An Investigation of Current Trends and Approaches in Teaching Reading in University ESP Courses

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Abstract

This study investigated the current trends and approaches in teaching and assessment of reading in ESP classes in Iran. Ten ESP teachers from ten different majors in the department of Humanities at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch were selected to be observed in this study. Direct Observations, field notes and audio- recordings were used to investigate the process of teaching and assessing reading in the selected ESP classes and to determine the amount of time given to each category in three phases of pre-reading, silent-reading and post reading during the class time. The results of data analysis revealed that the total time spent on post- reading activities was higher than that allocated for pre-reading activities. The most observed pre-reading activities were vocabulary-related and pronunciation-related activities while grammar-related activities were rarely used in the observed classes. In addition, the most observed post-reading activities in the ten ESP classes were "multiple questions". With regard to assessment procedures in teaching reading in ESP classes, the results demonstrated that summative assessment was used notably more than the formative assessment by the ESP instructors in their classes.

Keywords: ESP, pre-reading, silent reading, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has developed significantly over the past few decades. EAP has expanded with the rapid growth of colleges and universities in many countries around the world and increasing numbers of international students undertaking higher studies in English. As a result, EAP is currently situated at the front line of both theory development and innovative practice in teaching English as a second or foreign language.

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On a similar note, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) first emerged in the 1960's when second language teachers and institutes noticed that ordinary English courses were not able to produce the expected results of the learners as well as employers in English speaking communities (Bracaj, 2014). It gradually became clear that what makes a certain group of learners' English course different from those learning general English is the needs of the profession to which they want to join. In other terms, they have to use English for specific purposes instead of using it to meet their daily needs. English has grown into the international language of media, tourism, business, science, and politics, and as a result, it has created a global demand for ESP around the world. It is not only a language used in academic settings for educational purposes anymore. In many circumstances, ESP is not a fancy option for a better chance of getting a job or fulfilling the college curriculum requirements or obtaining professional development, but a requirement that you need to include on your job application. In addition, ESP has become one of the most prominent areas of second language teaching today. Therefore, it will be worth spending some time on studying the main characteristics of effective ESP courses.

According to Mcnamara (2007), reading strategies refer to the different cognitive and behavioral actions that the readers use, under the purpose of achieving comprehension in reading. Anderson (2003) stated that reading is the interaction of four things including the reader, the text, the fluent reading or —the ability or read at an appropriate rate with adequate Comprehension, and strategic reading, or —the ability of the reader to use a variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading (p. 8). Discovering the best methods and techniques or processes the learners choose to access, is the goal of research in reading Strategies.

Yau (2005), in a study on language learning strategy use found that proficient readers apply more sophisticated approaches to reading than less-proficient ones. In his study the skilled reader employed strategies of inferring, summarizing, and synthesizing during and after reading, while the less skilled reader used bridging inferences, paraphrasing, and repetition.

Critical Elements in Reading Instruction

Saskatchewan Learning English language arts curricula focus on teaching students through an integrated process to help them understand the relationship among the elements and how they relate to the ultimate goal of reading (see Figure 1). According to Lyon et al. (2001); Saskatchewan Learning (2003); Stanovich (2000), expressive and receptive oral language provides the foundation for these elements. These critical elements must be explicitly and intensively taught if students are to become proficient readers and writers .Students who are at risk for reading failure require direct teaching through a systematic format.
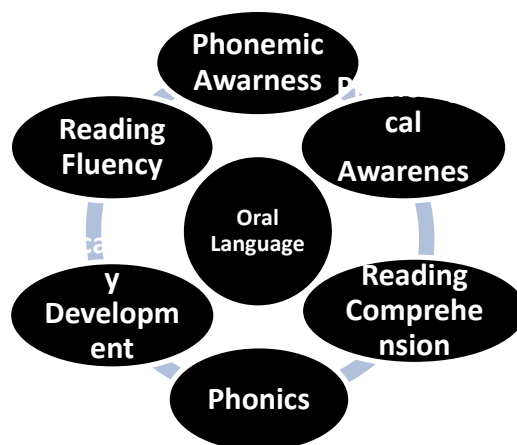
Figure 1. Critical elements in reading instruction adapted from Bos & Vaugh (2002).

It is considered that all these components are important elements in developing reading comprehension. And also it is not sufficient to focus on any single element to conclude an effective reading program. All elements need to be taught systematically and explicitly through a balanced approach. If all elements are taught in a balanced approach, the students have the opportunity to become proficient readers who can gain knowledge from text.

