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READING IN ENGLISH: INFERENCE SKILLS OF YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Abstract *Reading comprehension is a very complex process that depends on a number of cognitive and metacognitive skills and processes, the crucial ones being inference skills. The paper presents the results of a study that aimed to identify the inference skills of young learners of English as a foreign language in comprehending a narrative text (a comic strip). The participants were 90 young learners aged 11, drawn from a state primary school in Serbia. The post-reading reflection protocol was used to collect qualitative data on the participants' inference skills, while quantitative data were collected by means of a reading task. The results indicate that successful readers applied a variety of inference skills, flexibly combining local inferences (referential, case and antecedent causal inferences) with global inferences (superordinate goal, thematic, and character emotional reaction inferences), and monitoring their comprehension while reading. By contrast, less successful readers relied mainly on local inferences, not monitoring their understanding, which resulted in poor scores in the reading test. The study highlights the need for integrating the development of young English language learners' inference skills into reading programmes.*

Keywords: *young English language learners, reading comprehension, post-reading reflection protocol, local and global inferences, world knowledge.*

Introduction

Reading Comprehension and Inference Skills

Reading comprehension is a very complex process that depends on a number of cognitive and metacognitive skills and processes, the crucial ones being inference skills. Reading knowledge and skills of successful readers operate very quickly in working memory at lower and higher level processing, resulting in text comprehension through the formation of a text model of reading comprehension (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Nation, 2005). The reader's background knowledge (schema) and inference skills help the formation of a situation model of reader interpretation, without which comprehension is rather shallow (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). The construction of a textbase and situation model in reading comprehension is very much dependent on inferencing, i.e. "the ability to use two or more

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pieces of information from a text in order to arrive at a third piece of information that is implicit" (Kispal, 2008, 2).

Cognitive models of reading and comprehension recognise the crucial role of inferences in connecting parts of the text to create coherence (van den Broek, Beker & Oudega, 2015). Research has pointed to different inference skills, such as: 1. coherence inference, also referred to as text-connecting or intersentence inference, which helps maintain textual integrity by establishing cohesion between sentences and by adding unstated information, such as causal links; 2. elaborative inference, or gap-filling inference, which draws on life experience and background knowledge, and helps enrich the mental representation of the text by using the information from outside the text; 3. local inference, which includes coherence inferences at the local level of sentences and paragraphs, like mapping related words; 4. global inference, which is necessary for creating a coherent representation of the whole text, like understanding the theme, the main point or the moral of a text by connecting ideas that are not explicitly stated in a text; 5. on-line inference, which is automatically drawn during reading; 6. off-line inference, which is drawn after reading, in the process of constructing a mental representation (Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Currie & Cain, 2015; Graesser, Singer & Trabasso, 1994; van der Broek et al., 2015). However, there is no agreement among researchers about the number and names of inference types.

The most comprehensive taxonomy of inference skills has been proposed by Graesser *et al.* (1994), who suggest 13 different inference types, six of which are generated on-line, in the process of reading a text: 1. referential, represented by a word or phrase related to a previous element in the text, either explicit or inferred; 2. case structure role assignment, represented by an explicit noun phrase with a particular case structure role; 3. causal antecedent, referring to a relationship between the current and previous explicit actions, events, or states; 4. superordinate goal, a goal lying behind an agent's intentional action; 5. thematic, related to a main point or moral of the text; 6. character emotional reaction, referring to an emotion experienced by a character (Graesser et al., 1994: 375). In the process of reading a text, these types of inferences are generated automatically (without the reader's active control) or strategically (with the reader's active control), in the way that memory-based associative processes are automatic, while elaborative inferences, which add information not explicitly stated in the text, are strategic and initiated by the reader when automatic processes fail to establish coherence during the reader's monitoring and "validating textual information against prior knowledge" (van der Broek et al., 2015: 99). Automatic processes predominate in reading a text about a familiar topic (when background knowledge is easily accessible), but there are substantial individual and developmental differences in applying strategic processes for making more elaborative inferences (van der Broek et al., 2015). The inferences that relate to semantic relations, like referential and causal/logical (backward and forward causal inferences which allow the reader to identify links between events and facts in one sentence with those in another sentence) "most directly contribute to comprehension and a coherent representation of the text" (van der Broek et al., 2015: 94).

