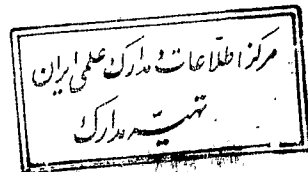


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In the Name of Allah



**Tarbiat Modarres University**  
**College of Humanities**

*Master of Arts Thesis in Teaching*  
*English as a Foreign Language*

*The Effect of Pre-Conceptualization on*  
*Reading Comprehension in ESP*  
*(in Navigation)*

*By*

*Esmail Hassan Nejad*

*Advisor*

*Dr. Ali Afkhami*

*Tehran, Iran*

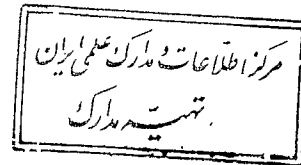
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Tarbiat Modarres University  
College of Humanities  
English Department

The Effect of Pre-Conceptualization on  
Reading Comprehension in ESP  
(Navigation)

۱۳۷۴ / ۲ / ۷



By  
Esmail Hassan Njad

Committee of final examination

*A. Afshari* Dr. Ali Afshami, Advisor  
*A. Akbar Mirhassani* Dr. Sayad Akbar Mirhassani  
Head of English Department  
and reader

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*Dedicated*

*To My Wife*

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*The Effect of Pre-Conceptualization*

*On Reading Comprehension*

*in ESP*

*(Navigation)*

*Abstract*

The investigation reported in this study was undertaken to determine whether there would be any effect on the reading comprehension of the navigational students in ESP course, if the pre-conceptualization instruction is used.

Students need to be aware of their level of comprehension as they read. Research result indicated that many students are not aware that meaning is the goal of reading. On the other hand, research showed that a high level of proficiency in English is not sufficient for speed reading and comprehension, (Coady, 1979). This is because of the poor background knowledge of the students. So, the background knowledge of the readers plays a very significant role in the process of reading. Falk (1978) maintains that reading is an active process. Readers must interact with the written material. This interaction occurs at least on

three levels: visual, linguistic, and concept processing. Among these, concept one is considered important. Concept processing implies that reading is partly a process of relating new knowledge to old one. What we read must be related to our previous knowledge of the world: otherwise full comprehension will be impossible.

To do the research, two groups of students were selected, 30 in each. They were all male ones in the college of marine sciences and techniques of Sepah in Chalus who were majoring their ESP course in navigational field. They were divided in two-30-group, experimental and control groups.

For the two groups, a Michigan test and comprehension test as pre-tests, and a comprehension test as post-test were conducted. The results obtained through statistical analysis, supported the hypothesis and rejected the null one.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### *1.1. Background and Purpose*

Foreign language learners of English around the world frequently need to read specialized English language materials as part of their university course work. The Navigational students need to study and read most of their materials in English. As this field is new in Iran, there is a great need to learn how to read texts in English.

A traditional view held by the instructors in such specialized course is that the knowledge of the technical terms will provide the foreign language reader with what he reads, particularly in scientific texts. However experience has shown that even students with mastery over the technical terms become frustrated in reading technical English. Mackey, et al, (1979) states that some FL readers are handicapped because their knowledge of English is insufficient to pick up the necessary linguistic cues. Other poor FL readers seem to lack adequate processing strategies rather than the knowledge of English. Yorio

(1979) claims that difficulty in learning to read in a foreign language can basically be traced to the lack of knowledge of the target language. i.,e. success in reading a second language is directly related to the degree of proficiency in that language (p.21). On the other hand, Coady (1979) maintains that great number of students who have a high level of proficiency in English read very slowly and with poor comprehension. Considering this situation would lead us to infer that these students have a poor background knowledge in their reading. In other words, this is a reading problem, not a language problem. To prepare the students for such readings in English, and also for better comprehension, there is a need to give them a background knowledge about the grammar, technical terms, and reading. It is believed that if the students master these elements, they will be able to read their ESP materials with little difficulty. This will help the readers to manipulate the text in a way that they possess a relevant schema for understanding their specialized materials. Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of pre-conceptualization on reading comprehension to navigational students on their reading and understanding ability. To do so, an attempt has been made to find an answer to the following question:

- What is the effect of preconceptualization on reading comprehension in ESP (for Navigational students).

### *1.2. Significance of the Study*

Researchers have shown that reading is only partially visual and that the amount of information provided by the reader is more than the information included in the text. So, the background knowledge of the readers plays a very significant role in the process of reading. Considering the above, the outcome of this study could be helpful to the followings:

1. FL teachers who seek for some way to help their students to improve their reading ability and comprehension. This would surely affect their teaching methodology.

2. Textbooks can be designed in such a way as to provide the students with sufficient knowledge for quick and better comprehension.

3. Test writers could provide reading tests with a view to measuring the students' skills in quick comprehension rather than just testing the new vocabulary, structure, and some factual information in a reading selection.

### *1.3. Statement of the problem*

Reading and comprehending foreign language texts are considered to be hindered in such a way that the full understanding of the authors' intentions fails to take place, since reading is a process involving the activation of relevant knowledge and related knowledge skills to accomplish an exchange of information from one person to another. Reading requires the reader to focus attention on the reading materials and integrate previously acquired knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written. It is believed that reading and comprehending passages written in a foreign language can be greatly facilitated and promoted through giving directionality to the learners' perceptions, ideas and expectations developed with respect to the content of the texts involved.

One of the most significant problems of Iranian students in understanding a text is their skill problem. Iranian students take a longer time to read an English passage and consequently comprehend less, because they have never been taught how to read rapidly in their own language. On the other hand, in teaching reading as the objective of an ESP course, the teacher focuses merely on reading and considers it his legitimate right to resort to any possible way to enable the

students to learn and improve the desired skill.

Another important problem is that non-native learners rely more heavily on syntactic clues than semantic and don't attend to word stress and sentence stress. Considering the above mentioned problems the present study has been conducted. It is an attempt to investigate the effect of preconceptualization on reading comprehension in ESP (for Navigational students).

#### *1.4. Hypothesis*

Using the method of pre-conceptualization non reading comprehension in ESP will cause in a more semantic attention than syntactic, that is, getting more lexical meaning than structural one. In this investigation it is attempted to test the following hypothesis:

*"Pre-conceptualization will affect the comprehension of the readers in ESP."*

To be safe in this regard, a null hypothesis is considered to be as follows:

*"There is no effect of pre-conceptualization on reading comprehension in ESP for navigational students."*