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must also search for specific information and formulate questions (Grabe, 1991).

It was mentioned earlier that many authors claimed an improvement in reading comprehension and reading rate of students. Also, it was established that scanning and skimming do not stand for a full reading comprehension. Scanning can reduce the time of reading, when the purpose of reading is to find some information which can be extracted directly from the text. As a matter of fact, many reading texts are nothing more than some information. For example, academic and scientific texts of journals and encyclopedias, contain some information and facts about a given subject. Scanning techniques can help the reader to find his needed information out of a large body a materials. Williams (1983) says that scanning serves the important purpose of giving the reader a content preview.

Previously, a lot of literature has been allocated to schemata and background knowledge. Skimming, which has the function of giving the reader a preview of the whole text, can activate the readers' background knowledge. Skimming can make ready the reader to encounter the forthcoming materials. It may have a facilitating effect if the reader is already familiar with the concept expressed in the text, that is, if the informatin fits into readers' preexisting knowledge, he can continue reading with more confidence and with higher reading rates. If it is not the case, the reader has to pay more attention or resort to some other strategies to extract meaning from the text.

in fact, higher reading rates are closely related to the amount of comprehension. Broughton et al. (1980) have more elaborated on the concept as follows:

Obviously, the rate at which material may be covered becomes slower as depth and detail of understanding increase, but there are a number of other factors which enter here. One of these may be the clarity of the text itself. Another factor is the extent to which the content of a text is already familiar to the reader. Nevertheless it is possible to develope reading speed, and efficient reading involves high reading speeds with high levels of comprehension (p. 93).

Similarly, Bowen et al. (1992) assert that, "slow readers do in fact make more mistakes than faster readers. Faster readers have the advantage of having to absorb fewer meanings, doing less physical work, and having a supportive rhythm and follow of the language" (p.244).

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enjoyment of text" (p.392). Dubin and Byina (1991) maintain that, "a rate of 200 words per minute would appear to be the absolute minimum in order to read with full comprehension" (p.198). Jensen (1986) recommends that second language readers seek to "approximate native speakers reading rates and comprehension levels in order to keep up with classmates" and suggest that 300 words per minute is the optimal rate (p. 106). This rate is supported by Nuttall (1996) who claim that, "for an L1 speaker of English of about average education and intelligence... the reading rate is about 300 words per minute (p.56, cited in Anderson, 1999).

Raygor and Schick (1970) suggest the following guidelines for appropriate reading in various circumstances:

1. When reading recreationally - a light novel, a short story, ... –your reading rate should be 500 words per minute and more.

2. When reading fiction with some focus on the characterization and when reading nonfiction to find the main ideas, an adequate reading rate is 350 to 500 words per minute.

3. When reading complex fiction with the intent of analyzing the plot or determining more subtle elements of characterization, or when reading nonfiction to note details or determine relationship among ideas, a reading rate of 250 to 350 words per minute is suggested.

4. When reading highly technical material, when attempting to criticize the merit of what you are reading, or when reading to solve a problem or follow directions, a reading rate as slow as 100 to 250 words per minute is appropriate. (cited in Saif, 1995, p. 86).

On the other hand, Carver (1990) notes that, "the concept of reading rate has been applied to a wide range of processes, all of which are called reading" (p.12). He continues that in a reading process like **scanning**, the aim may be to find a certain topic or a target word; once it is found, the process in immediately terminated. Carver (1990) has mentioned five basic reading processes to be used in reading rate research: **scanning**, **skimming**, **rauding**, **learning**, and **memorizing**. It should be noted that, according to Carver (1990), rauding is a reading process in which "an individual is looking at each consecutive word of a prose passage in order to comprehend the complete thought contained in each sentence" (p.15). He claims that, in the scanning process, the typical college student's reading rate is 600 words per minute. He also maintains that college students typically need to average about 450 words per minute to execute a skimming process successfully. It should be mentioned that these high speed reading rates, according to Carver (1990), might be gained only when individuals correctly identify a target word in a passage or correctly recognize an anomalous word in a given text in scanning and skimming respectively. As a matter of fact, no special comprehension is involved in Carver's account of scanning and skimming; only some sort of identification time measure has been considered.

Scanning, Skimming and Reading Rate

scanning and skimming are not the only reading strategies that readers employ; rather they use a range of strategies in order to read efficiently. This includes such strategies as adjusting the reading speed, skimming ahead, scanning, previewing titles, headings, pictures, and text structure information, etc. The readers

They give the example of finding the date of Oscar Wilde's death out of a related passage, claiming that the readers' purpose. Akbari and Mirhassani (1998) define skimming as, "reading quickly in order to get the gist of the text and to spot relevant bits to come back to later. You ignore the details and examples" (p. 56).

