The Sources and Types of Reading Miscues Produced by 6th Grade Students at Public Schools in Jordan

Ahmed Al-Oliemat[1], Ahmad Al-Khatatneh[2], Eissa Al Khotaba[3]

1. Department of Modern Languages, Alalbayt university, Jordan
2. Department of English Language and Literature, Mu'tah University, Jordan, P.O. BOX 7
[1]E-mail: a_oliemat@hotmail.com, [2]E-mail: a.khataneh@livecom, [3]E-mail:alkhotabaeissa@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study was conducted to explore the types and sources of reading errors produced by 6th grade students at Jawza governmental secondary school at Al-Karak directorate of education. The sample of the study consists of 20 students. The result of the study showed that students produced different types of reading miscues. This included reading omission, repetition, mispronunciation, pausing and word by word reading categories. In light of these results, the study provides several pedagogical implications that could hopefully used by teachers to improve their student reading .The study recommends that further future researches study be conducted in this field to investigate this area .

Keywords: Reading Miscues, Omission, Repetition, Pausing and Mispronunciation.

1.1 Introduction

English teaching technique especially for reading skills in foreign language (EFL) settings has undergone various stages of development in the last few decades. In the process of its development, certain methodologies of reading comprehension were assumed to be the most successful at the various stages of development (Al Khotaba, 2013). Language teachers should teach their students to read carefully and connectively when using English as a foreign language. The mastery of listening skill is probably one of the most complicated skills in any of the languages in the world in which all the languge skills are interrelated to each other, with awareness that each language has its own styles and means of reading skill. In other words, both teachers and learners of English language as a foreign language should not consider a reading text as merely utterances and words arranged put together to create a reading text (Al Khuli, 2000).

Reading is a very complex activity which is difficult to master by school students. So learners may commit different types of errors. These errors may provide insights on the process of second language acquisition. Corder (1981) explained that these errors are significant because they may provide useful clues to understand the process of second language acquisition. Also, it may provide the learner and teacher insight about learner progress in learning the language. The teacher may realize the area in which learner encounter more difficulties and employ the best techniques to solve these difficulties.

Goodman (1972) argued that many of English language teachers look at reading as a careful exact process. Teachers make their students learn reading carefully without committing mistakes and attaching words in isolation. Teacher ignored what is important in reading. They concentrate on the phonological aspects of reading and forget that the main function of reading is to understand what you are reading. For example a Pakistani can sound out the "Qur'an" correctly because Urdu uses Arabic script. However, we do not consider them readers of Arabic unless they understand what they read in Arabic. Proficiency in reading is more than sounding out words and sentences correctly. Hence, this study concentrates on the oral errors of students (Al-Khatib and Sabbah, 2008). Thus, learning EFL in which all the skills are required has become increasingly demanded because of the availability of many sources that help people learn it very easily, such as the Internet, books and educational institution which are available around the world.

Similarly, the goal of the present research is to contribute to this development. In addition, this research is needed in the Jordanian learning situation where students face problems in producing connected reading. Reading by EFL students, regarded as the most difficult issue that EFL students in Jordan face when attempting to comprehend and read a written text, is often overlooked in EFL reading classes (Al Natsheh, 2007). Traditional teaching reading techniques in EFL classes have far too many disadvantages. In fact, connected reading in an EFL context provides a critical instructional chance for student readers and offers an appropriate avenue to produce reading without any miscues or errors that area rarely possible in the day-to-day operations of class through using conventional methods of teaching reading (Al Omari, 2004). Students of English in Jordan are expected to achieve proficiency in the main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

In a Jordanian EFL reading context, there is generally no variation and the employment of new approaches in teaching reading to EFL students. Teachers more often look at a reading text as a process without referring to the sources and types of reading miscues and correcting every single error they observe in their reading. This in fact is taken as time – consuming and effort intensive. Interestingly, however, their efforts are not appreciated or valued, for students still

replicate their previous reading miscues (Al-Rabee, 2004). That is, EFL students in Jordan encounter many difficulties in all language main skills. As that reading is the cornerstone for all learning, the researcher concentrated on their reading because "a good reader is a good learner". Hence, he attempted to analyze and evaluate their reading through observing their readings and conducting a library research. Therefore, all of the examples in this paper are real reading miscues produced by primary public schools students in southern Jordan at Jawza Primary School in AL Karak Directorate of Education.