Psycholinguistic models of reading comprehension skill

The purpose of this part is to review what is known about the processes involved in reading and in learning to read. Topics to be discussed include the controversies about the best way to teach students to read and the reasons why some students have great difficulty mastering this skill. Surely, Researchers from a variety of disciplines, including cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and education, have been active in research on reading.

The researcher of this article conducted a critical investigation of the role of ESP teachers in Islamic Azad University Rasht Branch (2016), the ESP teachers' activities through observation of some ESP classes were checked indirectly. The results of the study revealed that there are many problems with the ways teachers teach ESP and that their activities do not reflect recent innovations in teaching and learning. What this study offered is that in addition to knowledge of subject he/she is teaching, an ESP teacher should be aware of the principles of teaching reading, adult learning and should be able to contribute to the development of all the components of an ESP program efficiently.

Sherkatolabbasi and Mahdavi-Zafarghandi (2012) tried to evaluate problematic areas of ESP teaching and learning in the context of Iran. They used interviews with 30 students and 15 teachers randomly chosen, and a questionnaire derived from the content of the interviews and pilot-studied for 420 students and 50 teachers in ESP classes. Data analysis showed shortcomings (e.g., language proficiency and pedagogy) especially in the case of content teachers who teach ESP courses. The results also showed that most students were satisfied with ESP courses. The importance of the role and decisions of language departments was also emphasized in the study.

Teaching Reading comprehension in ESP

The researcher used an extensive body of work on metacognition and reading comprehension by several researchers (e.g., Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Baker & Brown, 1984; Garner, 1987; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, to name only a few) who had provided much of what is currently known about this important topic. We drew on Pressley and Afflerbach's (1995) notion of constructively responsive reading, which appears to be quite consistent with recognized theories of reading such as Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory, in which the transaction between readers and texts is emphasized. The concept of constructively responsive reading also embraces key principles of the top-down processing model of reading reflected in schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984), bottom-up text-processing strategies emphasized by van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), and the comprehension monitoring processes advocated by several notable researchers in this line of inquiry (e.g., Baker & Brown, 1984; Garner, 1987; Paris & Winograd, 1990). In their book, *Verbal Protocols of Reading: The Nature of Constructively Responsive Reading*, Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) offer a very helpful thumbnail sketch of various strategies skilled readers use before, during, and after reading.

According to Wallace (1999), one very popular kind of pre-reading task is "brain storming". This may take the form of giving the class a particular key word or key concept, or it may be a newspaper headline or book title. Students are then invited to call out words and concepts they personally associate with the keyword or words provided by the teacher. Brainstorming has many advantages as a classroom procedure. First, it requires little teacher preparation; second, it allows learners considerable freedom to bring their own prior knowledge and opinions to bear on a particular issue; and third, it can involve the whole class. No learner need feel threatened when any bid is acceptable and be added to the framework. For example, these are the kinds of associations which might be called up by the key word money: 'coin', 'bank', 'poverty', 'pay day', 'interest', 'purse', and etc. These bids reflect very different categories and levels of generalization. However, the initial random association can be classified and subcategorized either by the teacher or the students, and additional contributions from class members or the teacher added to stretch existing concepts.

The researcher has selected two textbooks as representative examples of ESP books in Islamic Azad University Rasht Branch that contain some activities:

1. English for the students of Persian literature, by Nasrollah Zirak, Tehran: Nasrollah Zirak, 2006.

2. English for the Students of Management, by Farhad Moshfegh, Tehran: The Center for studying and composing University Books in the Humanities (SAMT), 2014.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to identify the main current procedures in teaching and evaluating reading in ESP classes in Iran. This chapter will discuss the methodology of the

current study, and it contains five parts. The first part introduces the research design. The second section provides information regarding the participant. The third part provides a description of the research materials and instruments. The fourth part explains the research procedure, and the fifth and final part describes the methods of analyzing data in this study.

Design

This study followed a qualitative design in which a description of approaches in teaching reading, as well as assessment of reading comprehension in ESP classes was reported based on researcher's observation. Therefore, this paper consisted of a detailed notation of behaviors, events and the contexts surrounding the events and behaviors. In addition, the collected data was coded to numerical format and analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. Moreover, the observations were based on criteria which had been organized in the form of a checklist. The validity of the content of the checklists was endorsed by some experienced experts in advance of the observation sessions.

