

# Reading for Comprehension

— On the schema and strategies employed by Japanese speakers of English —

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## Preface:

The author has seen for a long time now, as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language at a Japanese college, that a good deal of the students cannot process reading material in the first and second years of college. What was particularly perplexing to the author was the fact that the students didn't appear to understand a relatively simple reading nor answer simple comprehension questions pertaining to it. Suspect as cause was the method of instruction they had received as younger students: mostly translation with grammar .

The students in the first year college EFL program at Morioka College in Japan appear to read with a lower comprehension level than anticipated. Upon cursory look, they can do the exercises in the books chosen and have even passed certain tests here. Yet, when asked questions that are relevant to the reading in question, with the text before their eyes, they cannot answer questions that the teacher has put forth in addition to the book's questions. This seemed rather strange until the book questions were furthered reviewed. It seemed to the researcher that the questions didn't pursue comprehension, but rather were a puzzle-like convention whereby the students would search for the words and find the exact spot in the text. Then they would just mimic the text. Basically, the questions were like a matching game with little expectation from the students to know more than the WH-question words or the order of yes-no questions. They mastered grammatical analysis and were quick with their dictionaries.

Is English reading instruction at the junior and senior high school level in Japan adequate? Do Japanese students really understand what they are reading in English? Can they apply the meaning they construe in translation to use in an English environment, i.e., answer questions in English about the content? I shall cite three problems I have found in the reading of my students.

Using the text in class, *Life and Sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Chapter 13, page 54, lines 6-7, let us take the case as found in the line, "People with diabetes have high levels of sugar in their blood." The students could answer the question, "Are the sugar levels in the blood high in people with diabetes?" However, only 60% could correctly answer the question, "Is there a lot of sugar in the blood of a person with diabetes?" and even fewer could correctly answer, "Is there too much sugar in the blood of a person with diabetes?" Understanding inferences was not a strong point for these students.

I suspect that there is not a clear idea of the meaning inherent in the sentence for the student possibly because he has been subjected to translation to a tee. Each nuance has a specific Japanese translation and that is it. Any paraphrase then becomes risky territory for the student. He may wonder if the phrase is not exactly the same, is there a significant difference in meaning. I noted this while observing student teachers in English class and I noted that I learned more Japanese grammar than English in each and every lesson.

In another example from the same textbook in Chapter 11, page 46, lines 14-15, “The scientists say the chemicals are in both the skin and the flesh of the apples.” One question posed after we discussed that these chemicals were good for a person (cancer-fighting or good) was, “Is the skin of the apple healthy?” Only 3 people out of 38 got that correct. The question, “Is the inside of the apple healthy?” really stumped them, they said, because they didn't know what flesh was. Another question put to the students was, “Should we take off the skin before eating the apples if we really want to fight cancer naturally?” Only 1/5 of the students could answer that. Again, teachers should wonder what the students are thinking that they can't answer these questions of simple inference. I then tried to teach my students the word flesh by using the analogy of the human body, what is under the skin is the flesh. This was a bit difficult so I added a picture and a diagram. Several students still looked puzzled. When they were allowed to use their translation dictionary, they then looked up at me and nodded with comprehension.

In case three, from *Reading Power*, second edition, page 164, the section on thinking skills, here is a sample of a commonly made mistake students have had. “Coffee grows in places with warm climates. In some parts of the world, the land is good for growing coffee but the winters are too (a) cold (b) dry (c) short d) cloudy.” Choose the best answer. A group of students were discussing this and couldn't find the right answer because they didn't know the meaning of the word, 'climate.' They were stopped dead in their tracks. Why should this be the case? Some weren't sure of the word, 'cloudy.' This played no part in the correct answer yet it stumped them. In both cases, they were bewildered until I let them use their dictionary, a translation dictionary. They absolutely refused to even consider the answer without first knowing every word in the text according to the dictionary.

In case four, taken directly from an authentic text entitled *Sally's Room*, a children's picture book with the pictures intact, from the following sentences, they were asked to answer some questions. Of the three questions below, only 1 person out of 5 could answer them correctly. The others had no idea. The use of the word, “but” had provoked little sense of contrast in meaning for the readers. They insisted that they did not understand the vocabulary after the word, “but”, It should have been drawn from context especially with the pictures in the book so clearly illustrating The meaning. Text: “How come, at school, people can be very neat and know where everything goes, but at home, they throw things around.”

Q: Is to 'know where things go' a good thing or not so good (bad)?

