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language proficiency and referential and inferential reading comprehension test is another area for further research.

No test of traditional reading comprehension or teacher-made questions were used in this study. Thus, further research may take into account this kind of test as well.

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writers can include different reading comprehension questions in their books. Different effective questions included in the textbooks can be practiced in the class.

VI. Suggestions for Further Research

As Farhady(1994) states , an important property of any research lies in the fact that it generates more questions than it answers .The present study , too, has raised some questions worth mentioning .As the results of this research indicate although students did better on inferential questions than referential ones but , statistically there is no meaningful difference between inferential and referential questions among senior EFL learners.

From among the different categories of questions only inferential and referential questions were selected among the others for this study. However, this study might be replicated to test the effectiveness of other reading comprehension questions .

The content of the passages was not kept constant in the present study . A research can be done to investigate the relationship between inferential and referential questions on the performances of advanced EFL learners , if all the questions be administered from one passage.

TOEFL reading comprehension questions were administered for BA senior students majoring in TEFL and Literature .This can be administered for other levels of

... as well. The relationship between the level of

to teach authentic materials through different contexts and use reflective questions in reading comprehension.

Implications for EFL Testing

EFL testers should always take into consideration that reading comprehension questions have to deal with microstructure aspects of a text such as cohesion and coherence. So, cohesion is the quality of well-formed discourses (texts) that gives them an internal unity, making them hang together (Halliday & Hassan, 1976). So, coherence and cohesion are closely related. For a test to be coherent it must make sense. If it does not, it is, by

definition, incoherent. One of the qualities that contributes to textual coherence is cohesion (Ibid). There should be a discrimination between those fluent readers who are able to identify top-level structure, i.e. referential meanings in a text, and those readers who remember only a collection of details. The questions which may discriminate these two groups of typical readers refer to referential and inferential ones. According to Widdowson (1984a) these two types of reading comprehension questions can be further subdivided into assimilation and discrimination ones. The former requires the immediate processing of discourse in linear sequence and the latter requires the selective processing to abstract the main points. Therefore, textbook

questions would be beneficial in teaching reading comprehension because they create new situations for the students for critical thinking and learning and it also would be more interesting .When students are engaged in performing different tasks, the learning would be much easier (Nunan,1988,89; Parrott ,1983; & Brosnan,1984 among others).

The teachers who use referential and inferential questions in their teaching of reading comprehension should contextualize the context in which also activate students schemata, too.

Finally , if the teachers of English as a foreign language , use inferential and referential questions ,the best way through which the students are led to encounter the questions in different contexts is through the extensive reading. That is the teachers, especially university English teachers , should provide their students with enjoyable reading materials and encourage them to read extensively. So, these questions would help students to use their reading ability to solve problems and do the tasks.

Implications for Syllabus Design

Most of the time, syllabus designers put the responsibility on the shoulder of the English teachers saying that it is the teacher who knows what his or her students need. However, the syllabus designers should make extensive reading

1. In other words, story books are the best means

rather than finding back ground knowledge or schemata within the text .

However, the purpose of the comprehension tests should be how to draw readers' attention to the process by which a piece of language is interpreted as discourse but also beyond extra linguistics knowledge like back ground knowledge. What inferential questions are intended to draw out is the value that the terms have in making different kinds of statements which set up implicational relations with other parts of discourse and back ground knowledge.

Since most of the current methods of second or foreign language teaching ,nowadays are based on the communicatively based approach of teaching and learning .These kinds of inferential questions seem to consider linguistic knowledge and extraknowledge of the reader together.

However, the nature of reading is now questionable .Research on the nature of reading does not match the age of the recognition of its importance in language teaching .

V.Implications

Implications for EFL teaching

The results of this study recommend the teachers of English as a foreign language emphasize the importance of inferential and referential questions as teaching devices in their classroom .Using different cognitively demanding

It's likely that the students will know the meaning of forms and its references as elements of language, the kind of meaning called associated meaning here. What the students are less likely to recognize is the value which such items take on in utterance occurring within a context of discourse or regarding extra knowledge out of the text. One might usefully distinguish which kind of ability inferential and referential questions should aim at checking. And know how to recognize sentences are used in the process of communication and the ability to understand the rhetorical functioning of language in use.