Obviously, without inferencing while reading, it is impossible to integrate information within the text and to fill in the information that is implicit (Currie & Cain, 2015), both for adult and young learners.

Children's Inference Skills

With respect to beginning readers' comprehension skills, there have been numerous studies of the processes children engage in while reading and comprehending a text, indicating that at the beginning of learning to read children are primarily learning to decode and identify words, so their reading may be limited to literal meaning (textbase, i.e. the meanings of words and relations between them), while their inferencing usually needs prompting (Perfetti, Landi & Oakhill, 2005). This may be due to the age and maturity of young children, since competence with gap-filling inferences emerges later in development (Cain & Oakhill, 1999). Individual differences in inference making also involve factors like working memory and background knowledge, which determine general cognitive skills, comprehension skills and reading comprehension skills (van der Broek et al., 2015). Research indicates that with age, children develop all these skills and the ability to focus on relevant information and to access their background knowledge effectively, so that "even very young children can have extensive knowledge in a specialized area and, as a result, may make sophisticated inferences" (van der Broek et al., 2015: 109).

When measuring children's comprehension, however, reading tests provide information mainly about the product of reading comprehension, i.e. reading scores, not revealing "the processes (or deficiencies in particular processes) that resulted in the child arriving at that particular score" (Oakhill Cain & Elbro, 2015: 30). Considering the indisputable significance of inference making for reading comprehension, and the fact that "inference-generation skills at an early age predict reading comprehension at a later age" (van der Broek et al., 2015: 110), the paper aims to determine what inference skills lie behind young EFL learners' reading scores and how they relate to their success in reading.

Method

Research Aims

Our study aimed to identify the inference skills of young learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Although it sought to build on previous research on children's ability to make inferences, it was a novelty in the sense that it studied inference skills of beginning readers of English as a foreign language, while previous studies had mainly focused on English as L1 (e.g. Cain, Oakhill, Barns & Bryant, 2001; Currie & Cain, 2015). The following three research questions were posed: I. What inference skills do young EFL learners apply in comprehending a narrative text? II. How do successful and less successful young readers differ in the number and types of inference skills they apply in reading in English? III. How do inference skills relate to reading comprehension scores?

A mixed-method approach was used in the study and both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Although this approach to studying L2 acquisition has increasingly been used in research, it is still relatively new in the area of young learners' L2 learning (Lindgren & Enever, 2017), making our study a potentially valuable contribution to linguistic research.

Sample

The participants were 90 fifth-grade students in a state primary school in the north of Serbia, whose average age at the time of the research was 11.9 (see Table 1). The participants were drawn from a large-scale study that involved 502 participants from six state primary schools (marked S1-S6 in Table 2), located in different geographical regions of Serbia (Savić, 2014), and came from School 6, a state primary school with the best reading scores in the survey (see Table 2). The participants were all the students in the school attending Grade Five at the time of the study (four classes, comprising 24, 20, 27 and 19 learners each, taught by two English language teachers), forming a representative (probability) sample.

Table 1. The sample background information.

Background Information	**Sample (N = 90)**
Average Age	M = 11.19 (SD = .28)
Boys	52.2% (N = 47)
Girls	47.8% (N = 43)
Mother Tongue	Serbian
Reading Test Score	M = 5.54 (SD = 1.67)

All the participants had been taught the English curriculum from Grade One (age 7) with two 45-minute lessons a week, and the survey of their reading skills was conducted after four years of formal English study, of which the last two involved the development of reading skills. The children participated in the study voluntarily, and had previously been informed about all the details regarding the survey of their reading skills, as well as of their right to withdraw from it at any time.