Q: Is to 'throw things around a good thing or not so good (bad)?

Q: What does to 'throw things around' mean?

Case five comes from a text made for Japanese students of English at the college level, *Cultural Riddles*, page 32-33, as seen below:

- 1 Akiko organized international volunteers in a ward office in Osaka.
- 2 LeeAnne, an older woman whose husband was a successful businessman
- 3 who recently had been transferred to Japan, called Akiko to volunteer, say-
- 4 ing she had plenty of time. LeeAnne started working twice a week with two
- 5 Japanese women on a project...
- 13 One day, when the group was about to start a new pamphlet, Lee Ann
- 14 called to tell Akiko that because her social life had become quite busy, she
- 15 couldn't come to help anymore.

Asked what a social life is, line 14, most of my third year students said they had no idea. A few students made guesses that it referred to working and their job. I then pointed out **key words** on lines 3-5 (volunteer, plenty of time), on lines on lines 13-15 (social life, busy, couldn't come to help). Given those clues they could guess, but until then, they just didn't use the context of the text to figure out the meaning. Instead, they used isolated vocabulary to try to construe the meaning. Though that is helpful, it must coincide with the context and they didn't even notice how their guesses were not logical. Why didn't they do this on their own? That is what reading is about.

In view of this limitation, the teacher then decided to check further to see what the students could do. Could they draw meaning from a text? Could they figure out meaning of individual words from context? It is inferred here that children's picture books provide enough content, verbal and non-verbal to allow a child to process meaning even if there are unknown words in the content. Through the use of a children's book by Dr. Seus, *I can Lick 30 Tigers today and other stories*, I endeavored to find this out. The story chosen was "The Glunk That Got Think. "

A look at the act of reading for a child either when he is listening to a story or trying to read it for himself should shed some light on this. Children from the second grade in a New Jersey elementary school in the US were asked to take the same test as the college students just to be sure that children could handle the book. The test was administered in the same way except that the children were allowed to answer orally if they preferred. Only one child gave her answers orally. She was labeled as dyslexic at school and she came from a home where the parents spoke mainly Spanish, though everyone was bilingual. She was a low level readers according to her teacher, yet, even she could comprehend the reading.

To be sure, we are not comparing the early reader who is still trying to master the phonics and letters as symbols of words to a Japanese college level student of English as a Foreign Language. These college students have mastered phonics and letter-sound equivalents. They appear to be reading the text as words and sentences yet they seem to draw little meaning from it. Why don't the words have enough meaning for them?

## *A Brief Overview of Reading Theory*

### **What is Reading?**

Reading has been said to be the process of constructing meaning from the written text (Anderson et. al. 1985) or, as thinking guided by print (Perfetti, 1986a, in Harris ). It may be defined simply as the meaningful interpretation of written language, in other words, comprehension. (Harris, Sipay, p10). However, it is truly a complex activity, a cognitive activity that happens so rapidly in the mind that it is hard to measure and even more difficult to study and define. Reading is, moreover, not only a complex activity but a private activity. Various individual factors within each of us, such as the skills and knowledge we possess while reading, our attitudes, and other variables at home, school, work and sociocultural environments may interact in a sundry of ways to influence the acquisition and development of reading and even disabilities in it. (Harris, Sipay, 1990, p.1). It is interactive. Meaningful response is at the heart of the reading process. “It can and should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imaging, reasoning, and problem-solving.” (Gates, 1949, p.3) More than intellectual meaning may be involved: Feelings of great intensity may be aroused and emotional attitudes may be deeply altered through reading.

### **Reading Comprehension**

Succinctly put, reading comprehension may be said to be a process whereby the reader combines information provided by another author via the printed text with previously possessed knowledge in order to construct an interpretation of the text. It is not an oral activity, per say. Word-recall is a reading skill that may be deemed necessary for pronunciation and dramatic invention and play, but it is not the outcome of a successful reader. Comprehension is and that is not reliant on reading aloud. It may actually hinder it.

Reading is an active process, interactive in nature. In constructing texts, authors present their ideas through words, sentences, and paragraphs that are structured in such a way as to allow for the best possible flow of communication and self-expression. Authors anticipate that readers will fill in the missing information using prior knowledge and reasoning abilities. The reader while reading, to create the meaning intended by the author, must coordinate and integrate information available from various sources – the written text, the reader’s mind and any accompanying illustration, chart, map, photograph, etc.

