the approach, firstly, the students are concerned in the classroom with language use, not language knowledge and secondly is a view that the student learn language most effectively by practicing it in realistic situation (Littelwood & William, 1981, p. 94)

The communicative approach prepares students to be confident communicators for different real-life contexts through repetitive oral practices and student-student interaction and cooperative, collaborative tasks. It gives them the opportunity to express their own individuality in classroom. It also helps them to integrate the foreign language with their own personality and thus more emotionally secure with it.

When talking about the communicative approach, it is hardly ever thought of as the main skill of study. It is often linked with speaking. But teachers nowadays are using this approach to make reading activities more interactive and enjoyable. The teacher's role as co-communicator places him or her on an equal basis with the students. This helps to break down tension and barriers between them. They are then giving their students the chance to build their own knowledge by being free of any traditional restrictions.

2. METHODS:

2.1. Participants:

30 first year baccalaureate scientific stream students at the Lalla Khadija high school in LallaMimouna, Kenitra Morocco were selected to participate in this study. The researcher informed the students about the objective of this research to get them motivated to actively participate in its making. The results of this study were collected through the implementation of a lesson plan. The session was held on Saturday, January 22nd 2022 from (10am to 11am).

2.2 Test:

(*APPENDIX)*

2.4 Reflection:

1. ***As the researcher reflects on the lesson, what did they do to actively engage students?***
   - While teaching the lesson, the majority of students were motivated to participate and share their ideas with their peers. Choosing activities such as (Jigsaw-Picture eliciting- debates) created a supportive classroom environment where students felt calm and reassured.

2. ***Did the students learn what the researcher had intended? Were their instructional goals and objectives met?***
   - Students were improving as the lesson progressed. Their phrasing got better by the end of class. They were able to understand the text's general message and use that as a tool to form arguments.
   - There were a few obstacles hindering their learning process such as falling back to L1 when they do not know a word or a phrase.
   - The researcher made sure to help by providing them with the vocabulary items they needed in order to make them feel engaged and confident.

3. ***To what extent did the classroom environment contribute to student learning? Were the classroom management strategies effective?***
   - Before starting the lesson, the researcher made sure to remind students of the previously made code of conduct, and the importance of respect in class. Students were made aware that our lesson is based solely on collaboration and support. All students responded in a very positive attitude which made the bond of respect grow stronger between all members of the classroom.

4. ***What should've been considered or done differently?***
   - Time constraint was the number one obstacle in the lesson. Students were enjoying every activity but having teaching it in 1h was not enough. More time should have certainly been allotted.
   - The classroom was not big enough for students to move freely in the Jigsaw activity. Next time this lesson will be done in a bigger room.

2.5 Pedagogical implications:

While planning the lesson, teachers who choose to adopt the communicative approach should bear in mind the following points:

- Anxiety, low self-esteem and the lack of motivation can push students to stop participating and interacting in the classroom. That is why; a teacher should create a safe environment where students would feel safe and welcomed.
- Allowing enough time for everyone to contribute creates a sense of peace which encourages the slower students to make their voices heard.
- Teacher talk has to change to allow students to talk and participate more as it is seen as a key to improve classroom learning (Eke & Lee, 2009). Teachers in this case, should resort to flipped classroom, where students are given the opportunity to prepare for their lessons ahead of time.

Conclusion:

This research focused on the importance of integrating the scientific text in students' curriculum, and its impact on their performance inside the classroom. It motivated students to investigate information related to their own needs in foreign countries, which is useful for their future lives as professionals. Students of science and technology must learn specific information about their field which will help them develop their professional profiles, and make them fit for the work environment.

Furthermore, this research was a great opportunity for students to become familiar with new reading techniques and strategies. Students learned to be more collaborative and helpful while working in groups. They felt responsible of their own learning process. The teacher is no longer the only knowledgeable figure inside the classroom. Students felt independent in the making of their own decisions and learning.

When doing so, students started to form a different opinion when thinking about the school, and the classroom. They consider them now as a safe environment made for teaching and learning where all opinions are accepted and tolerated. Students felt safe when debating, no one was judging their ideas or criticizing them. This encouraged them to become more creative, open and expressive.

All in all, as a recommendation for future teachers and researchers, the main focus should always be on students and their interests when talking about delivering new information while teaching. Teachers should put into consideration their students' ambitions and dreams to prepare them accordingly for their designated professional career.

References:

Anthony, L. (1997). Genre analysis and it applications for ESP materials.*Paper presented at MA TEFL Summer Seminar of the Birmingham University, Hiroshima, Japan.*

Anthony, L. (2007, October). The teacher as student in ESP course design. Keynote address presented at the 2007 *International Symposium on ESP & Its Applications in Nursing and Medical English Education, Fooyin University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.*

Burns, A. (2003). Collaborative action research for English language teachers. *Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.*

Butler-Pascoe, M. E. (2009, June). English for specific purposes (ESP), innovation, and technology. *English Education and ESP, 1-15*

Gary Woolley. (2011) *Springer Science & Business Media, Education* - 259 pages

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes. *Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.*

Johns, A. M., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1991). English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 297-314.

