An Analysis of the ESP for Economics: Approaches to Determine the Feasibility of a Reading Program at Secondary Level as

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Abstract
This case study is examining the overarching approaches to second language (L2) reading instruction reflected in the Libyan ESP secondary three curriculum and how well this curriculum prepares students for tertiary reading in the ESP field. The Libyan context was chosen because it highly values ESP instruction and has many similarities with other English for specific purposes (ESP) countries, in terms of ESP reading issues at the tertiary level. The research questions for this study are divided into two parts as follow: the first part is to examine the alignment of Communicative Approach with the Libyan ESP Secondary 3 Reading Curriculum; the second part is to examine the extent to which the Libyan ESP Secondary 3 Reading Curriculum prepares secondary school students for Reading in English for Economics Academic Programs at the university level. This explorative study is using document reviews as the primary data collection and analysis method. The Libyan ESP Secondary three Curriculum and the ESP secondary textbook is analyzed using Sidek's (2010) revised model of Richards and Rodgers's (2001) framework for analyzing EFL teaching.

Introduction

In the 21ˢᵗ century, English language has successfully outnumbered the competition to be known as the universal language for trade and knowledge transfer. Around the world, numerous examples can be taken about the growing adoption of English as a medium of education, communication and instruction (Schneider, 2007). This research paper is a reflection of concentrated efforts made to explore suitable association between reading instructions and curriculum in English for Specific purposes (ESP) countries, in general and Libya, in particular. The research paper chooses manifest content analysis to determine theories and instructional approaches to the acquisition and reading of second language in Libyan secondary education programs. The research paper also provides assessment of cognitive demand of reading skills reflected in secondary ESP for economics reading curriculum and instructional practices.

Question 1 - Theories and Instructional Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Second Language Reading

In a broader context, teaching of language for general and specific purposes is clearly distinguished; the former emphasizes on the teaching of language that a student is normally exposed to in his/her school while the latter signifies the teaching of language for specific people, for example, economics students. In the discipline of instructing/teaching second language, Richards & Rogers (1986) aver that the theories of learning as well as language have repeatedly highlighted pedagogy as an important element. In Libya, language pedagogy can be illustrated by the key approaches that are task-based, oral-situational or notional-functional. In this research paper, assessment of second language acquisition and second language reading is conducted by taking into consideration three important instructional approaches of second language acquisition theories. These instructional approaches include socio-cultural, behaviourism and cognitive information processing.

According to Wang (2009), use of behaviourism or structuralism theory may help to identify certain approaches such as the method of grammar translation (GT) to help understand grammar rules or improve vocabulary through reading. In line with the third year text book and curriculum specification document of ESL for economics, structuralism theory may be reflected in Libyan ESL secondary reading curriculum if it promotes reading comprehension through dictionary, and pictures and TV programs. According to classroom observations, structuralism theory is reflected in Libyan ESL secondary reading curriculums when an instructor intends to engage students in read and fill the blank, read and solve the problem and similar passage reading activities. In L2 reading, Koda (2005) avers that the application of SLA theory of cognitive processing-information can be measured through the processing of textual, linguistic and text synthesized information. Classroom examples of SLA under such approach can be taken from the instructions that require students to read and process information from a/an article, skimmed text, conversation or paragraph to provide answers or solution to a particular question or problem.

The research paper also assesses Libyan third year ESL for economics reading curriculum in the light of socio-cognitive theory of SLA; in this theory, approach for communicative instructions characterizes language learning nature as social and

cognitive. Since the research paper intends to explore the reflection of SLA theories and instructional approaches in Libyan third year ESL for reading curriculum of economics, socio-cultural theory of SLA is highly significant as it determines language as an essential tool for the intercession of cognitive development of a student. Under this theory, second language acquisition and second language reading can be effective if it takes into consideration the combined effect of social and cognitive interaction, and perfunctory aspects of teaching and learning a language (Atkinson, 2002). In the context of L2 reading, examples of socio-cognitive and socio-cultural based communicative instructions can be taken from statements that require a student to read and respond to a list of questions related to a paragraph. Moreover, examination indicates that the exemplary statements of ESL reading curriculum under socio-cultural theory can be identified as chart reading and answering related questions and rephrasing a piece of information deducted from a text.