Reading comprehension results from the interaction of the following: recognition and perception of graphic symbols, linguistic information, cognitive skills and knowledge of specific topics and of the world in general. Comprehension depends on how well the reader’s competence in the above-mentioned areas meets the task demands, but also on how the reader employs these skills and knowledge bases. Reading comprehension is also influenced by reader motivation, interests, biases, purposes and the context in which the reading act occurs. (Harris, Sipay, 1990, p. 10)

What helps improve comprehension? It had once been felt that comprehension improved with the use and increase of reading skills but now it is looked upon more as a process that improves with the use of strategies.

One way to improve reading comprehension is to increase the number and breadth of schema that a reader has. Readers enter into a reading activity with a certain amount of background knowledge that is stored in the brain as schema. If the schema is too limited, it needs to be increased. If reading is done on a translation basis, the schema is built as a network of Japanese words and Japanese meanings for an English word. This is not a very efficient way to build up English knowledge.

Less proficient readers may have the added trouble in the process of monitoring and recognizing inappropriate schema. Often these readers become wedded to the schema they selected initially and have difficulty adjusting their initial ideas, even if they don't fit. Wade (1990) described these top-down processors as schema imposers (p. 448). They often force the text to fit their initial schema regardless of the incoming textual data. This may especially occur if they have very little other English schema to choose from. If they are relying on translation into the Japanese, they still have little to choose from that may be appropriate. The next step for them would be to consult a dictionary. However, in the case of this research, dictionaries were not permitted and, in the case of this Dr. Seuss story, a dictionary can't be used for many of the words because they are not true English words. This may then result in frustration and abandonment of the goal. Ambiguity grows higher with the lack of knowledge and the lack of strategies to figure out meaning.

Reading must meet the level of the reader and the purpose for it to have a powerful impact on him. A study by Gicking and Armstrong (1978) showed that when reading assignments were too difficult, on-task behavior and task completion and comprehension were relatively low. When the assignment was too easy, there is a high percentage of off-task behavior (like doodling).

Another strategy would be the constructive use of context global and locally. Refer back to the discussion of vocabulary comprehension in the essay in *Cultural Riddles*, pp. 32-33. There, the students didn't even consider using context to discover a meaning.

### **Vocabulary and reading comprehension**

A definite cause and effect relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge has not been firmly established, partially because vocabulary, comprehension, and cognitive ability are so deeply dependent upon each other and are highly inter-correlated. (Calfee and Drum, 1985).

Most vocabulary instruction fails to improve reading comprehension (Harris, Sipay, 1990, 515) due to five related categories; the level of word meaning needed to improve comprehension, the word meanings taught, the number of word meanings that must be known, the need for additional skill

improvement. Furthermore, the knowledge may not be transferable to another text. Most vocabulary instruction fails to produce the level of word meaning necessary for reading comprehension improvement. Reading comprehension depends on a wealth of encyclopedic knowledge, not on merely knowing a simple definition. Even if word meaning is developed adequately, it may have little impact on comprehension. (Nagy, 1988). If many of the word meanings were already known or could be derived from context, the effect of pre-teaching vocabulary would have little effect on comprehension (Harris, Sipay, 1990, 515). "Also, not all words are of equal importance for understanding a text; some are more central to obtaining meaning. It may be possible to understand a passage without knowing the meaning of every word in it." (Harris, Sipay, 1990, 515)

### **Translation**

Translation tends to place stress on minute details and nuances very important at some levels but highly useless at these lower levels where the students can't even construe general meaning. It may actually become a nuisance or interference in thinking. A good reader learns to pull out meaning by using context as much as possible. This means using skills of inference and deduction. Many teachers in the States teach these skills and other skills of guessing as part of teaching reading. The reader should have various reading skills at his disposal to combat incomprehension but this doesn't appear to be the case for the learner of English in Japan. This has not been done in the Japanese methods. Instead, it is replaced by tedious word for word translations. Mind you, it could be taught in other subjects but it has not transferred to English. This I cannot confirm.

### **The Experiment**

#### **The Questions Addressed in this Study**

Can students construe meaning of unknown vocabulary items from context? Nagy (1988) notes the idea of deriving word meaning from context, that is, without the use of a dictionary is important.

Can students understand textual meaning without understanding all the words in the printed text? Harris and Sipay and others have acknowledged that to be true.