It also recognize and manipulate the formal devices which are used to combine sentences to create continuous passages of prose. One might say that first has to do with the rhetorical coherence of discourse, and the second with the schema theory of the reader with the text.

In practice, of course, one kind of ability merges with the others.

The analysis of variance between the means of the referential and inferential questions show that there is no significant difference between the means of these two questions. Accordingly to the results, it seems inferential questions check the same thing which referential questions did and the total scores load on one single factor(0.90). This possibility shows that the tests of comprehension are still prepared according to rhetorical coherence of discourse

.The readers should know linguistically knowledge and also world knowledge and know how to combine them in understanding a text .The readers also should know the referent marker in the text and also know how to make a connection between what is mentioned in the text and the related schemata (Grabe cited in Carrel 1988).

Second Factor Analysis using Principal Axis Factoring method of extraction along with Varimax Rotation were run on inferential and referential test scores ,excluding grammar and vocabulary, shows that they load on a single factor. It means referential and inferential questions have the same underlying construct (Table7).

To do further assess another factor analysis was run among subcategories of reading comprehension questions (Table 8). Exploratory Factor Analysis was run among 24 referential and inferential reading comprehension questions .The results show that more than 80% of items load on one factor and 20% on another factor .It shows that reading is not unidimensional (Alderson,1990). The result of this study suggest that university students' understanding of the text cannot be authentically tested by means of merely testing reading comprehension subskills (structure and vocabulary).In order to test students' comprehension of a text ,reflective and meaningful questions are highly efficient. This indicates that the nature of reading comprehension is multidivisible and still questionable.

INF7	.36756	
REF9	.34382	
INF	.32613	
REF11		.70894
REF10		.64372
INF14		.60884
INF12		.54151
REF4		.44715
REF5		.43651

IV. Results and discussions

The result of this study suggest that reading cannot have just one or two factors .This study claim that reading might have multi-divisible nature in its construct(Grabe,1991,1997,Alderson,2000,Rumelhart and Mclellan,1981).There have been many studies designed to investigate the nature of reading .In this regard, two major trends have been developed .The first trend considered reading comprehension as an ability comprising many subskills (Spearrit ,1972; Munby ,1978; among others), and the second one considered reading comprehension as a global ability (Vacca,1980; and Rost, 1985;among others). Rost (1985) believes that reading has several different and independent underlying factors .

Different Exploratory factor analyses results support the multiple factor view of reading comprehension in this study ,too. First Factor analysis (Table 6) indicates that teaching grammar and vocabulary to students would not help them more in understanding reading comprehension

Table 7, Factor analysis between inferential and referential test

TEST	Factor 1
Referential test	0.90
Inferential test	0.90

7. Factor Analysis (3)

Another Factor analysis was also carried out on 24 items of reading comprehension questions. Exploratory Factor Analysis along with Varimax Rotation were performed to extract 2 solutions. Rotation converged in 3 iterations. As the Table 4.8 indicates 16 items load on the first factor, and 6 items on the second factor. So, Factor Analysis at item level does not show a clear pattern. However, their appearance along each other means that they might have the same underlying construct.

Table 8, Factor Analysis among 24 items of reading comprehension

TESTS	Factor 1	Factor 2
REF7	.55440	
REF6	.53599	
INF10	.52014	
INF8	.51736	
INF2	.50880	
INF9	.49400	
REF1	.49161	
INF6	.47760	
REF8	.47310	
INF5	.43890	
REF3	.40766	

two factors ; the inference and reference tests load on the first factor , and the structure and vocabulary load on the second factor (Table 8).The results show that the TOEFL tests meet the assumption that they are made up of two sections of reading and linguistics .It implies that the underlying constructs that they measure might be the same.

Table6,Factor Analysis among (structure,vocabulary, reference and inference

TESTS	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2
Reference	0.91	
Inference	0.86	
Structure		0.86
Vocabulary		0.78

Extraction Method :Principal Axis Factoring

Rotation Method : Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a.Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

6.Factor Analysis (2)

Explatory Factor Analysis using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF)along with Varimax Rotation were run on inferential and referential test scores, excluding vocabulary and grammar ,they load on a single factor.It means referential and inferential questions have the same underlying construct.Loading under 30 was discarded .

between structure/vocabulary and referential/inferential questions.