With specific context of Libya, this research paper is inclined towards the exploration of only specific-purpose; therefore, the earlier stated research question is analyzed through a combination of selective theories and instructional approaches. The research paper examines SLA and second language reading in Libyan secondary level by applying structuralism, socio-cultural, cognitive information processing and socio-cognitive instructional approaches and the above identified SLA theories to the text book and secondary curriculum for third year ESL students. Research evaluation indicates that 68.33% of ESL textbook reading tasks seem to be based on the theory of cognitive information processing while 59.74% of the curriculum specification document of ESL provides evidence for the inclusion or reflection of the theory of cognitive information. At third year secondary reading curriculum of ESL students, observations provide evidence for the prevalence of grammar translation under structuralism theory of SLA in the reading-related statements of ESL curriculum.

Opposing to these statistics, assessment of socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories suggests that almost 5.11% of ESL textbook statements related to reading comprehension reflect the approaches and theories of communicative instructions. On the other hand, similar evaluation of specification document of ESL curriculum indicates that 8.90% of reading statements are in compliance with the communicative instructional approaches and theories of SLA. However, classroom observations determine that the specification document of ESL curriculum pays no significant attention of incorporating the underpinning approach of communicative language teaching i.e. the socio-cultural theory. Therefore, observations provide as low as 6.15% depiction or reflection of earlier stated communicative approaches in the third year secondary reading curriculum of ESL students.

In line with the above evaluation, research statistics show that 63.5% of ESL curriculum statements related to reading surely reflect the SLA theory of cognitive information processing. In other words, it can be stated that ESL reading curriculum for third year secondary level students is developed in accord with the SLA theory that requires students to individually process information. Therefore, research evaluations provide little evidence in support of the claim that reading statements of ESL curriculum for third year secondary level students reflect communicative curriculum. As a result, research brings an important issue onto the surface i.e. Is the

initially developed ESL reading curriculum for third year secondary level in aligned with the communicative instructional approach to reading/learning language?

Moreover, the research evaluation also indicates that the above stated research outcomes are not in line with the actual instructional practice of classroom reading in ESL. According to statistics, socio-cultural theories rank first with the highest relative percentage of 65.8% while structuralism theories rank second with a percentage of 29.7%. In addition, 2.61% of research results also put emphasis on the significance of incorporating socio-cognitive theories. In ESL textbook and specification document of curriculum, theory of cognitive information processes is found to be certainly focused; however, in the actual practice, only 1.82% of instructional emphasis has been given to this approach. Consequently, research outcomes can be interpreted in support of the fact that ESL instructors/teachers practice few aspects of communicative theories of language learning in the classroom environment.

Consonant with the above quoted statistics, the research evaluates and infers that the lack of reading skills among the ESL students of third year secondary level is due to the observed misalignment of SLA theories. Research evaluation to the notion that SLA theories are misaligned at the third year secondary level is made through a combination of sources including classroom instructions for ESL language reading, ESL textbooks and the curriculum specification document of ESL. The research explored that ESL teachers adhere to few aspects of communicative language teaching to prepare classroom reading instructions in accord with the socio-cultural theory. Contrarily, the two key documents i.e. the ESL textbook and the specification document of ESL curriculum provide mere implementation of socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories relative to cognitive information processing and structural theories of SLA.

In addition to instructional approaches, the research also examines theories related to second language reading by analyzing the reading tasks designed and incorporated in the curriculum. According to research, third year ESL for reading curriculum of economics is evaluated through three main theories including interactive, top-down and bottom-up. In the absence of communicative components, instructional approach of the whole language is categorized as non-interactive instructional approach of the whole language. The top-down reading theory illustrates a process in which meaning is derived through a whole reading process. According to research, top-down theory of reading mainly concentrates on the higher order text processing skills. In addition, top-down reading theory is also found to use the interactive instructions of whole language as a case in point. Conversely, being an L2 reading communicative approach, the top-down reading theory partially reflects the whole language instruction. Since reading task definitively emphasizes on the substantial interaction with the activity of reading; therefore, only a part of the whole language instruction is reflected in the top-down reading theory. Under bottom-up theory, a process of second language learning is driven by text; hence, it requires the related exercises of reading comprehension to implement instructional approaches such as grammar translation for reading second language. In accord with this theory, Libyan third year ESL for economics reading curriculum need to incorporate learning exercises of word recognition and phonological processing to reflect the L2 reading's bottom-up theory.