### **Rationale**

Children learn to understand and read through context. They use neither dictionaries, nor translation. Children, regardless of their English level are relatively equipped to find the correct answers. They seem to know how to use context to learn more vocabulary and to thus learn more about the text. If children could do the comprehension and vocabulary questions, why shouldn't adults be able to? Dr. Seuss is known for the use of nonsense words throughout his works. Do these words pose a challenge to every reader or is it a threat? They are not found in the dictionary, yet, through content, we can deduce the meaning. In a sense, this author teaches the reader new vocabulary. In this way, all the readers start at the same level. The number of unknown words is

somewhat constant for all the populations targeted. To ascertain answers to the above questions, the author took a relatively well-known children's author of picture books for younger children. Children of 2-4 years old may listen to this. Others, of a little older age, seem to enjoy reading it. Moreover, they get it. The story selected, "The Glunk That Got Thunk," by Dr. Seuss from his book entitled *I Can Lick 30 Tigers Today* was chosen as the material for this experiment.

Grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and cultural background varying to some degree, the author tried to even things out a bit by using a low level picture book to help the non-native speaker adults out a little. The text used was a pure fantasy world quite different from any authentic culture, though there were some items that may have had cultural context. No text can be totally devoid of cultural context. However, because the test material had very little cultural background, the adults in this study, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, could be expected to answer appropriately according to their English level, which should be relative to their background (length of study). Hence, the more one has studied or used the language, the better one would expect his/her answers to be. Ability is based on English study experience

### Subjects

The subjects were all non-native speakers of English categorized into 2 groups: Japanese and non-Japanese. From these two basic groups, 3 sample populations were formed for this experiment. Test group 1 – Beginning Japanese adult learners of English with at least 6 years of study just starting their first year of college. All were English majors.

Test group 2 – Advanced Japanese users of English who had college level English and who used English on a frequent basis, either at work or in social circumstances. They all had overseas experienced in an English –speaking country and had travel experience as well. They all had a great interest in English. The majority were English majors including one HS English teacher of 30+ years teaching experience and several interpreters.

Test Group 3 – Non-Japanese adult learners of English with at least 4 years of English study. This included a group of foreign exchange students living in Japan as well as non-native speakers of English of all nationalities who had just arrived to the US at the time of the test and had limited practical experience with the language. None in this group were English majors, nor professed any great interest in the language. Rather, they just needed English to do their studies or job.

### Method

A set of pre-test questions was given to each student. Then, the selected story was first read straight through together with no questions asked by the listeners (students). They were instructed to follow along in their own books, exactly the same as the reader's edition complete with the color pictures, as the reader said aloud the contents adding no words of her own. Then a questionnaire

was handed out to the students to fill-out with the use of the book. This was not a test of memory nor was it timed. Students could take as much time as they wanted, but no dictionaries were allowed.

The respondents were asked to answer each question in simple English. For the children in the control group as well as the beginning group of Japanese students, special allowances were made for their responses. The children could answer orally or with a written response. The beginning level Japanese students, if they were desperately lost or unable to find an English explanation, could use Japanese, as a last resort. Only the beginning Japanese speakers were given this luxury. These beginning Japanese students were given the luxury to answer in Japanese if, and only if, they had absolute need. This was to ensure that writing as an expressive or performance skill was not interfering with the correctness of the answers. This was to get as true a look at their level of comprehension as I could. No other test group was given such an advantage. The advanced group of Japanese speakers nor any other foreign language speakers of English were given such an option.

### Test Format

The pre-reading questions were handed out to the students regarding vocabulary found in the story. The vocabulary was not isolated, but preserved in the sentences from the text. The purpose of these pre-reading questions was to insure that all populations including the control group had similar vocabulary knowledge. Both real and nonsense words from the books were selected for this part and the scores were equally as poor for all groups with no one knowing more than 2 out of 10. The pre-reading ones were just to give the researcher an idea of the extent of their base of useful vocabulary knowledge possessed for this particular test.

The actual test questionnaire was created with a total of 50 questions. This set of questions was answered by all the test takers regardless of which group they were in. The questions were of 3 major categories: vocabulary, content, and subjective or speculative in nature.

The vocabulary questions were of 2 kinds: global vocabulary and locally sensitive vocabulary all found in the book. The vocabulary was not isolated, but preserved in the sentences from the text. In both groups were real English words found in any dictionary and especially made-up words (nonsense by dictionary standards) used by Dr. Seuss in this particular story.