Table 5, The post-hoc Scheffe's Tests

Comparisons			Differences	
			served	Critical
Structure X=63.50	VS.	Reference X=50.20	13.30*	4.42
Structure X=63.50	VS.	Inference X=53.01	10.49*	4.42
Vocabulary X= 59.78	VS.	Reference X=5.20	9.58*	4.42
Vocabulary X=59.78	VS.	Inference X=53.01	6.77*	4.42
Inference X=53.01	VS.	Reference X=50.20	2.81 Not significant	4.42

* Denotes significant differences at .05

5. Factor Analysis(1)

The next analysis to be done was factor analysis to investigate the underlying construction of the test. To do so, total scores of students in the four sections (structure, vocabulary, referential and inferential reading) of TOEFL were used. The items were added to one another and factor analysis was run among four variables. So, Principal Axis Factoring along with Varimax Rotation was carried out to extract 2 factors. Rotation converged in 3 iterations. Loading lower than 0.30 was discarded. Maximum likelihood goodness of fit test probability is

Table 4, MANOVA (Structure, Vocabulary, Inferential and Referential questions)

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F Observed	Sig.
TESTS	35043.97	3	11681.32	46.03	0.000
Within Cells	238318.57	939	253.80		

$P < .05$

4. Post-hoc Scheffe's tests

The post-hoc Scheffe's tests are carried out to locate the differences among the means as displayed in table 5. The following conclusions can be made.

There is a meaningful difference between the mean score on Structure ($x = 63.50$) and Reference test mean score ($x = 50.20$) and the mean score on structure ($x = 63.50$) and the mean score on inference test ($x = 53.01$) too.

There is also a meaningful difference between the vocabulary test mean score ($x = 59.78$) and the mean score on reference ($x = 50.20$) and the mean score on inference test ($x = 53.01$).

But, there is No meaningful difference between the mean scores on inference test ($x = 53.01$) and reference test ($x = 50.20$).

As the Table shows, with regard to null hypotheses (2,3,4, and 5), there is no significant difference between the mean scores of subjects in referential and inferential reading comprehension tests, but there is a significant difference

and vocabulary questions are nearly the same but it is different from structure. It means students displayed similar range of ability in performing on vocabulary and reading questions.

Based on the above results, the reliability of the full test was found to be 0.88 which implies that a high degree of consistency exists in subjects' responses to test. However, it should be noted that this estimate of reliability could be higher if less correlated items were excluded from the test.

3. MANOVA

Multivariate analysis of Variance (MANOVA) is aimed at testing the null hypothesis that the means of groups of observations are identical. A MANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the four tests, i.e., structure, vocabulary, inferential and referential reading comprehension questions. Structure and Vocabulary are included in MANOVA, because they are subskills of reading comprehension questions. As displayed in table 4, the F observed value, 46.03 and it is significant at 0.05 level of significance (sig. 0.000).

The null hypothesis as no meaningful difference among the means is rejected, and it can be concluded that there is a significant difference among the means.

Inferential questions	314	53.01	20.69	7.69	100
Referential Questions Total	314	50.20	22.98	9.09	100

2. Reliability

Reliability coefficients of the TOEFL used in the study was also estimated. The results are shown in table 2 .According to the table , the estimated reliability index is 0.88, So the test is fairly reliable.

Table 2, Reliability Coefficients for full test

Statistics for SCALE	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of cases	N of Items	Alpha
Reliability Coefficients	55.75	165.53		314	94	0.88

The reliability coefficients for 40 structures , 30 vocabulary and 24 reading comprehension questions are presented in table 3.

Table 3, the reliability of reading comprehension , structure and vocabulary

Reliability Coefficients	N of Cases	N of items	Alpha
Structure	314	40	0.87
Vocabulary	314	30	0.76
Reading comprehension	314	24	0.77
Full test			0.88

As the table 3 shows , the reliability indices for reading comprehension

Having analyzed the results, repeated items and items with no unanimous agreement based on referential and inferential questions were omitted. The questions also classified in their related subcategories. Nevertheless, if eight of the judges, i.e., 80% or more than 80%, agreed upon the classification of the items, it was considered as the final decision of specific category of that item.