In the Libyan context, emphasis is put on the reading tasks that prefer high order text processing, for example, printed articles and reports. In this manner, reading text

coding is observed as a reflection of non-interactive whole language instructions and the top-down theory of L2 reading to determine classroom activities or instructions that emphasize on individual reading in a non-interactive manner. Opposing to this, reading tasks with lower order text processing requirements, for example, tasks that require reading and acquiring word meanings through the understanding of word formation are selected as the reflection of instructional approach of grammar translation and the bottom-up theory. Nonetheless, the last L2 reading theory of interaction reflected in the reading statements that provide an example of process interaction of context-driven reading, reader-driven and text-driven processes is in-evident in the specification document of ESL curriculum.

According to research evaluation, 89.05% and 64.19% of reading statements in the ESL textbook and specification document of ESL curriculum respectively, reflect repeated emphasis on the top-down theory as an eminent theory of second language reading. In accord with Goodman, Smith, Meredith and Goodman (1993) such reading theory of L2 relates with the instructional approaches such as the instructional approach of whole language. Research examination suggests that the ESL reading curriculum for third year secondary level reflects top-down theory by principally incorporating tasks for individual reading. Since individual reading tasks emphasize on individual learning/reading without any interaction with the environment or the peers; hence, examples of such tasks may be quoted as the requirement of locating details and main ideas.

Reading instructions under interactive theory of reading and the top-down theory of second language reading can be differentiated with the use of reading instructions that imitate the top-down theory of reading. According to statistics, 29% of reading-related statements in the specification document of ESL curriculum are constructed under the bottom-up theory of reading the English language. Results on the same measure of assessment provide contrary evidence obtained through the ESL textbook, which indicates interactive theory as an important theory of reading the English language with the weightage of 13.41% consideration. Unlike, the specification document of ESL curriculum, bottom-up theory of reading is only weighted 7.88% as a simple theory of second language reading. Corresponding to these findings, the research provides evidence to the notion that the instructions of second language reading, as a base of measure identify misalignment between the textbook of ESL and the specification document of ESL curriculum. On a general level, 21.77% of the whole ESL reading curriculums for third year secondary level rarely reflect the theory of interactive reading. On a comparative basis, 40.12% of ESL curriculum for third year secondary level reflects the incorporation of grammar translation approach and the bottom-up theory while 138.6% of the ESL curriculum for third year secondary level mirrors the use of non-interactive reading instructions of whole language and the top-down theories.

In line with the above findings, classroom observations of reading comprehensions for the English language illustrate top-down and bottom-up instructional approaches as the favourable theories of teaching/instructing English language reading. To support the notion, evidence can be collected from the quantified values that indicate 43.5% preferences of second language teachers given to top-down theories relative to 46.8% of bottom-up theories of reading second language. Opposing to these two theories, the research identifies that only 16.68% of teachers prefer to use interactive

theories for teaching second language reading in a classroom setting. Based on these evaluations, the research infers that the pattern of instructional approaches preferred in the ESL reading curriculum of third year secondary level is irregular. Therefore, research ascertains that the second language reading approaches are misaligning with the instructional approaches of teaching communicative language.

In support, research outcomes provide no evidence for the replication of socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories in combination with the respective instructional approaches. Contrarily, the research illustrates frequent reflection of cognitive theories of information processing in the reading tasks of ESL curriculum for secondary level students. For that reason, the research paper infers that the instructional approaches and reading theories of L2 and SLA are misaligned with the communicative approach of Libyan reading curriculum for third year secondary level.