Smith and Smith (1990) have more elaborated on **Key words**, and have distinguished between key words and **key terms**. They contend that, Sometimes we are not sure of the exact key word we are looking for. For instance, an example of this is when we are trying to find the date when a man was born or a process was discovered. In situations like this, we cannot expect to have an exact date in our mind when we look for the key word. The exact word we called the **key word**, the type of word we shall call the key term (p. 57).

Sadeghi and Pourgive (1996) numerate the usefulness of skimming as (a) sampling from a long passage to see what the writer is up to, or what major points he is trying to make, (b) helping in previewing of a chapter to get the main idea(s) in mind before talking the more exhaustive sectionby-section study, (c) helping to browse through book selections to decide if they contain what you want, (d) helping to be selective of what and other journalistic formats (p.195).

They also recognize the usefulness of scanning as: (a) when the reader knows exactly what type of infomation he needs but must look through large reference volumes to find it, (b) helping the reader to answer specific questions and refer back to clarify specific points he or she might have missed in an earlier reading (p.195).

Many authors have recognized the usefulness of skimming and scanning in reading comprehension exam settings such as TOEFL. (Bailey et al., 1991 Broukal & Nolan - Woods, 1991; Phillips, 1989. Gear, 1993; Davy & Davy, 1984).

Bailey et al. (1991) suggest those who want to take the TOEFL test go through the following essential strategies to improve their reading skills and comprehension:

1. Skim the passage and the questions.
2. Read the passage.
3. Scan to answer questions (p. 215).

Bailey et al. imply that, "we can understand a passage better if we know the general subject it will discuss before we read it" (p.215).

Reading Rate

Reading rate has been of great interest to researchers at least as long ago as Huey (1908) who considered reading rate to be "... of the greatest important practically and pedagogically..." (p.170, cited in Carver, 1990, p.3).

Reading rate of reading speed is defined as the speed at which one reads a text. It is usuall measured as words per minute, i.e., it is calculated by dividing the total number of the words in a passage by the minutes it takes one to read a passage.

Reading rate is highly dependent on the type of material and the purpose of reading. There are conflicting data regarding the optimal reading rate. Higgins and Wallace (1989) suggest that 180 words per minute "may be a threshold between immature and mature reading and that a speed below this is too slow for efficient comprehension or for the

While the way of reading depends on the type of materials to be read and also the reader's own purpose.

As matter of fact, Grellet (1981) suggests that scanning and skimming techniques be used to preview reading material, predict what the selection is about, and develop expectations about the content of the text.

Apps (1990) makes the following suggestions for previewing nonfiction books, as well as textbooks. These suggestions implicitly refer to **skimming**: turning to the title page, reading the author's preface or introduction, examining the table of the contents, checking the bibliography, reading the publisher's statement on the backcover or jacket, reading 'about the auther' and selecting one or two chapters that seem central to the main topic. Saif (1995) comments that when you are in search or reference material for conducting a research project, only the information in some chapters might suffice for your purpose.

Scanning, on the other hand, is a searching technique is which the reader tries to find answers to his or her questions in mind. Therefore, the reader misses many details in the material, because scanning involves not reading every word in the text. Saif (1995) makes the following suggestions for using the technique of scanning:

a. *Fix your question in mind.*

b. *Run your eyes as fast as possible down the pages or columns.*

c. *Disregard the information not related to your purpose, even if it is interesting to you.*

d. *If you are scanning narrow columns, for example, those of newspaper width, run your eyes down the center of the column.*

e. *Use headings, indentations, and italicized words, since they often give you clues about where the information you are seeking is located.*

f. *Try not a fall into the trap of reading every word. If so, stop and start over again, giving yourself a new 'fix' on the question you want to answer (p. 91).*

Yorkey (1970) does not distinguish between skimming and scanning. He assigns two purposes for skimming: "(1) to locate a specific word, fact, or idea quickly; and (2) to get a rapid, general impression of the material" (p. 113). In describing the first kind of skimming, which is usually referred to as scanning nowadays, Yorkey (1970) says, "When you look for a telephone number,..., you are skimming." He continues, "as you skim your eyes over a page or down a column, keep in mind the specific information you are looking for." (pp. 113-114).

Yorkey (1970) as for the second application of skimming continues, "For skimming of this kind, you ignore all details and look instead for the main ideas. You use this king of skimming when you first survey a chapter in textbook, or when you want to determine whether an article contains new or useful information about a topic you are interested in (p. 117).