The test was administered to students majoring in English. They were thanked with juice and cake. To make students take the test seriously, instructors considered positive points for the participants. The best students of each class was rewarded a calculator. The next step was to score the papers. Each correct answer was given one point. No penalty was given to the wrong answer. The last step was to test the stated hypothesis through the following analyses:

1. Descriptive Statistics

Prior to any statistical analyses first of all, the scores converted to the scale of 100. The results are presented in Table 1. It appears that the subjects have performed relatively better on inferential questions than referential questions.

Table.1, The Descriptive Statistics of TOEFL

Variables	N	Means	Standard Deviations	Min.	Max.
Structure	314	63.50	18.65	17.50	100
Vocabulary	314	59.78	16.22	15.50	100

meaning of a word within a context ,understanding factual information about the passage ,and understanding what is stated or implied in the passage. In this part, the students are supposed to read each passage and choose the best choice for each question following the passage.

Reading comprehension questions were classified into referential and inferential questions by 10 English language teachers (ELT) holders majoring in TEFL as the judges of this study. judges also determine the subcategories of referential and inferential based on the operational definition proposed by Barretts' Taxonomy(1996).Then the classification was checked by 4 English language teachers (ELT) ph.D holders.

2.3.Procedure

TOEFL (1991) were selected as the main instrument in this study .Reading comprehension questions were classified into referential and inferential questions and also to their related subcategories based on Barrett's Taxonomy(1996) by 10 English language teachers (ELT) MA holders.

Four university professors holding Ph.D in applied linguistics and therefore experts in this field were asked to check the answers too.Although the items were very close in nature , they were judged to be different enough to be classifiable into two different categories according to the researcher's justification.

II.Method

2.1.Subjects

400 students participated in this study on the basis of their complete response. 314 were chosen for the final analyses . The students were all senior students majoring in English Literature, Teaching and Translation from different universities of Central Azad University, Roudehen Azad University, South Azad University , Karaj Azad University, Garmsar Azad University and Esfahan (Khoraseghan Azad and Esphahan State University). They were female and male students who were selected randomly . The subjects ranged in age from 19 to 24.

2.2.Instrumentation

An original version of TOEFL (1991) was utilized as the main instrument in this study (Appendix I) .The TOEFL consists of four parts of structures,written expression, vocabulary and reading comprehension questions .The listening section was omitted for practical and logical reasons.

The first part of TOEFL included 40 items measuring grammar in multiple choice format.

The reading part included five passages each followed by five or more multiple choice questions .These questions aimed at different facets of comprehension such as

6. Do the scores obtained from referential and inferential reading comprehension questions yield the same underlying construct?

4.1. Research Hypotheses

Based on the above mentioned questions, the following null-hypotheses are posited.

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the subjects' mean scores in referential and inferential reading tests.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in structure and referential reading tests.
3. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in structure and inferential reading tests.
4. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in vocabulary and referential reading tests.
5. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in vocabulary and inferential reading tests.
6. The scores obtained from different reading tests do not yield the same underlying construct.

1. 2. Statement of the problem

Research inquiries on reading comprehension questions indicate that in order to test reading comprehension, two different types of reading comprehension questions are often distinguished: inferential questions and referential questions. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between testing inferentially and referentially designed questions of reading comprehension ability of the senior students of Iranian EFL learners.

1. 3. Research Questions

This study aims at investigating the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between referential and inferential reading comprehension test types and EFL learners' performance?
2. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of subjects in structure and referential tests?
3. Is there any significant difference between the mean score of subjects in structure and inferential tests?
4. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in vocabulary and referential tests?
5. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of the subjects in vocabulary and inferential tests?

multidivisibility of reading comprehension, Nuttall (1996) advised three steps for approaching reading in the classroom. The method approaches reading as a problem solving:

Nuttall mentioned that the problem should be recognized to solve it and also a clear purpose in reading should be considered and finally students should be quipped for the journey with all the tools at disposal (p.96).

It has been empirically found that the techniques of testing reading comprehension affects the test-takers performance. If only one or more model of questions proved to be more valid tests of reading, so the EFL teachers should emphasize the use of them as testing devices in their classes. And finally, when the reading ability is improved more validly through one or more techniques, the textbook writers can include them in their textbooks to be practiced by the EFL/ESL learners. Today , professional organizations and professional literature support critical thinking in the classroom and call for teachers to guide students in developing higher level thinking skills.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between referential and inferential reading comprehension questions among senior students of Iranian EFL learners in order to find a better device to test reading comprehension.