Instruments and Procedures

The data were collected by means of a reading task, post-reading reflection protocols, and a background questionnaire. The reading skill assessment instrument was *Early Language Learning in Europe* (ELLiE) study reading research tool, a set of comic strip pictures adapted by the ELLiE team, validated in the ELLiE survey (Enever, 2011), and piloted in a Serbian school before the survey. The tool consisted of three strips of pictures, the first and the third strip containing three pictures each, while the second one had four pictures. There were 16 speech bubbles in all, and the text had been erased from seven speech bubbles (representing seven items of the reading task). The reading task involved filling in the empty speech bubbles with a text by choosing from the options which had one distracter per each strip. The correct answers were each given a point, so the total scores ranged from 0 to 7. Each item was preceded by a prompt, either as a text in a speech bubble, or a picture. The storyline of the comic strip was as follows (Szpotowicz & Lindgren, 2011: 134): "Tony is preparing a snack in the kitchen. When he turns around to take out chocolate spread from the fridge, his bread and orange juice disappear, leaving an empty plate and an empty glass. The doorbell rings and his friend

Tina appears. Tony tells her about the mystery and she gets an idea. They put a banana by the kitchen window and pretend to go out of the kitchen. A monkey appears in the window to grab the banana. The children are surprised to see it and then watch the monkey finish the banana on the table saying that it probably escaped from the zoo."

The qualitative data were collected in the form of post-reading reflection protocols that comprised the participants' explanations of the reasons for having chosen particular answers in the reading task. The participants had been instructed to write down in their native language (L1) the reasons for choosing each answer, and to point to the clues that had helped them to make inferences (e.g. a certain word, or a phrase, or the whole sentence which they had understood, or an object in the picture). Our implementation of a comic strip multiple-choice completion task as a reading assessment tool (instead of the more usual task of answering comprehension questions based on a text), and measuring inference skills by means of a post-reading reflection protocol (an instrument rarely used in written form with young learners), was a novelty in L2 linguistic research in Serbia. The post-reading reflection protocols were aimed at contributing to a more in-depth understanding of the participants' inference skills.

Data Analysis

All quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, a quantitative data analysis package, while detailed coding schemes were devised by the researcher drawing on previous studies on inference skills, and were used for analysing post-reading reflection protocols.

Results

Reading Task Results

The reading test achievement of the sample is presented in Table 2. It can be seen that more than 40% of the participants successfully completed all 7 items in the reading test, and that a very small number of the participants (N=14, or 15.5%) scored fewer than half of possible points.

Table 2. The sample's reading test scores (frequencies and percentages of points achieved on the scale 0-7).

Scores		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	1.1
	1.00	1	1.1
	2.00	1	1.1
	3.00	11	12.2
	4.00	10	11.1
	5.00	12	13.3
	6.00	15	16.7
	7.00	39	43.3
	Total	90	100.0

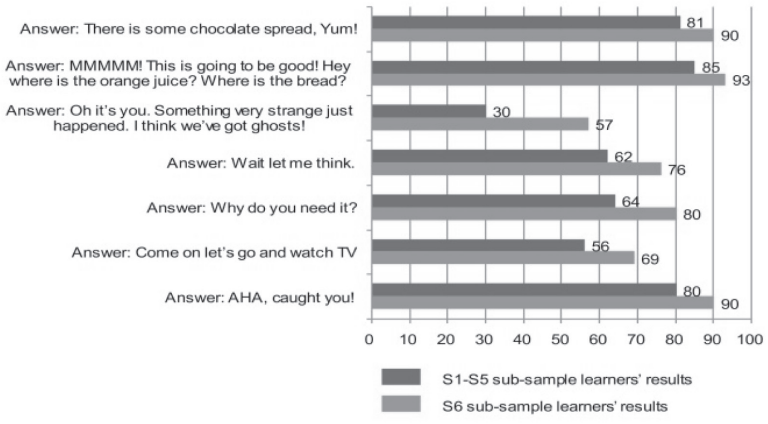
The mean score of the sample was the best among the six groups in the large-scale study (5.54, SD=1.67; total scores ranged from 0 to 7) and was much higher than the average score in the large-scale study (see Table 3).

Table 3. The paricipants' (S6) reading outcomes as compared to the results in the large-scale study.