Participants

The participants were ten ESP instructors who were selected for observation sessions from ten different majors in the department of Humanities at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch. Stratified random sampling was used to selects the participants in this study. The instructors were under observation during a term. All the instructors were experienced in teaching ESP. Three of them were educated in teaching English and the rest were majored in non-English fields of study. The students were both male and females studying in M.A. programs. They were from different parts of Iran and all of them were within the age group of 19 to 35. None of the participants were aware of the purpose of the research in order to make the observations as natural as possible.

Materials

In this study, two instruments were used with the aim of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Field notes were used for detailed transcription of what happened in each session of observation, for identifying the approaches of teaching reading, and for determining the amount of time given to each category in three parts of pre-reading, silent-reading and post reading in ten classes which were selected from different fields. Audio recordings were used for later transcription of those events taken place in ESP classes under observation which were not noticed during the note-taking procedures due to observer error or environmental obstacles.

Instruments

Observation

A number of instruments are commonly used in qualitative research to collect data the most widely used of which is direct classroom observation. This research instrument required following a well-chosen strategy in order to avoid any misinterpretations in

later data analysis. The selected observation strategy depended on a set of factors including the role adopted by the observer, the kind of data to be collected, and to nature of the research questions. The observation strategy, which was used during the present study, was the "piece of the became" strategy (Chesterfield, 1997) in which the observer sat at a student desk and became part of the desk i.e. the observer did not play a part in the activities going on, even when addressed or asked questions by students. This strategy was used to amplify the focus on teachers' interaction with students, as it reduces teacher attention to an outsider within the class. Another reason of choosing this strategy in the current research was to take natural detailed field notes without causing any interruption in the natural process of teaching reading in the observed ESP classes. An observation checklist was developed by the researcher using the comments of some experts as well as ESP instructors. This checklist inspected four categories of reading instruction: pre-reading, silent reading, post reading, and evaluation. The pre reading category of the checklist included two subcategories of 'help with language, and 'activating background knowledge'. The silent reading category consisted of 'sentence by sentence' and 'paragraph by paragraph' subcategories. The post reading part incorporated subcategories such as Wh-questions, true and false questions, multiple questions, vocabulary tests, and translation test. All of the categories and subcategories on the checklist were revised by experts in the area.

Audio- recordings

In order to have an accurate data collection and analysis on what happened in the ESP classes, the researcher found it necessary to choose an additional tool of recording the events. After direct observations by sitting in the class and taking notes of actual events according to the observational schedule, the second tool which was used for a more thorough investigation was recording the data through audio recording so that further reflection on details and transcription of interaction would be possible.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), it is common in EFL class observations to use not only field notes or observation schemes but also audio or video recordings for the matter of 'triangulation' which means "using multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives"(p. 181). This term suggests that if a true picture of a particular event is needed to be gained, at least two perspectives are acquired to be used. So for more sophisticated classroom research procedure, use of multiple perspectives on data collection known as triangulation is valuable.

Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher first informed the head of the Humanities' department at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch about the study and received the required permissions. Eight male and two female educated and experienced instructors from English and non-English majors, were observed directly by the researcher. In order not to distract the teachers' attention they were not informed about the study of their teaching approaches and the researcher acted as an observer, sitting between the

students of the class and participated as a student. Some notes were taken on a checklist developed by researcher and some experts in ESP. The classes were also audio-recorded for detailed description for qualitative results. Moreover, at the end of each session a short interview with teachers was conducted about teaching reading, selecting material and the assessment process. The research was conducted during one term in Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch

Data Analysis

Because of the qualitative design which was chosen for this study, descriptive statistics were used to report the main current trends and approaches in teaching and assessing reading in ESP classes at Islamic Azad University, Rasht Branch. To find answers to the first and second research questions, the collected data from the observations were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and charts. In addition, these two questions were answered qualitatively through transcribing important events in ESP classes regarding using approaches of teaching and evaluation by ESP instructors and comparing these events in different classes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching procedures followed in pre-reading phase