1991; Weir et al., 1990), while others support the binary nature of reading comprehension (Gough & Juel, 1991; Tunner & Hoover, 1993 all as cited in Grabe, 1997). While, there is no agreement on the nature of reading comprehension as a construct, most scholars have proposed different methods for teaching and testing reading comprehension in the classroom (Nuttall, 1996; Higginbotham and Burton, 2000; Susser and Robb, 1990; Routman, 1996; Duke and Pearson, 1991; Heal, 1998; Collins, 1993; Henninger, 2000; and Alkahtani, 1999 to name a few).

According to Grabe (1997), reading comprehension is a combination of two abilities of word recognition and inference ability. Chastain (1988), referring to reading as a basic decoding skill, defines the ultimate goal of reading as gaining meaning from those word sequence, not reading the individual or sequences of words.

On the other hand, some scholars define reading comprehension as a multidivisible construct. Underwood and Batt (1996) define reading as an information processing skill comprising a number of cognitive sub-skills. Higginbotham and Burton (2000) define reading as a thinking process which involves concentration, prediction and anticipation. Kern (1989) believes that "reading in any language is cognitively demanding" (P. 135). In his view reading involves the coordination of attention, memory,

statistically (See Rost, 1993), most often it is intended to teach or assess the reading passage with a number of comprehension questions following it. These questions are usually classified in terms of content to inferential and referential questions (Watts & Alderson, 1971; Farhady, 1998; Hudson and Slackman, 1990).

Reading plays a crucial role in the field of English as a foreign language (Paulston, 1979; Rivers, 1981; Goodman, 1988; Nuttall, 1996). Therefore, it is through reading that students may use authentic sources such as newspapers, magazines, and books in the target language. Along the same line, Rivers (1981) emphasizes the development of the reading skill as it enables students to use the literature and periodical, or scientific and technical journals in target language.

Grabe (2002) believes "overall goal of reading is not to remember most of the specific details but to have a good grasp of the main ideas and supporting ideas, and to relate those main ideas to background knowledge as appropriate" (p.12).

In this regards, Broughton (1994) States that:

Reading is a complex skill that involves a whole series of lesser skills. In discussing the complex nature of reading skill it was pointed out that reading involves correlating elements of language with meaning (p. 94).

Some scholars support the idea of multifaceted view of reading comprehension (Celce Murcia, 1991; Swaffar,

the means of referential and inferential reading comprehension questions and students' performance and they have the same underlying construct, but there was a significant difference between the mean scores of subjects in structure/vocabulary and referential/inferential questions.

The finding will have some implications for curriculum developers, course material developers, language teachers and learners. In this research, different views towards teaching and testing reading comprehension, techniques and factors have been meticulously studied. Then based on these features, some suggestions have been made for an effective reading comprehension classroom. This study suggests language tester to provide a better device to test subskills in reading comprehension.

Key words: Reading, Inferential and Referential reading comprehension questions(RQ& IQ), Iranian EFL learners, Taxonomy, English language teachers (ELT)

I.Introduction

1. 1.Introduction

Reading is an important ability, but the least understood one in academic context(Nuttall, 1996; Grabe, 1991; Routman, 1996; Paulston, 1979; Hatch, 1979). It is a common practice among teachers, researchers, and test developers to look upon this construct from analytic point of view (for example, Grabe, 1997,1991; Alderson, 2000).

On The Relationship between Inferential and Referential test type: The Case of EFL Learners

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate two different techniques for testing reading comprehension questions. Differences are measured by two different types of questions including inferential and referential questions.

To answer the referential questions, the reader is required to move beyond the level of sentence comprehension and understand the relationship among the sentences. While, Inferential questions are designed to check the students' ability to make logical conclusions, or inferences from the information provided in the text. 400 senior students participated in the study. TOEFL (1991) was used as the main instrument in the study. 314 undergraduate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students whose scores were between one standard deviation (SD) below and above the mean were selected for the final analyses. The reading comprehension items were classified into Referential (R) and Inferential (I) questions and their related subcategories based on Barrett's Taxonomy (1968) by 10 MA teachers majoring in TEFL. Several statistical procedures (correlation coefficient, post-hoc Tukey's tests and factor analyses) were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between