School	Participants (N)	Mean (min=0, max=7)	Std. Deviation
S1	80	4.94	1.80
S2	85	4.40	1.97
S3	75	4.43	1.73
S4	71	4.51	1.92
S5	101	4.57	1.73
S6	**90**	**5.54**	**1.67**
Total	502	4.75	1.84

To determine the statistical significance of the above differences the independent-samples t-test was applied for the two groups: S6 group (the sample, N=90) and S1-S5 group (N=412). The results of the t-test showed that the difference in reading scores of the two groups was statistically significant ($p<0.01$ for items 3, 4, 5, and 7; $p<0.05$ for items 1, 2 and 6). Considering the fact that our paper cannot cover a number of factors, both individual and contextual (Enever, 2011; McKay, 2006; Murphy, 2014; Savić, 2016), that might have influenced the sample's (S6 group) reading outcomes, we focused on the sample's inference skills as a unique variable for the purposes of writing the paper. As the reading task comprised seven items that were sequenced in terms of lexical (syntactic and semantic) difficulty, and also differed in the scaffolding provided by the pictures and the prompts (becoming progressively more challenging), Figure 1shows reading scores across seven items expressed in percentages of success for the sample (S6) and S1-S5 group.

Figure 1. Reading task achievement rates (across seven items) of the sample (S6) as compared to S1-S5 group.



It can be seen that the scores for both the sample (S6) and the S1-S5 group differed considerably across the items, indicating a range of item difficulty and differences in comprehension success. However, the sample's scores were significantly higher than those of S1-S5. Also, the scores indicated that item 3 was the most difficult and item 2 the easiest for both the sample and the S1-S5 group, which corresponded to the linguistic complexity of the items and the need for making different types of inferences.

With the aim of uncovering the comprehension skills used by the sample's successful participants, we transcribed, coded and analysed the sample's post-reading reflection protocols.

Results of the Post-Reading Reflection Protocol

The post-reading reflection protocols of the sample were used for the qualitative study of reading comprehension. Table 4 presents quantitative data showing that a great majority of the participants reflected on their comprehension processes, explaining their answers.

Table 4. The number of post-reading reflection protocols per individual items of the reading test (in percentages).

	Item 1	**Item 2**	**Item 3**	**Item 4**	**Item 5**	**Item 6**	**Item 7**
Number of protocols per individual items (in %)	92	92	83	74	83	69	73

The analysis of the protocols was conducted by reading through the participants' protocols, determining the dominant inference skill in each statement, and coding it, so that the type of inference appliedbecame obvious. The coding produced a list of six types of inference skills, which are listed and defined in Table 5. Illustrative examples from protocols are also given, though they can be understood as combining at least two inference types (and the ones they illustrate here can be considered as dominant).

The above six types of inference skills comprised three local type inferences, used for achieving local coherence (numbers 1, 2 and 3), and three global type inferences (numbers 4, 5, and 6), applied for creating global coherence covering the whole text (Graesser et al., 1994; Currie & Cain, 2015). Both referential inference and case inference helped the participants achieve local coherence in solving items 1 and 2 by mapping the picture and text clues as elements of the textbase construction (Kinch & Rawson 2005: 214), using word meanings, logical implications and argument overlap (coreference, like repeated words *orange juice - orange*), and by referring to the story character (a boy named Tony) and his actions in the pictures as well as to the concrete objects referred to in the text (*chocolate spread)*. Moreover, successful comprehenders further combined referential and case inferences with an inference referring to character emotional reaction. Some of the protocol reflections include the following explanations (the numbers in brackets refer to the types of inferences listed in Table 5):

- *Because the boy in the picture is taking something brown, I think it is chocolate. And there is the word 'chocolate' in the text.* (1, 2)
- *I have chosen this answer because I see that the boy is surprised as his juice and bread are not there.* (1, 2, 6)
- *I have chosen this answer because Tony wonders where his bread has disappeared, and I have also understood the text.* (1, 2, 3)

Table 5. Taxonomy of inference skills determined in the sample's post-reading reflection protocols (based on Graesser et al., 1994, and van der Broek et al., 2015).