#### Examples:

What is a Glunk? - global

What is a Schnutz-berry as written on p. 15? - local

The content questions were of two formats: exact wordings just written in question format and paraphrased wordings using very simple words that test takers were expected to know based on the fact that they had at least 4 years of English training. They included factual questions of specific facts, of general content, and of simple analysis.

#### Examples:

On p. 16, who will be ruined?



On p. 16, who shook with fright?

On p. 15, what can you use a Schnutz-berry for?

Note: Here, answers could have been as follows: **instead of raspberries, for the stew, to eat in the stew, to pluck in the stew.**

There was also the non-factual or subjective question of three general types: supposition and analogy, prediction, or speculation.

#### Examples:

Why do you think the little girl couldn't make the Glunk leave by herself?

If you were the little girl, what other ways would you have tried?

All questions were short-answer fill-in the blanks. The subjects were instructed to answer every question to the best of their ability. They were told to leave no blanks and that a wrong answer would not be penalized. Only correct answers were graded with plus points. An empty answer blank would receive no positive nor negative points.

#### Results

Results were based on the number of correct answers in the vocabulary section and the comprehension section. It is stunning to see the differences in the level of comprehension of the non-Japanese and the Japanese EFL student. Even Japanese with more English study tended to perform at a lower level than the non-Japanese counterparts.

The highest score was a 98% achieved by a non-Japanese (Saudi Arabia) student with only 4 years of English study. Interestingly, the children's scores ranged from 84-96% but there is little need to elaborate on their scores for this study just to mention that the native speaker children could indeed perform reasonably to very well, and, as can be noted, well out-ranked the other groups.

Subjects	Overall Average	Vocabulary Section	Comprehension Section
Non-Japanese EFL	76%	68%	84%
Advanced Japanese EFL	58%	44%	72%
Beginning Japanese EFL	28%	16%	40%
Native Speaker Children (ages 7-9)	84-96%	N/A	N/A

Note: The highest overall test score was 96% by a speaker of Arabic who had studied English for only 4 years but lived in the USA for 1 year.

**Analysis of the test results** is not a simple matter by total score alone. It was important to look at the vocabulary section separate from the comprehension section and then to look within each of these categories. A quick review of the comprehension results shows a clear trend, that despite the total grade, the comprehension section scores were higher for each of the three groups than that of the vocabulary.

### **Locally-sensitive vocabulary**

This was the most difficult type of question to answer for all groups. The only correct answers came from the non- Japanese EFL users. The Japanese speakers of both high and low levels left these questions blank for the most part. Those that did answer were usually wrong except for the question about the telephone number and the meaning of a Schnutz berry.

### **Global vocabulary**

Almost everyone in each group could answer the most important question central to the plot, "What is a Glunk?" There were only exceptions in the beginning Japanese group where 6 students left it blank. Of those 6, they had left the whole test empty. In that group as well was one answer that had to be counted as correct, showing no actual comprehension. The response was, "He was greenish, not too cleanish and he sort of had bad breath," but this reply was an exact word for word copy from the text. It was made by 4 people. Other global vocabulary items answered correctly by 70% or more was regarding the meaning of the word, "thunk," which was successfully completed by the advanced Japanese and non-Japanese groups.

### **Exact-wording Comprehension of specific facts**

This, too, proved to be one of the easier questions for all groups producing the highest number of correct responses regardless of group.

### **Paraphrased Comprehension of specific facts**

This was harder than the exact wording for the Japanese. It didn't seem to have much affect on the non-Japanese participants, all who could answer 70% or more correct. The advanced Japanese group did fairly well, all answering 50% of them correct.

### **General content (paraphrased)**

This was hardest of the content bound questions for the beginners. The members of the other groups all got 70% or above whereas the beginners tended to get them wrong

Ex: How can you get a Glunk to go away?

### **Subjective**

This was difficult for the Japanese only regardless of level. Both advanced and beginner level had less than 70% average scores. The non-Japanese out-performed here with 80% of the participants getting 70% or higher on this part.

Ex: Was the Glunk good or bad?

### **Speculative**

Even the highest-level Japanese speakers of English tended to leave these blank. The non-Japanese filled in all the answers with a 60% of the test takers getting a score of 70% or above.

### **A Look at Some Obvious Trends**

Misunderstanding global vocabulary items made it hard to get the main idea of the story. Words

especially like the Glunk, for which there was a picture, was absolutely the most important word of the story. However, misunderstanding localized vocabulary didn't affect the comprehension of the main ideas, and in fact, the students could answer verbatim factual questions even using these unknown words.