For pre-reading stage, with respect to the procedures followed to help learners with their language, the frequency and percentage of the use of activities related to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar were computed. Furthermore, the total time devoted to these items were presented. The results are available in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage for pre-reading activities (help learners with language)
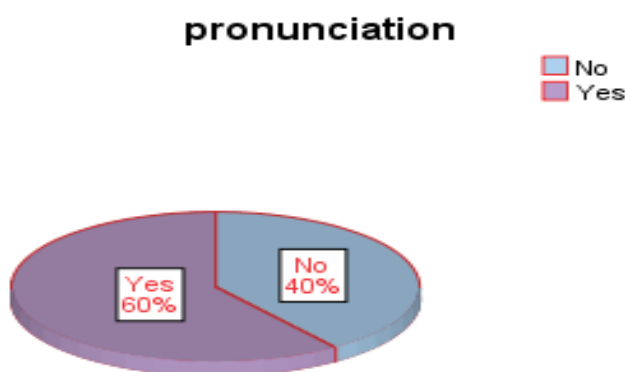
		Frequency	Percent
Vocabulary	No	4	40.0
	Yes	6	60.0
	Total	10	100.0
Pronunciation	No	4	40.0
	Yes	6	60.0
	Total	10	100.0
Grammar	No	8	80.0
	Yes	2	20.0
	Total	10	100.0

When it comes to the activities related to the "*Vocabulary*," it was observed in nearly more than half of the classes (n= 6; p= 60%) during pre-reading stage. In other words, vocabulary- related activities were lacking in (n=4; 40%) classes.
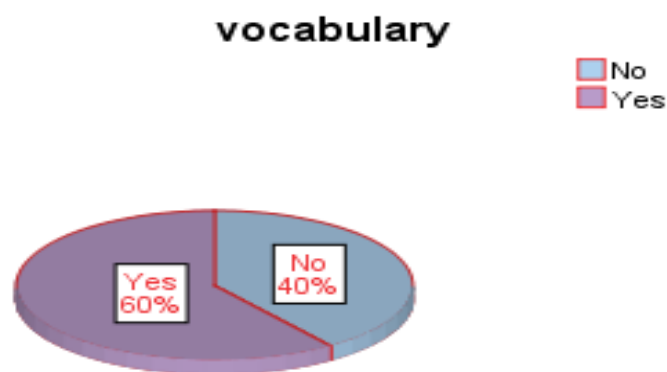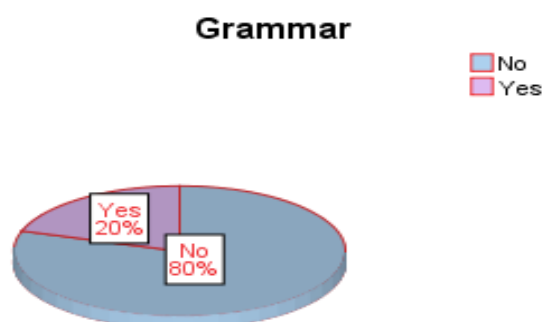
vocabulary

Figure 2. Percentage of the use of vocabulary related activities during pre-reading stage

Concerning "*pronunciation*" activities during pre-reading stage, similarly it was observed simply in (n=6; p=60%) of the classes. This meant that, no pronunciation- related activities were observed in (n=4; 40%) classes.

pronunciation

Figure 3. Percentage of the use of pronunciation related activities during pre-reading stage

Grammar was the third component that was examined during the observation process in this investigation. The frequency table revealed that grammar- related activities were utilized rarely through the pre-reading activities. It was observed merely in (n=2; p=20%) of the classes and no grammar- related activities were observed in (n=8; 80%) classes.

Grammar

Figure 4. Percentage of the use of grammar related activities during pre-reading stage

In general, the findings showed that teachers employed higher vocabulary and pronunciation related activities compared to grammar during pre-reading phase. The second subcategory of the pre-reading stage in ESP classes inspected the instructors' procedures taken to activate learners' background knowledge. This subcategory looked into items such as introducing the topic, guiding questions, and giving pre-reading tasks.

**Table 2.** Frequency and percentage for pre-reading activities (activate learners' background knowledge)

		Frequency	Percent
Introducing the topic	No	1	10.0
	Yes	9	90.0
Guiding questions	No	8	80.0
	Yes	2	20.0
	Total	10	100.0
Giving pre-reading tasks	No	8	80.0
	Yes	2	20.0
	Total	10	100.0

In many of the classes (n=9; p=90%), instructors used activities regarding "*introducing the topic*" to activate the learners' background knowledge. In contrast, activities related to introducing the topic were lacking simply in (n=1; p=10%) of the classes through pre-reading activities.
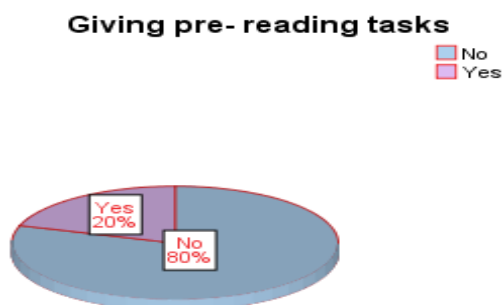