Kuhn, M. R., & Stahl, S. A**.** (2003). Fluency: A review of developmental and remedial Practices.*Journal of Educational Psychology, 95, 3-2*

Littlewood, W., & William, L. (1981). Communicative language teaching*: An introduction. Cambridge university press.*

Nunan, D. (1987). Communicative language teaching: Making it work. *ELT journal, 41(2), 136-145.*

Revell, J., &Flavell, R. H. (1979). Teaching techniques for communicative English. Macmillan.

Richards, J. C. (2005). Communicative language teaching today (pp. 22-26). *Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.*

SalmaniNodoushan, M. A. (2020a). Language assessment: Lessons learnt from the existing literature. *International Journal of Language Studies*, 14(2), 135-146.

APPENDIX:

The Test:

Date: Saturday, January 22nd 2022	Level: 1st year Bac, Science 2	Unit: 3 (Media) (Gateway to English)	
Lesson Type: reading comprehension **Skill emphasized:** Speaking	**Topic:** Technology	**Duration:** 55 mins	
Objectives: *by the end of the lesson, students will be able to:* Skim through the text to get the main idea Scan the text for specific information Use the vocabulary presented in the text to form an opinion and discuss matters related to technology and the internet.			
Instructional aids, materials or tools needed: Pictures, whiteboard, handouts.			

Lesson Plan:				
Stages:	**Content:**	**Techniques & Activities:**	**Duration:**	**Mode of work:**
Warm- up:	● T greets Ss and asks them some icebreaking questions. ● T activates students' schemata about mass media related vocabulary.	WH- Questions Reviewing	5mins	T-Ss
Pre- reading stage:	● T divides students into groups of 4 and gives each group a picture.(see appendix)	Discussing Eliciting	10mins	Group work

	● Ss discuss with their groups the topic of each picture. ● T asks the representative of each group to give the topic of their picture. ● T writes Ss predictions on the board.			
While-Reading stage:	● **1st Reading:** ● In groups, Ss silently skim through the text to check their predictions. ● T asks students to underline any difficult words and explains them. ● **2nd Reading:** ● Each group is assigned a paragraph. ● Ss read each paragraph for its main idea. ● Ss choose from a provided list the most convenient title for each paragraph. ● Ss leave their home groups to discuss their findings with another group with a different assigned paragraph. ● **3rd Reading:** ● Ss read the text again and do exercise (A and B see appendix).	Silent reading Skimming Jigsaw Reading True or False WH- Questions	25mins	Group work T-Ss Group work Pair work Individ

	● Ss write their answers on the board. ● Whole class correction and feedback.			ual work
Post-Reading stage:	● T asks students to form two large groups ● One group agrees that the internet is beneficial and the other disagrees. ● T provides Ss with some debate ground rules. ● Ss share their arguments orally. ● T provides feedback.	Debate/Discussion	15mins	Group work

READING COMPREHENSION TEXT:
INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

Almost everyone with or without a computer is aware of the latest technological revolution destined to change forever the way in which humans communicate, namely, the Information Superhighway, best exemplified by the ubiquitous Internet. Already, millions of people around the world are linked by computer simply by having a modem and an address on the 'Net', in much the same way that owning a telephone links us to almost anyone who pays a phone bill. In fact, since the computer connections are made via the phone line, the Internet can be seen in which direction the Information Superhighway is headed, but many believe it is the educational hope of the future. The World Wide Web, an enormous collection of Internet addresses or sites, all of which can be accessed for information, has been mainly responsible for the increase in interest in the Internet in the 1990s. Before the World Wide Web, the 'Net' was comparable to an integrated collection of computerized typewriters, but the introduction of the 'Web' in 1990 allowed not only text links to be made but also graphs, images and even video.

A Web site consists of a 'home page', the first screen of a particular site on the computer to which you are connected, from where access can be had to other computers all over the world. This is achieved by a process called 'hypertext'. By clicking with a mouse device on various parts of the screen, a person connected to the 'Net' can go traveling, or 'surfing' through a web of pages to locate whatever information is required. Anyone can set up a site; promoting your club, your institution, your company's products or simply yourself, is what the Web and the Internet is all about. And what is more, information on the Internet is not owned or controlled by any one organization. It is, perhaps, true to say that no-one and therefore everyone owns the 'Net'. Because of the relative freedom of access to information, the Internet has often been criticized by the media as a potentially hazardous tool in the hands of young computer users. This perception has proved to be largely false however, and the vast majority of

users both young and old get connected with the Internet for the dual purposes for which it was intended – discovery and delight.

Unit 1: the Information Superhighway. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2022, from https://zavantag.com/docs/427/index-2022997.html

Pictures used in 1st reading:

3rd Reading Questions:

A) ARE THESE SENTENCES TRUE OR FALSE? *Justify.*

1- Everyone is aware of the Information Superhighway.

2- Using the Internet costs the owner of a telephone extra money.

3- Internet computer connections are made by using telephone lines.

4- The World Wide Web is a network of computerized typewriters.

5- The process called 'hypertext' requires the use of a mouse device.

6-The latest technological revolution will change the way humans communicate.

B) ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1) Name the two stated purposes for which the Internet was created:

2) According to the passage, owning a telephone links us to whom?

3) According to the author, the Internet since 1990 can be thought of as:

4) The process called 'hypertext' requires the use of a certain device. What is it?

5) What do companies advertise on the Internet?

6) According to the passage, who does the Internet belong to?