Exactly worded questions could be answered without the understanding of the vocabulary, which means that the questions were perhaps not understood. Comprehension tests must be scrutinized to be sure they check for comprehension.

Only the Japanese students left blanks and lots of them per test paper, even including advanced students. This was very surprising. They refused to guess. They might be labeled as non-risk takers, which, as Wade (1990, p.446) has stated are generally bottom-up processors who view reading as a primarily a task of decoding words on the page, so focused on decoding that meaning is secondary. In contrast, 2 participants from Slovakia with only 3 years of English at the junior high level answered more than 3/4 of the test, though they only scored about 20% accuracy. Yet, they were trying to guess. Guessing is a fine strategy that is not encouraged in Japan.

Only beginning Japanese left a whole test blank. A study by Gicking and Armstrong (1978) showed that when reading assignments were too difficult, on-task behavior and task completion and comprehension were relatively low. It appears that if the ambiguity is too high, they give up.

Only Japanese left blanks in comprehension type questions of paraphrasing, conjecture, inference or a subjective or speculative nature. They seemed only willing to answer directly- worded questions about the pure fact. These students may have been influenced by their school training which mandates that they be precise and absolutely sure, rather than guess.

The test was extremely difficult for all the non-native speakers, yet, for the non-Japanese group, the majority of the participants said that it was fun and they were surprised how difficult Young English readers are. The advanced Japanese said they were shocked at the difficulty and they were sure they couldn't do it well, but it was interesting to many of them. The beginning Japanese said it was too hard and they didn't like the test. This was odd because it was a really vibrant picture book and the reader narrated it with lots of expression. Children loved it, but not the Japanese students. Shouldn't reading be a challenge and still fun?

#### Overall Look at the results

It is interesting to note that, though the test takers could not always answer the vocabulary, they could still do the comprehension questions, showing the following things:

(1) Vocabulary is not always necessary, though useful, is not necessary for true comprehension. There are limitations to vocabulary knowledge and again, I refer back to Nagy (1988) who has said that even when there is adequate word knowledge, comprehension does not always improve. Those who could not answer any vocabulary items could still answer some of the comprehension questions,

making it clear that vocabulary is not the panacea for comprehension. Those who could answer comprehension questions did not always understand the text. We must beware of the types of questions we use in tests and what they actually are testing.

(a) Global vocabulary, which was used in the text much more often, was more important to the comprehension of the overall plot and it tended to be understood.

(b) Locally-sensitive vocabulary was restricted to a sentence or two and was less useful with the comprehension of the main ideas and plot of the text. These items were more difficult to figure out and to use as further clues for other things.

(2) High level grammar is not fundamental to true reading comprehension.

(3) The major difference between high-level Japanese students of English and other foreign speakers was the amount of chance-taking they took. There was a lot less guessing for the Japanese than for others.

Could it be that the Japanese participants, through translation and grammar training had their previous schema and knowledge base only in Japanese? Therefore, without the use of translation dictionaries, they felt uneasy using English-only schema.

### Conclusion

Should reading be taught by grammar, translation, or vocabulary? Perfect grammar will not have a huge effect on comprehension nor will vocabulary knowledge. They are helpful to be sure but reading is an ability that goes beyond that. How much translation occurs in the mind of the non-native speaker as he reads a foreign language cannot readily be measured, but to train translation skill for English comprehension is a time-consuming task.

The use of reading strategies in the target language is a more effective and efficient way to train reading comprehension. Are we producing readers? Are they good readers? With proper guidance in reading comprehension, we should soon be finding more and more good readers of English who enjoy it, too.