1.2 Review of Literature

Researchers have shown interest in analyzing errors because they have believed that errors may contain valuable information of the strategies that are employed by learner to acquire a language. A lot of these studies concentrated on reading problems and errors. There are many reasons may cause reading difficulties. Goodman (1972) stated that the letter sound correspondence in English in not always consistent. For example words such as (heart) and (read) have the same spelling letter but their pronunciation is different. Another reason is that there is phonological interference from native language, for instance Arabic does not have/p/sound while English does. This causes difficulty for Arabic learners of English to pronounce word like "paper" and spell it as /b/.

Baker (1980) said that English is not phonetic language. There is a mismatch between the graphemic units. According to Al Khuli (1999) reading is complex activity that involves many elements each of which may be a source of problem for readers: imperfect fit, Arabic English graphic contrast, vocabulary, grammar and content. Miller and Yochum (1991) mentioned that the reading difficulties students face may be related to inaccurate knowledge of the reading process. Also, past literature shows that the differences between languages can cause a problem for foreign learners. Avery and Ehrlich (1987) stated that the big number of English vowels in comparison with that in other languages is a problem. Baker (1980) stated that Learning to read will be easier if the language is written as it sound.

Rutherford (1975) mentioned in his study that there are some aspects that cause difficulty in the reading and pronunciation of English: i). lack of one to one correspondence between speech sounds and letters, ii). some of the letters of English alphabet can represent more than one sound such as /t/ in "city" and "nation", iii). the differences between lax and tense vowels and errors should be identified and described to understand the process of reading. There are many models for the analysis of errors which is different from researcher to another. Nickel (1971) argues that in analyzing errors, the nature and the source of these errors should be explained. According to Corder (1974), the errors analysis should include; corpus of language is selected, the errors in corpus are identified, the errors are classified and the errors are explained.

In this study, the researcher will follow Corder (1974) method that is mentioned above in analyzing reading errors made by the students of the study. The importance of exploring reading errors that students make is that it may help teachers to work with their students more productively and recognize the areas in which students produce these mistakes. If the teacher identifies and recognizes the areas in which they produce these errors, they will be able to use their techniques to overcome their student's difficulties.

1.3 The Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to explore errors produced by 6th grade students at Jawza Secondary school at Al-Karak directorate of education in order to investigate their nature and source. The researcher addresses the following objectives:

- To identify reading errors made by students
- To classify reading into specific categories
- To analyze these errors and find the source of them
- To provide specific recommendation that may help in solving these errors

If teachers identify and recognize the areas in which students produces errors, they may manage to use their own techniques to overcome their students difficulties and improve their readiness ability. The researcher's experience as teacher of English as a foreign language at the governmental schools in Jordan, led him to believe that English as a Foreign language students in Jordan, face difficulties in reading English. By coding and marking the errors that are produced by students, they can be specified into: omission, mispronunciation, repetition, pauses and word by word reading. Some of these problems are fatal and some not, but solving them in early age can be easier than it's too late.

2.1 Research Procedures

This part presents a description of the research procedures of this study. It includes a description of the population, the selection of the sample and research methodology. The population of the study consisted of 20 male students in 6th grade at Jawza secondary public school at Al-Karak directorate of education for the academic year of 2012/2013. Their ages ranges between 10-11 years old and they have been learning English for

6 years. Students native language is Arabic and they experienced the same educational system.

The researcher chose one English passage unseen by the students. It was within student's level. Firstly, the researcher retyped the passage on paper to code student's error and finds the frequency of the error. Secondly, the researcher categorized the errors. They were classified into: omission, mispronunciation, repetition, word by word reading and pausing. The errors were counted and listed in a table. Thirdly, the errors were explained. Here, the researcher attempted to provide suitable explanation of students reading errors.

3.1 Findings and Discussion
Here, the researcher discusses the findings of the study to answer the research question and identify, as well as classify and explain reading errors that are produced by students.