Question 2 - Level of Cognitive Demand of Reading Tasks Reflected in the Secondary ESP for Economics Reading Curriculum and the Teachers' Reading Comprehension Instructional Practice

In the recent years, technological developments have congregated the technological knowledge into a written format; thus, McGill-Franzen (2009) avers that reading is one of the key ways to acquire knowledge and language skills at the tertiary level. For a university student, one of the quickest and effective ways to acquire a secondary language such as English is through the development of sound vocabulary which is only possible if, that student intends to develop and enhance his/her reading skills. At global scale, foreign language students are increasingly facing issues in the acquisition of second language such as English mainly due to the lack of reading and comprehension skills. With digitalization and audio-visual practices, students have reduced the tendency to develop reading experience; as a consequence, students lack the ability to understand technical language which is the key to specialize in a respective knowledge area (Lyons, 2006). In agreement with Gear (2008), reading is an elementary tool to improve the language and communication skills of a person.

In the discipline of education, secondary school is considered as the building block for a student's progression to the tertiary/university stage. At secondary level, a student develops reading, writing and speaking skills so as to be prepared for the next education level; lack of attention and consideration at this stage, impedes the intended development of a student's second language development for higher level education. According to Suleiman (1983), Arab students face issues in acquiring second language due to inadequate training and mastery of the key language skills; the problem is also magnified with the difficulties faced by Arab students in the use of target language for the purpose of communication. Thus, secondary level teaching and learning process needs to be improved as a whole because it has profound impact on the preparedness of a student for studying courses such as economics at the tertiary level.

Consonant with the above assessment, cognitive development is recognized to rank among the key attributes required to master a particular language. At the secondary level, students are provided with opportunities to develop their reading, writing, speaking and cognitive development skills that facilitate their smooth progress through tertiary level. Since prior research studies suggest difficulties faced by Libyan

students in acquiring English as second language; hence, it is highly important to examine their psychological/mental development at secondary level. In reading comprehension, Chamot (1983) states that cognitive demand determines the process of internal mental development of a student; thus, understanding such process may help to examine the level of reading comprehension set at Libyan secondary level to develop ESP reading tasks. In accordance with Marzano's taxonomy of Cognitive System (2000) and Marzano et al's taxonomy of Core Thinking Skills (1988), cognitive demand of reading tasks for Libyan secondary level students is measured on two combined levels including lower and higher level. The lower cognitive level comprises of three skills including focus, recall and information collection while the higher cognitive level encompasses eight skills that include representation, organization, application, analysis, synthesis, generation, integration, and evaluation.

Correspondingly, is a student possesses these thinking skills; he/she is expected to be able to successfully process the information provided at different cognitive demand levels. At secondary level, ESP curriculum prepares a student for tertiary education; thus, it needs to develop reading coursework and program with specific target to help students develop enriched thinking skills as stated in the above taxonomies. Unlike Bloom's taxonomy, the combined taxonomy is expected to provide great assistance to teachers in fostering the cognitive skills of students at secondary level (Marzano, 2000). Nonetheless, the research paper examines cognitive demand of reading tasks via determining the lower and higher order thinking skills that students are required to be equipped with in order to master ESP reading for the next level of education. In ESP secondary three for economics reading curriculum, if only few of the cognitive demands of reading tasks are falling in the higher order; it may indicate that a student is not ready for the next level's exigent tasks of reading.

As can be seen in the table below, cognitive demand of reading in ESP secondary three for economics emphasizes on a combination of lower and higher order cognitive skills. At secondary level, students are encouraged to develop their lower order thinking skills through recalling and information gathering while for higher order thinking skills, the curriculum provides examples of synthesizing, focusing, organizing, analysing and generating skills.

READING-RELATED STATEMENTS IN THE ESP SECONDARY THREE FOR ECONOMICS CURRICULUM SPECIFICATIONS DOCUMENT	MARZANO'S TAXONOMY
1. Scan read for detailed information	Information gathering
2. Deduce and rephrase information from a text	Information gathering
3. Reading to re-tell information	Recalling / Remembering
4. Reading for specific information	Recalling / Remembering
5. Transfer information from a text onto a diagram	Organising
6. read and interpret a text	Synthesizing
8. Predicting content through reading	Generating
9. Reading to identify topic sentence	Focusing
11. analyse and express opinions (agree/disagree)	Analysing