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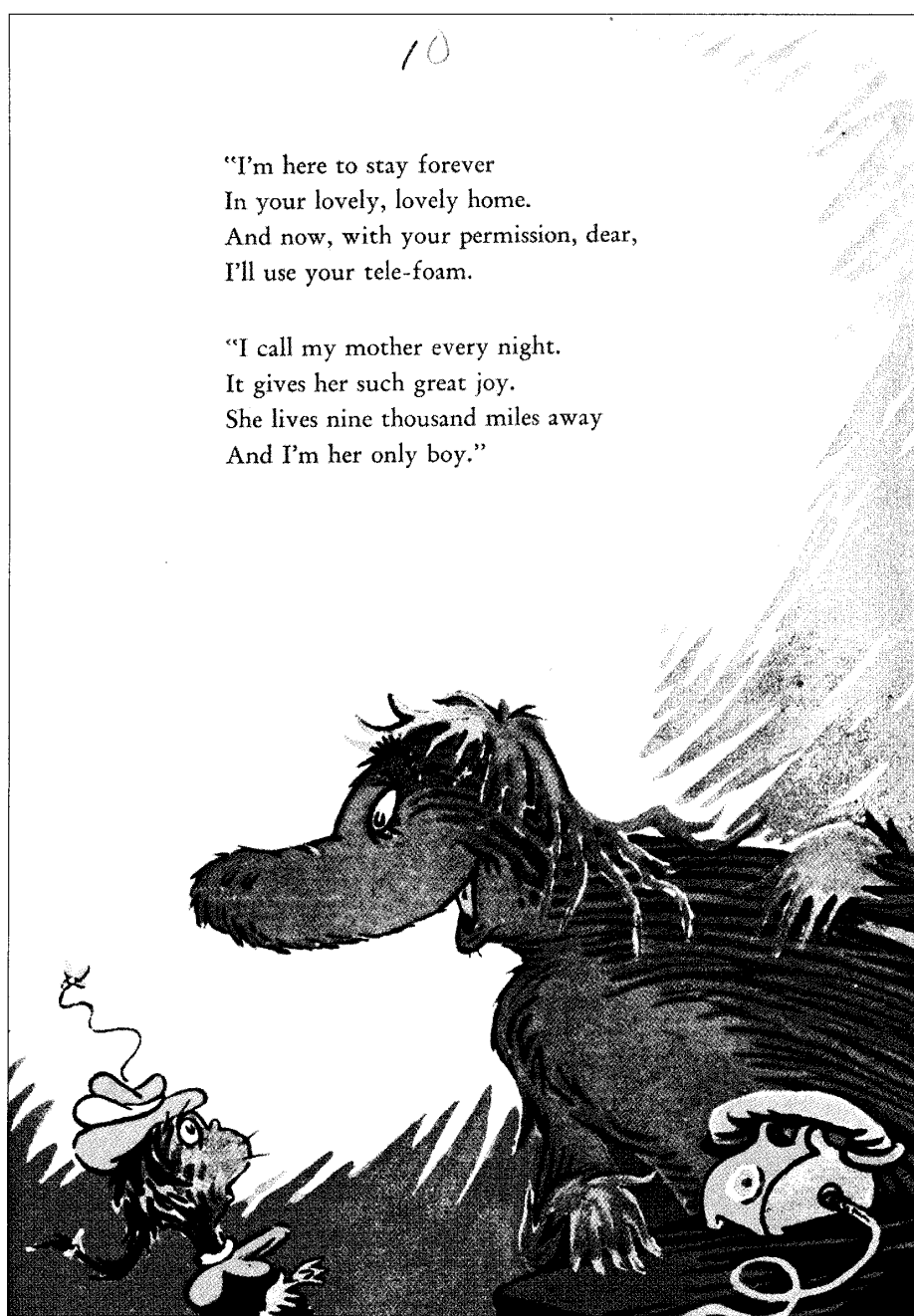
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Appendix I – Comprehension Questions

Sample Set of Comprehension Questions—in order of difficulty according to the frequency of mistakes

Page 10

1. How many miles away does the Glunk's mother live? (*easiest*)
2. Does the Glunk live more than ten thousand miles away? (*easy*)
3. How far away is the Glunk's mother? (*hard*)
4. Did the Glunk's mother live far away? (*hardest*)



Sample Set Comprehension of Questions—in order of difficulty according to the frequency of mistakes

Page 11

1. What's expensive? (*easiest*)
2. What did the sister say? (*easy*)
3. What's a line? (*hard*)
4. What did the sister mean? (*hard*)
5. What did the sister tell the Glunk to do? (*harder*)
6. Why did the sister say that? (*hardest*)



Appendix II – Sample Set Vocabulary of Questions – in order of difficulty according to the frequency of mistakes

Page 7

1. What's a Glunk? (Global vocabulary) (*easiest*)
2. What does the word, 'thunk' mean? (Global vocabulary) (*easy*)
3. What does the word, 'thunk' mean? (Global vocabulary) (*easy*)
4. What does BLUNK mean? (local vocabulary) (*fairly easy*)
5. What's a double klunker-klunk? (local vocabulary) (*hard*)