Figure 5. Percentage of the activities related to the introducing the topic during pre-reading stage

"*Guiding questions*" were used merely in (n=2; p= 80%) classes. In other words, there were no activities regarding "*guiding questions*" in (n=8; p= 80%) of the classes during pre-reading phase.
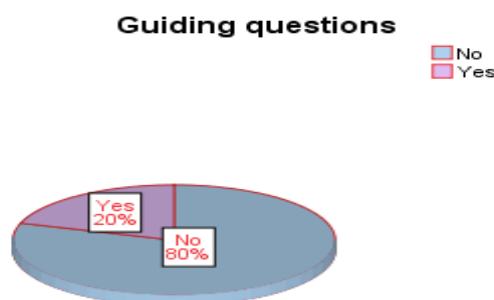
Figure 6. Percentage of the use of guiding questions during pre-reading stage

"*Giving pre-reading tasks*" was also used in a few classes (n=2; p=20%) to activate learners' background knowledge. In other words, no pre-reading tasks was observed in any classes (n=8;p=80%) during pre-reading stage.

Giving pre- reading tasks

No
Yes

Yes
20%

No
80%

Figure 7. Percentage of the use of giving pre-reading tasks during pre-reading stage

Time allocated for pre-reading activities

The time spent on each subcategories of pre-reading stage were also examined and compared. The results are available in Table 3.

Table 3. Time devoted for each subcategories in pre-reading stage

Classes	vocabulary	pronunciation	Grammar	Introducing the topic	Guiding questions	Giving pre-reading tasks	Pre-reading total
Class 1	.00	.00	.00	10.00	.00	.00	10.00
Class 2	15.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	5.00	10.00	55.00
Class 3	15.00	10.00	.00	5.00	.00	.00	30.00
Class 4	10.00	10.00	5.00	10.00	.00	.00	35.00
Class 5	.00	10.00	.00	5.00	.00	.00	15.00
Class 6	15.00	5.00	.00	5.00	5.00	10.00	40.00
Class 7	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Class 8	.00	.00	.00	5.00	.00	.00	5.00
Class 9	20.00	.00	.00	15.00	.00	.00	35.00
Class10	15.00	10.00	.00	5.00	.00	.00	30.00
Total	90.	55.00	15.00	65.00	10.00	20.00	255.0
Mean	9.00	5.50	1.50	6.50	1.00	2.00	25.50
Percent	9%	6.11%	1.66%	7.22%	1.11%	2.22%	28.3%

In general, total percentage of time dedicated to pre-reading activities was (average time= 25.5; p= 28.33%). The percentage of time spent on "*vocabulary*" related activities (average time =9 Minutes; p= 9%) was higher than that devoted to other activities. Secondly, the rate of time dedicated to "*introducing the topic*" (average time =6.50 Minutes; p= 7.22%) and "*pronunciation*" (average time =5.50 Minutes; p= 6.11%) was relatively high. Comparatively, short times were allocated to "*giving pre-reading tasks*" (average time =2 Minutes; p= 2.22%), "*grammar*" (average time =1.5 Minutes; p= 1.66%), and "*guiding questions*" (average time =1 Minute; p= 1.11%), respectively.

(Time) Vocabulary > introducing the topic > pronunciation > giving pre-reading tasks > grammar> guiding questions

Teaching procedures followed in silent reading stage

Two activities including "*sentence by sentence*" and "*paragraph by paragraph*" silent reading were determined in the checklist to examine silent reading phase in the ESP program. The results of the analysis of this stage are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Frequency and percentage for silent reading stage

		Frequency	Percentage
Sentence by sentence	No	10	100.0
Paragraph by paragraph	No	10	100.0

There was no activity related to the silent reading phase (neither sentence by sentence nor paragraph by paragraph) in none of the classes observed.

Teaching procedures followed in post-reading stage

The checklist inspected some factors that were related to the post- reading stage of this study. They included the use of wh-questions, true/ false questions, multiple questions, vocabulary test, translation test, and homework. The results of the analyses are available in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage for post- reading stage

		Frequency	Percentage
Wh questions	No	6	60.0
	Yes	4	40.0
True and False questions	No	4	40.0
	Yes	6	60.0
Multiple questions	No	3	30.0
	Yes	7	70.0
Vocabulary test	No	6	60.0
	Yes	4	40.0
Translation test	No	8	80.0
	Yes	2	20.0
Homework	No	1	10.0
	Yes	9	90.0