Figure 1: Reading related statements in the ESP secondary three for economics curriculum specification document

In order to develop in-sights into the extent to which ESP secondary level curriculum reflects cognitive demand for reading, class room observations are carried out to identify the aspects that actual class-based reading exercises cover in Libyan secondary level education. In line with the combined taxonomy of thinking skills proposed by Marzano et al (1988) and Marzano (2000); evaluation suggests that ESP secondary three for economics reading curriculum is inclusive of lower, as well as higher order cognitive demand for reading. According to classroom observations, majority of the secondary level reading curriculums are designed in a manner to emphasize on the development of analysis skill. At the same time, most of the ESP curriculum tasks focuses on nurturing higher order cognitive skills among students to help them prepare for the next level of education. In support, Whalley et al (2006) emphasize on the need for training and developing higher order cognitive demand to help students improve their reading skills for academic purposes. Likewise, the research paper evaluates that ESP secondary reading curriculum for economies trains students to tackle challenging tasks at tertiary level.

In response to the research question, research paper examines that the ESP secondary reading curriculum for economics does reflect equal consideration of lower and higher cognitive skills to help students prepare for university academics and reading task challenges. The research evaluation indicates that selected curriculum is in synchronization with the higher education demands to prepare students with enhanced thinking/cognitive skills to depict better second language such as English reading comprehension.

As identified by the classroom findings, low cognitive demand for ESP in Libya focuses on tasks that are based on focusing, recalling or information gathering as these are the generic activities that are important for every student to consider while learning economics ESP. On the other hand, high cognitive demand is required for organizing of information collected; organizing is when variety of information is presented in a haphazard manner and the information is to be well organized in a comprehending manner where the reader will easily understand the information. Organizing requires reading and then recognizing the important information that can be used for organizing; thus high cognitive demand is needed as higher attention and processing skills are required.

Furthermore, the classroom findings also present that more than organizing, analyzing activity of reading ESP materials demand high cognitive ability as analyzing is not only about reading, but understanding it along with answering the questions and identification of cause and effect. Analyzing is also based on gaining knowledge for explaining it to someone else along with applying it in real situations effectively. This is well supported by the findings of Marzano (2000) who is of the opinion that more than 45% of the ESP reading tasks focus on analyzing and present it as an integral reading skill for gaining success and to learn effectively for university students. Furthermore, Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, and Rycik (2002) mentioned in their research that in order to succeed in academic life of higher education in economic ESP, low as well as high cognitive skills are essentially required to help in reading and understanding tasks.

According to the classroom observation conducted, it is observed that the reading material that the teachers are developing in Libya in order to ensure that their students are proficient in high level education of ESP, are mostly based on analyzing the reading content given, that require high cognitive skills. However, Pranckeviciute and Zajankauskaite (2012) stated that in the initial stages of secondary education of ESP, low cognitive skills are required where reading tasks designed by the teachers are based on recalling, focusing and information collecting. But once the students are proficient as these task that demand lower cognitive skills, teachers develop reading tasks that are based on organizing, analyzing, applying, synthesizing, generating, evaluating and integrating in order to make their students a master of ESP as it is not about reading or understand but also about converting it into useful knowledge and information that is appropriate for the occupation.

Moreover, it was identified from the classroom learning that interpersonal and readings skills are also essential as the main mode of learning higher level of ESP; the economic ESP programs in Libya lack behind due to the inability to collaborate ESP as well as economic perspective in a typical ESP economics reading curriculum. Furthermore, as explained by Innajih (2007), students in Libya are low on reading skills even at the university level where their readings skills are to be strong enough and are essential for further learning. Additionally, their reading skills are at the initial level and not on the expert level as they score average marks on reading courses as compare to other courses taught at the university level of Libya. Similarly, through classroom observations it is witnessed that reading at the ESP is difficult as new language, words; terminologies are used in it along with an intense demand of reading as the course on a major perspective is based on readings. Students get enroll in the economic ESP courses without researching and knowing that the course is all about reading materials and working through it as this secondary ESP cannot be cleared without developing effective reading skills along with various other skills related to readings. Economic ESP curriculum cannot be useful if the teacher is not experienced in this field because the method of education and learning environment depends upon the teacher's skills, knowledge and abilities.