No.	Inference Skill	Definition	Example
1.	**Referential inference (based on semantic cues)**	Mapping pictures and words, a word/phraselinked to a previous element or constituent in the text (explicit or inferred).	*Because the boy in the picture is taking something brown, I think it is chocolate. And there is the word 'chocolate' in the text.*
2.	**Case inference (based on syntactic cues)**	Using knowledge of sentence structure, an explicit noun phrase with a particular case structure role, like an object, location, time, or an agent or a recipient.	*I chose this answer because the boy is wondering where his juice has disappeared.*
3.	**Antecedent causal inference (based on context cues)**	Connecting new information with something already mentioned in the text; a causal bridge between the current explicit action, event or state and the previous passage context.	*I chose this answer because the boy obviously wanted to know why she needed a banana.*
4.	**Superordinate goal (predicting)**	Making educated guesses about the information that will follow, indicating a goal behind a character's intentional action, predicting future consequence (based on background knowledge and previous text).	*Tina is pretending because she wants to catch the thief who has stolen Tony's food.*
5.	**Thematic**	Using knowledge about the topic, drawing on personal life experience, indicating a main point or moral of the text.	*I have chosen this answer because they wanted to cheat him.*
6.	**Character emotional reaction**	Referring to an emotion experienced by a character, caused by or in response to an action or event.	*I can see that the boy is frightened and wants the girl to know it.*

The sub-sample learners achieved very high scores in items 1 and 2 (see Figure 1), with similar response rates in the form of the post-reading reflection protocols (see Table 4). However, in solving the most difficult item (item 3), it was not enough to rely on the referential inference and case inference only, but it was also necessary to make a superordinate goal inference based on elements not stated in the text, inferences about the character's emotional reaction, causal antecedent and the theme of the text inferences. Half of the participants managed to solve item 3 (see Figure 1), and the protocols showed that the successful participants effectively made inferences about the feelings and emotional reactions of the characters in the story and in interpreting the text in the light of deeper understanding of the context, as in these examples:

- *Because I have seen that Tony recognised Tina and let her in.* (1, 2, 3, 4)
- *Because I see that Tony greets her and tells her about his problem.* (1, 2, 3, 5)

• *I can see that the boy is frightened and wants the girl to know it*. (1, 4, 6)

Items 4 and 5 were successfully solved by a majority of the participants (see Figure 1), whose reflections showed that a combination of several inference skills was needed to achieve the correct answers: antecedent causal inference; character emotional reaction; superordinate goal inference; and thematic inference. Some of the protocol reflections include the following:

• *Because she was thinking who might be the thief.* (1, 3, 4, 5)

• *Because Tina is thinking how she can find out who has taken it*. (1, 3, 4, 5)

• *I have chosen this answer because the boy was obviously interested to know why she needed a banana*. (1, 2, 3, 4)

Being the second most difficult item in our study, item 6 showed that only the participants who had managed to integrate information from adjacent clauses and to establish global coherence by making thematic inferences based on their world knowledge and personal experiences, were successful in answering the item. The successful participants also made predictions about the events that would follow, showing the ability to closely monitor their comprehension of the narrative. Some of the protocol reflections included the following:

• *Because she wants to play a trick on the monkey and make him come in to take a banana*. (1, 3, 4, 6)

• *Tina is pretending this, and she is taking Tony out of the kitchen to catch the thief.* (1, 3, 4, 6)

The last item (no. 7) was as easy for the sample as item 1 (see Figure 1). World knowledge seemed to be the key to correct inferencing, together with causal antecedent inferencing, as in these examples:

• *I have chosen this answer because it is obvious that the girl has caught the monkey who did not see the trap; I've also understood the text.* (1, 2, 3, 4, 6)

• *They are delighted because they have caught the monkey.* (1, 3, 5, 6)

These results show a range of inferences drawn by the participants in the process of reading the text and doing the reading task. The results will be discussed with the aim of determining how the participants' inference skills related to their reading success.

Discussion

The results will be analysed and discussed through the sequence of research questions.