Data gathered through the checklist revealed the frequency and percentage of the use of the above-mentioned activities during post- reading stage. The highest rate of activity used in this stage was "*homework*" which was closely followed by using "*multiple questions.*"

This meant that in many of the observed classes, the instructor assigned homework (n = 9; p = 90%) and asked multiple questions (n = 7; p = 70%). In comparison, "*translation test*" was the least frequently used activity in post –reading stage (n=2; p=20%).
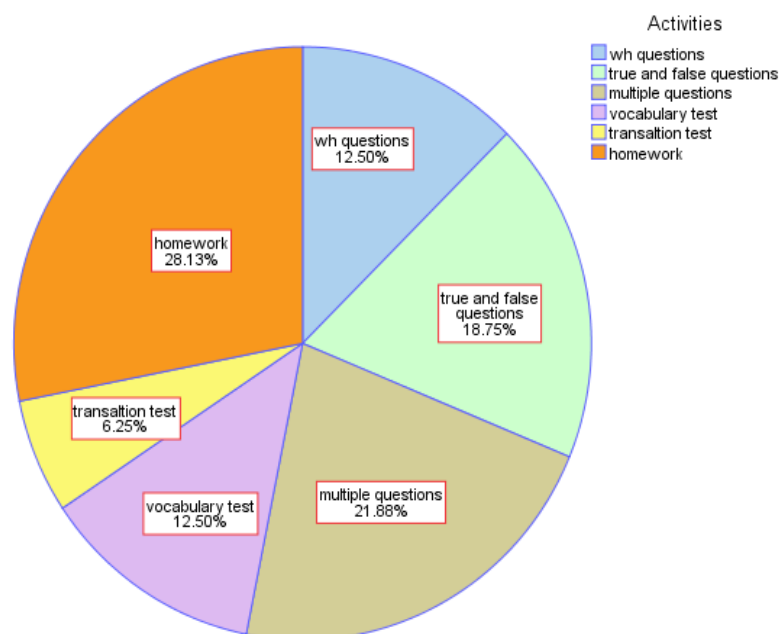
Figure 8. Percentage of the activities used in post- reading stage

Time allocated for post-reading stage

This section of the checklist inspected the time allocated to each of the activities observed during the post-reading stage. The results of this section are available in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Time devoted for each subcategories in post- reading stage

Classes	Wh questions	True and false questions	Multiple questions	Vocabulary test	Translation test	Homework	Post reading total
Class 1	.00	15.00	15.00	.00	.00	5.00	35.00
Class 2	15.00	.00	10.00	10.00	.00	5.00	40.00
Class 3	.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	5.00	55.00
Class 4	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	55.00
Class 5	.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	35.00	5.00	80.00
Class 6	.00	.00	10.00	10.00	.00	5.00	25.00
Class 7	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	5.00	5.00
Class 8	10.00	10.00	.00	.00	.00	5.00	25.00
Class 9	15.00	10.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	25.00
Class10	.00	.00	10.00	10.00	30.00	5.00	55.00
Total	50.00	65.00	75.00	70.00	95.00	45.00	400.00
Mean	5.00	6.50	7.50	7.00	9.50	4.50	40.00
Percent	5.55%	7.22%	8.33%	7.77%	10.55%	5%	44.4%

In general, total percentage of time dedicated to post- reading activities was (average time= 40 Minutes; p= 44.44%). The proportion of time spent on "*translation tests*" (average time=9.5 Minutes; p= 10.55%) was higher than that devoted to other activities during post- reading. In the second place, the rate of time dedicated to "*multiple questions*" (average time= 7.50 Minutes; p= 8.33%) and "*vocabulary test*" (average time=7 Minutes; p= 7.77%) was proportionately high. Relatively, short times were allocated to "*true and false questions*" (average time=6.5 Minutes; p= 7.22 %), "*wh- questions*"

(average time= 5.00; p= 5.55%), and assigning "*homework*" (average time= 4.5; p=5.00 %), respectively.