3.2 Defining the Categories and Source of Errors
1. Omission: refers to the point when a reader leaves out or omits words that are in the text. The omission doesn't occur too often but it is still a problem. Ekwal and Shankar (1985) said that there are two types of omission: deliberated (intentional) and non deliberated (non-intentional). The researcher found that some of his students have this problem. For example: when some students read the text, they didn't read some words such as "journeys" and "location". The researcher waited until the students finished reading, gathered student's attention and asked them to re-pronounce the words but they couldn't which means that students lack word recognition skill and didn't know the words so they omitted it.

Some other students didn't read some words and when the researcher asked the student to pronounce them, the students pronounced them correctly. The student is careless and thought that the researcher isn't going to notice his omission. The behavior of these two students is called deliberated omission.

One of the students was reading too quickly, he is good reader but missed some of the words. When the researcher asked him to re-pronounce the words he pronounced some of them correctly and other not. The behavior of this student may be related to that he just didn't notice the words because he is reading too fast and this is called non-intentional omission or non-deliberated omission.

2. Mispronunciation: is adding or omitting sounds when the student is reading. This problem is considered as the major reading problem of students. There are two types of mispronunciation: partial and gross. The partial is when student omit or add one sound but the listener still can recognize the word but the gross happens when there are total miss pronunciation that the listener can't recognize the word. For example some students read "busy" pronounced as/ bɪs i/ and world pronounced as \ˈwər(-ə)lid\. There are too many reasons for the mispronunciation error. Ekwal and Shankar (1985) explained that:

- Students don't know the phonics very well.
- Student is good with phonics but he may miss pronounce because the reading material is too hard.
- Student maybe simply careless or unintentional to the word.

In the case of Arab students, the first reason is the main cause of mispronunciation problem. The reasons for this problem are as the follow: first, English is imperfect fit i.e. (English has more phonemes than graphemes, one phoneme is presented by more than one grapheme and one phoneme presented by more than one grapheme). Second, direction of writing and reading in English is from left to right which is the opposite direction in Arabic.

Third, differences between English and Arabic in the sound system in both vowels and consonants. In the vowel level Students faced problems in reading many words such as places, sellers, journeys and beautiful. English has 14 vowel sounds but most of them aren't available in Arabic language. Avery and Atheric (1987) stated that the big number of English vowels in comparison with any other language is a problem. Problems in the consonant level are also available. Student have problems in reading words such as "sɛvən" they read it as / sɛfən / and "pl $\overline{a}$s" they read it as \ bl $\overline{a}$s \ . In "souvenir" the students tend to read /v/ sound as /f/ because Arabic language does not have the /v/ sound. Also in the other case \ pl $\overline{a}$s \is read as \ bl $\overline{a}$s \   because Arabic language does not have /p/ sound, so the students tend to replace it by /b/ sound.

Fourth, students tend to divide English consonant cluster with vowel, English language allow up to three adjacent consonants but Arabic allows only two so students tend to divide them by inserting vowel between them. For example when I asked student to read word such as "world" , he read it as "\ˈwərled\" rather than \ˈwərld\ . Fifth, students have problems in pronouncing words such "knife , hour and lamb" They are read them as \ˈknīf\, /?aύr/ and \ˈlamb\. The mispronunciation causes some silent letters in English language.

3. Repetition: is the process when a student repeats a word, part of it or phrases one or more times, that he already read once. It may occur with one or more words. This problem occurs because of poor word recognition skill, poor word analysis or bad habit. Also, Repetition may occur when the student realizes that he/she has made a mistake and corrects himself usually by repeating the misread word or by beginning the sentence over again. In some cases the student catches his error before finishing the word and pronouncing part of the word which creates partial word. This is considered as a repetition, even though he did repeat it for self correct correction.

Some of my students have this problem. So, in order to specify what the problem was, the researcher asked the

students who have this problem to read another text that is lower to their level. The students who read the text correctly, they have word recognition problem. The students that weren't being able to read the text they have a bad habit of repeating words when they read.

4. Word by Word reading and Pausing: are very popular reading problems. The difference between them is related with the time that student stop or pause. In word by word reading student read haltingly with short pauses between most words, but in pausing the student stops for abnormally longer time.