I. What inference skills do young EFL learners apply in comprehending a narrative text?

The results indicate that in order to comprehend a narrative text, young EFL learners needed to make both local and global inferences for deeper understanding of the text (see Table 5). Their inference skills involved using a variety of cues for making different types of inferences, such as: 1. using semantic cues to make referential inferences; 2. using syntactic cues for making case inferences; and 3. using context cues for making causal antecedent inferences. Moreover, the participants' inference skills also included the following: 4. predicting on the basis of world knowledge, life experience and the previous text; 5. drawing thematic inferences based on the background knowledge about the topic and on personal experience; and 6. referring to the character's emotions resulting from the events in the story. However, while a great majority of the participants were able to successfully comprehend the text at the local level

(using inference types 1, 2, 3), global coherence was achieved by a significantly smaller percentage of those who could make elaborative inferences (types 4, 5, and 6), which confirms the findings of earlier studies (Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Currie & Cain, 2015; van der Broek et al., 2015).

Taking into account the L2 context of our study, the results indicate that young EFL learners are able to use similar inference skills as L1 readers of English, some of the skills probably being transferred from their L1 reading skills.

II. *How do successful and less successful young readers differ in the number and types of inference skills they apply in reading in English*?

The results of the study indicate that successful comprehenders were able to make a range of inferencesin order to achieve local and global coherence, and to flexibly combine several inferencesto achieve deep understanding of the text meaning. Moreover, they were able to relate their own world knowledge and life experiences to draw inferencesabout a character's emotional state and the theme of a text. Unlike less successful readers, who focused more on word meaning than on monitoring their reading, skilled readers strategically made elaborative inferences for achieving comprehension (Cain & Oakhill, 1999). Most importantly, young learners were able to explain the process thatlay behind their comprehension in English as a foreign language by correctly verbalising the links between elements and ideas in a text at local and global levels, which corroborates previous studies in the area (Perfetti et al., 2005) and indicates that good readers in L1 and L2 share inference skills.

III. *How do inference skillsrelate to reading comprehension scores?*

Comparing the percentages of correct answers in the reading test items and in the post-reading reflection protocols, it can be concluded that there seems to be a very firm link between inferencing skills and reading comprehension outcomes, and that reading comprehension is determined by inference skills. This has been argued by previous studies in the area of reading in English as L1 (Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Currie & Cain, 2015; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005; van der Broek et al., 2015), but our results indicate a similar causal relationship in the area of L2 reading.

Pedagogical Implications

With English increasingly becoming a vital factor in the academic and professional life of young people, and "literacy [being] the foundation of further learning" (Prošić-Santovac, 2009: 98), considerable attention should be paid to the effectiveness of reading curricula, especially in teaching beginning EFL readers. Moreover, young EFL learnersare specific in the sense that "children are still developing their mother tongue reading ability" (Savić, 2014: 111) while learning to read in English. Significant educational implications have, therefore, emerged from the study. To help less-successful readers, EFL teachers should support primary school children in their development of comprehension skills by teaching them how to make appropriate inferences in reading comprehension. This should involve prompting children to look for comprehension clues in an unfamiliar text (Perfetti et al., 2005), raising their awareness of a number of cues available in a text (Kispal, 2008), and showing them how to use their own world knowledge and life experience in order to achieve a deeper understanding of a text in a foreign language (Savić, 2016).

Conclusion

The paper studied the relationship between the reading outcomes and inference skills of young EFL learners, by considering both quantitative and qualitative data. Our study indicates that young learners are able to verbalise their inferences spontaneously, without being prompted, which can be considered as one of the significant contributions of our paper to the area of linguistic research. The results show that the inference skills of children reading in English as a foreign language are closely connected to their reading comprehension and success in reading. Moreover, the analysis of the post-reading reflection protocols shows that successful young EFL readers are able to effectively integrate their world knowledge and personal experiences with the text information in order to comprehend the implicit meaning of a text. These results corroborate previous studies on the types and role of inferences in reading comprehension of a narrative text (Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Currie & Cain, 2015; Graesser et al., 1994; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005; Perfetti et al., 2005; van der Broek et al., 2015), but also introduce a new perspective in the sense that they refer to young learners' reading in English as L2.