(Time) Translation tests > multiple questions > vocabulary test > true and false questions > Wh questions > homework

Additionally, percentages of time spent on the three predetermined stages of the reading program was also computed and compared.
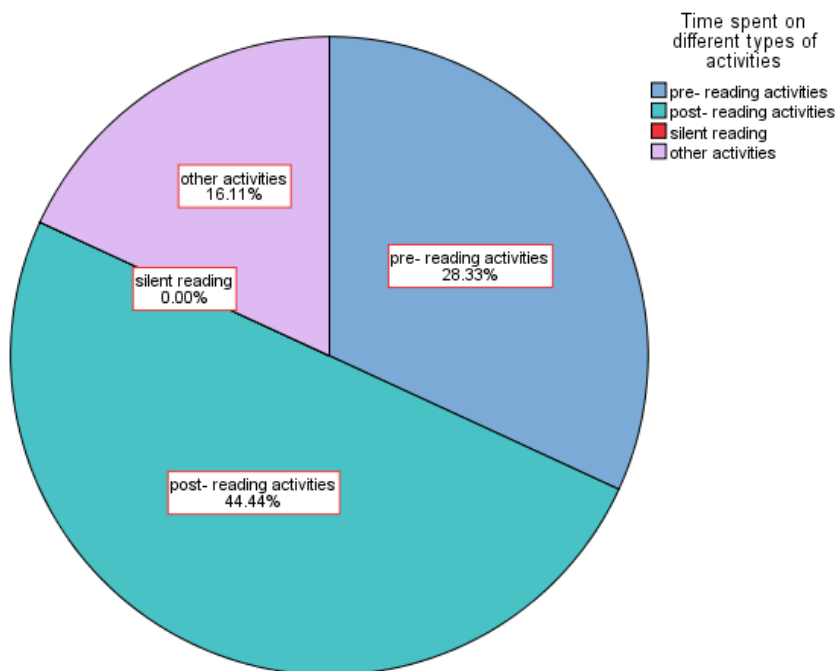
Figure 9. Percentage of the time allocated to three phases of the reading program

As it was displayed in Figure 4.8, the percentage of time spent on post- reading phase (44.44%) was greater than that allocated for pre-reading stage (28.33%). Moreover, no time was dedicated to the silent reading stage during the observation of the ten classes. From total time of the class (90 minutes), (p= 16.11%) of time spent on other activities.

Procedures followed in assessing reading in ESP classes

To provide answer to the second research question, the assessment procedure employed by the ESP instructors during the teaching reading program was observed and the information gathered through the observation phases were summarized in the following table.

Table 7. Frequency and percentage of summative and formative assessment

		Frequency	Percent
Summative	Yes	10	100.0
	No	7	70.0
Formative	Yes	3	30.0
	Total	10	100.0

Concerning summative assessment, all ten classes (n = 10, p = 100%) which were observed during the study employed summative assessment in order to evaluate reading progress of the students. In contrast, the results demonstrated that simply (n = 3, p = 30%) of the observed classes conducted formative evaluation during the ESP reading course of instruction.
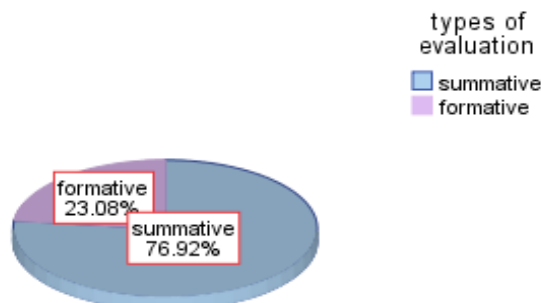
Figure 10. The proportion of the two types of evaluation in three phases of the reading program

As it was displayed in Figure 10, the size of summative assessment (76.92%) was higher than formative assessment (23.08%) in the ESP reading courses observed.

Qualitative Analysis of the pre-reading phase

This section focuses on two parts including first, the qualitative description of some selected parts in three phases of reading activities regarding teaching and assessment procedures in ESP classes and second, a brief interview with the ESP teachers.

According to the observations of the ten ESP classes at Islamic Azad University Rasht Branch, two subcategories including "*help with language*" (vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar) and "*Activating background knowledge*" (introducing the topic, guiding question and giving pre reading task) were mentioned in pre reading phase. Referring to the first category, it was found that 60 percent of ESP teachers (experienced and graduated in English or non-English majors) used direct translation from English to Persian in teaching vocabularies. In addition, neither pronunciation nor grammar were taught effectively. It was observed that an average time of about 9 minutes was spent on teaching vocabularies before reading and in most of the classes, the instructor mentioned the meaning of the words directly during reading aloud by the teacher or by students. Moreover, working on pronunciation took the average time of about 6.50 minutes of the class times. In some cases no time was spent on teaching pronunciation effectively. About the grammar, the average time about 1.5 minutes was spent in all classes entirely. It means that the teachers did not pay attention to teaching grammar.