As identified through the classroom observations that the textbooks referred for economic ESP curriculum are considered as the most effective and authentic source of teaching because they are approved by the Education Ministry of Libya; however, the other reading essential are usually not developed by the teachers due to lack of adequate guidelines and procedures. Amirian (2013) conducted an experiment where one group of students was being taught ESP through traditional methods of teaching whereas the other group was taught through reading learning methods. The results indicated that for ESP students, reading methodology was high effective than that of traditional teaching as ESP is a different nature and type of study where reading helps in acquiring knowledge and to learn more about the specific purposes related to the industry.

Contrastingly, Kiran (2013) mentioned that due to lack to guidelines and instructions to be followed, teachers face difficulties while developing an ESP reading programs as ESP is not based on one domain only, it caters to various disciplines including medicine, law, tourism, hospitality, aviation and many others. This creates issue for teachers for developing course material and reading essentials as a reading content for ESP medicine will be different from that of ESP of law as terminologies used in each

domain are different. As proposed by Sidek (2012), the reading material developed by teachers for secondary ESP in Libya on average is not revised on a regular basis and is not up to the mark as there is no proper procedure or methodology given for teachers to follow along with the unmet need of a specialist that helps in designing the ESP reading content.

It is observed through classroom trainings that teachers are working hard towards fulfillment of the students and the ESP requirement; a higher degree of teacher's control is emphasized due to the fact that the learning environment is created due to the control that teacher emphasizes on along with the collaboration with students in order to help and encourage them to polish their reading skills as ample reading assignments are given to students on weekends to work upon it in a manner that requires use of high cognitive skills. Interaction level of teachers and students is high in the initial period of the course as students come across various readings shocks but when they are capable of using high cognitive abilities in secondary economics ESP readings then the level of interaction reduces as the teacher wants his/her students to be confident and proficient at the secondary economic ESP level to clear the course with flying-colors.

Furthermore, It is comprehended through the acquired classroom trainings that the capability of the student regarding reading and using of cognitive abilities also dependents upon the easiness and complexities of the reading material given as a easy reading material will require lower cognitive skills as compare to a difficult reading material that requires greater time along with variety of higher level cognitive and interpersonal skills. However, it depends upon the teacher's willingness to decide that which reading essentials are to be given to students in classroom for evaluating their reading skills. In contrast, Skelton and Willis (2004) believe that it is essential to include all the textbook readings regardless of their complexity level in the ESP curriculum because of the fact that the criteria for success in secondary ESP in Libya include reading skills as an essential part.

On an overall perspective it is identified through the classroom trainings that secondary economic ESP curriculum of Libya is based on readings and demands high as well as low cognitive abilities. However, in the initial level, lower level of cognitive abilities is required, whereas organizing, applying, analyzing, generating, evaluating, integrating and synthesizing of information and knowledge requires high level of cognitive demands. Moreover, in order to gain success in ESP academics, usage of higher level of cognitive abilities are required. In addition, Teachers play a vital role in developing the readings and creating an environment that caters to effect learning practices. However, due to lack of proper guidelines and instructions, teachers are unable to develop reading materials on their own which serves as a reason for using merely the textbooks for giving secondary economic ESP classroom knowledge.

Conclusion

It is concluded that structuralism theory is reflected in Libyan ESL secondary reading curriculums when an instructor intends to engage students in read and fill the blank, read and solve the problem and similar passage reading activities. Task-based theories can be applicable to the practice of communicative language teaching (CLT) whereas

socio cognitive theory is also applicable to SLA. 6.23% of ESL textbook statements related to reading comprehension reflect the approaches and theories of communicative instructions. Reading instructions under interactive theory of reading and the top-down theory of second language reading can be differentiated with the use of reading instructions that imitate the top-down theory of reading. In addition, the level of cognitive demand for reading tasks reflected in the secondary economic ESP requires high as well as low cognitive abilities. However, higher emphasize is placed on high level of cognitive demand due to the fact that no one can succeed and gain knowledge in economic ESP in Libya without using them as not only reading but analyzing, synthesizing, interpretation of information is also required.

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