The research presented in this paper has certain limitations that should be addressed in further studies. Although our sample was a representative one, a more varied sample from various international contexts should be considered in future studies. Also, the relationship between inferencing skills and other variables affecting reading comprehension should be considered in the future.

In summary, this study highlights young learners' ability to draw inferences in reading in English as a foreign language. Its novelty lies in the use of post-reading reflection protocols for collecting young learners' verbal accounts of their reading comprehension processes, in determining six types of children's inference skills, in defining successful comprehension in EFL reading resulting from making appropriate inferences, and in making connections between EFL reading comprehension andthe cognitive ability of young EFL learners to draw inferences. The results can serve as a basis for designing young learner EFL reading curricula throughout a variety of English language learning contexts.

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ЧИТАЊЕ НА ЕНГЛЕСКОМ ЈЕЗИКУ: ВЕШТИНЕ ЗАКЉУЧИВАЊА УЧЕНИКА МЛАЂЕГ ОСНОВНОШКОЛСКОГ УЗРАСТА

Апстракт *Читање са разумевањем је веома сложен процес који зависи од великог броја когнитивних и метакогнитивних вештина, од којих су кључне вештине закључивања. У раду се презентују резултати истраживања чији циљ је био да се идентификују вештине закључивања ученика млађег узраста у читању наративног текста (стрипа) на енглеском као страном језику. Учесници у истраживању су били ученици млађег узраста (укупно 90), старости 11 година, који су похађали редовну основну школу у Србији. Квалитативни подаци о вештинама закључивања учесника прикупљени су вербалним протоколом, док је тест читања био инструмент којим су прикупљени квантитативни подаци. Резултати показују да су успешни читачи примењивали разноврсне вештине закључивања при читању са разумевањем, флексибилно комбинујући локалне закључке (закључивање на основу семантичких, синтаксичких и контекстуалних знакова), са глобалним закључцима (предвиђање, закључивање о теми/поруци текста, и закључивање о емоционалној реакцији ликова у тексту), уз проверавање сопственог разумевања у току читања. Насупрот томе, мање успешни читачи ослањали су се углавном на локалне закључке, нису проверавали сопствено разумевање, и остварили су лоше резултате на тесту читања. Истраживање указује на потребу за применом наставних метода којима би се развијале вештине закључивања ученика млађег школског узраста у настави читања на енглеском као страном језику.*

Кључне речи: *ученици млађег основношколског узраста који енглески језик уче као страни, читање са разумевањем, вербални протокол, локални и глобални закључци, опште знање и лично искуство.*

ЧТЕНИЕ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: УМЕНИЯ ПОНИМАНИЯ У УЧЕНИКОВ МЛАДШЕГО ШКОЛЬНОГО ВОЗРАСТА

Резюме *Чтение с пониманием - очень сложный процесс, который зависит от большого числа когнитивных и метакогнитивных умений и навыков, ключевыми из которых являются заключение и понимание. В статье представлены результаты исследования, направленного на выявление данных навыков и умений у учеников младших классов при чтении повествовательного текста (комикса) на английском как иностранном языке. Участниками исследования были ученики младших классов основных школ в Сербии (всего 90), в возрасте 11 лет. Качественные данные о навыках собраны путем вербального протокола, а тест чтения был инструментом для сбора количественных данных. Результаты показывают, что успешные читатели пользовались различными умениями и навыками в понимании прочитанного текста, гибко сочетая локальные выводы (сделанные на основе семантических, синтаксических и контекстуальных смыслов), с глобальными выводами (предвидение, заключение о теме текста и эмоциональной реакции персонажей), проверяя свое собственное понимание при чтении. Напротив, менее успешные читатели главным образом опирались на локальные выводы, не проверяли собственного понимания, получили плохие результаты при решении тестовых заданий по чтению. Исследования указывают на необходимость применения методов обучения, вляющих на развитие навыков заключения и понимания у учеников младшего школьного возраста при обучении чтению на английском как иностранном языке.*

Ключевые слова: *ученики младшего школьного возраста, изучающие английский как иностранный язык, понимание прочитанного, вербальный протокол, локальные и глобальные выводы, общее знание и личный опыт.*