Regarding to the second category, it was observed that introducing topics was done by the instructors in the average time of about 6.50 minutes. In all of the classes except for two classes, there were not any useful guiding questions and pre reading tasks to process and activate the relevant schemata necessary for comprehension of the text. In fact, the

texts lacked this kind of questions. Just two books for the students of management and Persian literature included a few pre reading activities.

Some snapshots of the observations in the Persian literature class will be presented in the following. The book was written by the teacher who adopted some relevant words to literature at first. It was followed with one literary text. Then some activities were mentioned for pre reading and comprehension check.

vocabulary and pronunciation: In this class, while the instructor was reading aloud the words one by one and translating them to Persian, the students wrote the meaning under or above of that word. Neither part of speech nor stress were checked. The words were pronounced by the teacher just once. It was done to introduce the meaning of the word and making models of pronunciation of the words. After the list of words, there was a text in which the listed words were applied. It means that the student could practice the application of new vocabularies in the text and also the learned vocabularies of previous units were utilized in the new text. This approach was not observed in the other ESP classes at all. Moreover, relevant questions to vocabulary were provided after text. A sample of the teaching process by this instructor are presented as follows.

 The students:

The students just listened and wrote the meaning.

Using above mentioned words in the text:

"Anvari, Ouhadoddin, Ali b. Vahidoddin Mohammad (b c 1126 Abbivard,d 1189/90 Balkh), Persian poet. Together with Moeezi the greatest in the circle of poets around Sanjer at the Seljuk court. Equally <u>versed</u> in poetry and the sciences of the time, mathematics, <u>astrology</u> and philosophy. He preferred the career of court poet to science, for financial reasons. That he suddenly turned to poetry, as suggested by Dolatshah and handed down by tradition, is <u>refuted </u>by the poem <u>quoted</u>, in which Anvari speaks of years of <u>previous </u>poetic activity. He was a convinced Sunnite. A false <u>prediction</u> of a gale, for which he was <u>ridiculed</u> for years, and a satire on Balkh wrongly ascribed to him, were some cause of trouble."

In fact, in order to overcome the challenges of specialized usage of vocabulary, learners were taught about the different types of vocabulary, its usage, and specific strategies that would help them acquire vocabulary. A sample of relevant exercises for vocabularies is presented below. (See Appendix A)

The students:

The students read the questions one by one and answered.

The instructor:

The instructor corrected the students' answers and sometimes translated the sentences for more comprehension.

A. Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. (T) For true statements and (F) for false statements.

   1- ....Anvari was one of the poets of the Seljuk court.

   2- .... Anvari was not only a poet, but also an astrologer.

B. Circle a, b, c, or d which best complete the following items.

1- 1988 was the year of the dragon in Chinese.......... .

   a. Astrology   b. soothsayer   c. divination   d. presage

2- We must have respected for ....

   a. Custom   b. habit   c. usage   d. way

C. Synonyms: From this list choose a synonym for the word in bold type in each sentence.

> Prognostication- attend- clear- verse

   1- A Prediction of the likely outcome of the next election.

   2- His first poems were published when he was nineteen.

Grammar: There was no discussion of any relevant grammatical points inherent in the text, and it seemed to be presupposed by the teachers that the students had already learned the structures. For instance, meanwhile in the process of reading, it was observed that the major problems of the students were related to sentence structure. More specifically, they did not know which words or phrases serve as subject or verb in a sentence. As an example of the case, most students had difficulty in comprehending the following compound sentences:

That he suddenly turned to poetry, as suggested by Dolatshah and handed down by tradition, is refuted by the poem quoted, in which Anvari speaks of years of previous poetic activity.

For solving this problem, teacher just translated the sentences in isolation and then gave a fluent translation to Persian.

Activating background knowledge: On the basis of observations, at first the students' background knowledge was activated by relevant literary information about the topic. The unit was about "Anvari" (the Persian poet) during which the instructor explained about his biography in Persian and then started to read the text. (See text in appendix A). Then, there were not any guiding questions for students to think about as they started to read. For example some Wh-questions with "Why" or "What" could give the students a reason to read or guide them toward the main points.

It is worth mentioning that this part of observation is in line with previous research by Rawson and Kintsch (2004) which has investigated the positive effects of prior knowledge on reading comprehension. In fact, utilizing some pre-reading activities has a positive effect on ESP reading comprehension. Activities such as pre-teaching vocabulary section, providing a list of definition and explanation of complicated sub-technical vocabularies, concrete illustrations and some questions at the beginning of each lesson as well as giving prior information through restoring to pre-reading activities might be a useful tool for teachers of ESP to facilitate the learner's reading comprehension ability.

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