Akbari and Mirhassani (1998), elaborating on the importance of scanning and skimming for Iranian students, contend that, "reading a text word for word is a common mistake of almost all Iranian students. They believe that if they miss a word, then their understanding of a text will be defective." (p. 54). They also maintain that careful reading of a text in many occasions, is nothing more than a waste of time.

first few pages of a novel to ascertain if initial reaction was correct" (p. 220).

According to Grellet (1981), "reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it" (p. 7). For him, skimming serves as an intermediate level between developing hypotheses and confirmation or revision of those hypotheses and guesses. This means that one does not read all the sentences in the same way, but one relies on a number of words, or 'cues' to get an idea of what kind of sentence (e.g. and example, an explanation) is likely to follow. The purpose of **skimming** is

not necessarily getting an idea of a content of a text. "We may want to ascertain the structure of the passage, or the tone of the writer" (Grellet, 1981, p. 82).

Saif (1995) numerates several misconceptions that readers might have about reading. Among these misconceptions, two of them serve our purpose: first, "some readers - especially students - believe when they read something, they should read every word" (p. 79). This causes readers face the problem of finding enough time to read all their textbooks from cover to cover. Second, "readers think that all texts should be read the same way" (p. 79).

word - formation, understand relations within the sentence, and link sentences and ideas. He also suggests using of timed - reading to improve students' speed reading. He further offers the teaching of skills of predicting, previewing, scanning, and skimming to make students more confident and efficient readers.

Chastain (1988) has classified teaching reading into three stages as follows:

1. Prereading, the purpose of which is to motivate and prepare the students to be able to read.

2. Reading the assignment, in which, the students receive some material as homework; the class time is regarded more valuable and is reserved for communication practice that students cannot get out of class. It is important, at this stage, that teachers teach the students how to tackle their readings. Sanacore (1985) has enumerated the techniques that teachers have to convey to their students as follows:

(a) Teach students to generate questions as they read. (b) Teach students to create story-specific questions from schema-general questions. (c) Teach students to monitor and resolve blocks to comprehension. (d) guide them to use strategies that increase their comprehension and retrieval of information, such as the SQ3R Process which consist of survey, question, read, recite, and review. (e) Teach students to learn and recall valuable information by adhering to the text structure. (pp. 56-58, cited in Chastain, 1988, p. 227).

3. Postreading, whose purpose is to clarify the meaning of any unclear passage and their relationship to the author's overall message by focusing on meaning without calling students attention to grammar an vocabulary, excepts as a last-resort. Further, students should be encouraged to ask questions at this stage.

Scanning and Skimming

"Understanding written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible" (Grellet, 1981, p. 3). For example, we may use varying reading strategies when reading newspaper adds to see if there is an advertisement for a particular kind of apartment and when carefully reading an article in a scientific journal. Yet locating the relevant advertisement in the newspaper and comprehending the new information contained in the article shows that the reading purpose in each case has been successfully fulfilled. In the first case, the reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what he or she is looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more detailed comprehension is necessary.

Regarding the aforementioned materials, Grellet (1981) suggests that some elements such as the text-types one usually come across, the main reasons for reading, and the main ways of reading be taken into consideration.

Indeed, Grellet (1981), regarding the ways of reading, introduces **skimming, scanning, extensive reading** and **intensive reading** as four main reading strategies. He explains that, "these different ways of reading are not mutually exclusive. For example, one often skims through a passage to see what it is about before deciding whether it is worth scanning a particular paragraph for the information one is looking for" (p. 4).

Chastain (1988), in the same manner, explains that, "if the readers are not entirely convinced that the contents are worthwhile or interesting, they may skim the article for the

Issues on Reading Comprehension
Part Three

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Teaching and Learning Reading

Having viewed reading comprehension as a communicative process, Chastain (1988) numerates several important conclusions:

Students, do not need to know all the vocabulary and grammar to comprehend a major portion of the text and recreate the author's meaning. ...They can learn reading strategies that enable them to read at much higher levels of proficiency. Also, teachers can initiate activities that heighten students' motivation and increase their level of comprehension (pp. 223-224).

Loew (1984) offers practical advice for teaching reading skills. He urges language teachers to encourage students to guess, to tolerate ambiguity, to link ideas, to paraphrase, and to summarize so that they stop dwelling on isolated words often not vital to comprehension (cited in Chastain, 1988, p. 224).

Grellet (1981) introduces useful reading practice techniques such as, helping students to make inference through context and through