There are many reasons for these errors (word by word and pausing). For example, when the student stops for a short time and then precedes reading, this means that the student doesn't have the word in his vocabulary sight and he is using word recognition skills. If the student stopped for longer time but gets the words this mean that the student does not have the words in his vocabulary sight or he have a bad habit, but if the student stops for longer time and waits the teacher to give him the aid this means that the student not only does not have the word in his vocabulary sight, but also he does not have word recognition and/or word analysis skills. In order to solve the problem of lack sight vocabulary the student should do a lot of free reading so he comes in contact with enough words, enough times to make them part of his sight vocabulary.

If the student pauses and misses more than 4 to 5 percent of the words in the passage; this means that the material is too difficult for the student. Student should be given less difficult reading material. For students who have poor word recognition skill, they need to read more, in which reading passages should be lower in level. Also, the teacher can make the student read what he has read. Table (1) depicts the reading errors produced by 6th grade students at Jawza primary public school. The corpuses were adopted from 6th grade text book taught in public school in Jordan as designed by the Ministry of Education 2013.

Table (1): Reading Errors Produced by 6th Grade students

Correct Pronunciation	Mispronunciations Committed	Number of Occurrences	Word
/əˈɡoʊ/	/əˈɡə /, /əˈɡʊ/	14	Ago
/həʊm/	/həʊme/	10	People
/laɪkd/	/laɪkid/	5	Liked
/pleɪs/	/pleɪk /, /pleɪke/	4	Place
/ˈhɪstri/	/ˈhɪsʊtri/	2	History
/ˈbɪzi/	ˈ/bozi /,//ˈbɪsi /,/ˈbosi/	6	busy
/ˈsentər/	ˈ/sentəri /, /ˈkentər/	4	centre
/sɔ:/	/so:/ /sʊ/	7	Saw
/ˈdʒɜ:rni/	/ˈʒɜ:rni/	9	Journeys
/əˈkrɔ:s/	/əˈkrʊs /, /əˈkrʊsis/	5	Across
/dɪˈskraɪb/	/dɪˈskraɪbe ,// dɪˈskrɪb/	3	Describe
/wɜ:ld/	/wɜ:lid/	6	World
/ˈbju:tɪfl/	/ˈbɔ:tɪfl/ ,	3	Beautiful
/ləʊˈkeɪʃn/	/ləʊˈkeɪʃon /, /ləʊˈkeɪtn/	9	Location
/ˈmenʃn/	/ˈmenton/	8	Mention
/ˈsevn/	/ˈsefn/	5	Seven
/ˈwʌndərz/	ˈ/wʌndərs /, /ˈwʌndəris/	8	Wonders
/taɪm/	/taɪmi /, /tɪmi/	3	Time
/rɪtʃ/	/rɪʃ/	1	Rich
/ˈtrævl/	ˈ/trævlI/	5	Travel
/ɔ:l/	/əl , // ɔ:lil/	6	all

If the problem was bad habit the best solution is to make the student read chorally with another student who reads correctly, practice read poetry or/and have the student read or plays. If the problem was comprehension then the teacher should give the student material easier to understand and draw (slash lines) between words to show students how to phrase properly.

4. Conclusion

This study has explored reading errors made by school students in the 6th grade in Al-Karak directorate of education at Jawza secondary school. The main objective of the study was to identify, classify and analyze errors that are committed by students. Here, the researcher will present the conclusion of the study. First, the study reveals the students 123 mistakes, which were distributed among four error categories: omission, repetition, mispronunciation, pausing and word by word reading. The study also shows that most students' errors were mispronunciation problems because of the differences between Arabic and English. Secondly, the results of the study shows that the error mistake be related to; differences between languages, lack of sight vocabulary, poor

word recognition skills, lack of phonology knowledge and bad habit.

This paper will also provide help and a lot of information for teachers to find their students reading problems. Ekwal and Shankar (1985) stated the teacher is the most important factor in the reading. To be effective he/she should understand how children read and know what are the advantages and disadvantages of teaching reading methods. But we should remember that learning to read should be fun, exciting and satisfying. Also, the teaching of reading should be challenging and rewarding activity.

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