Algerian University English Language Teaching Materials:
How readable are they?

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Abstract

The main thrust of the present study was to analyze the readability level of teaching materials used both in Algerian departments of English and in secondary schools. The ultimate objective was to determine whether these materials were written at a level appropriate for Algerian freshmen and sophomores in departments of English. Text from lectures delivered at the university and others used in secondary schools were analyzed for their readability level using the four most popular readability formulas: The Dale-Chall Readability Formula, The Flesch Reading Ease formula, Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease formulas, and The Lexile Formula. The analysis of the data revealed a significant difference between the readability of reading material in the secondary school and the university. The results suggest that there is a wide gap between them. Consequently, this readability level is too far beyond the freshmen and sophomores' reading ability to achieve the desired optimum comprehension. It is suggested that teaching the reading skill and an emphasis on vocabulary at the university could be one step toward bridging such a gap. Furthermore, there is a need for more careful matching of reading material readability levels and Algerian students' reading levels.

Keywords: readability, reading difficulty, reading formula, text difficulty.

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It is a byword in educational settings that the most important instructional decision that teachers make is supplying students with materials that are at the appropriate level of difficulty. If students are given materials that are too easy, they may lose interest and motivation. If students are given materials that are too difficult, they may struggle to understand the lectures and the learning material. There is a good chance that they will be low achievers. They may also become so frustrated that they simply fail and give up.

The present research aimed at investigating whether Algerian freshmen and sophomore's reading level enables them to achieve comprehension of reading material used in departments of English, as well as comprehension of the lectures they attend. The motivation of this research comes from the fact that complaints by teachers and expression of frustration about the students' level at English as being far from the standards are often heard in staff rooms. However, no evidence has been adduced in support of such assertion.

Matching learning material and students' reading ability requires knowing the readability level of materials. In the context of the present study, one way to reach such an end is to assess the readability of the reading material used both at the department of English and in secondary schools in order to (a) establish the difficulty level of these materials at both levels; (b) determine the gap which may exist between student reading ability and the level of the materials being used to teach them; and (c) know whether material used for university students is written at a level suitable for them.

To this end, three main research questions were posed:
1- What is the reading difficulty of Algerian secondary school English language teaching materials?
2- What is the reading difficulty of Algerian university English language teaching materials?
3- How does the reading difficulty of Algerian university English language teaching materials compare with the difficulty of Algerian secondary school English language teaching materials?

The results could be utilized in future studies to highlight the gap which may exist between student reading ability and the level of the materials used to teach them.

Literature review

What do we mean by readability?

There is no consensus on the exact definition of the concept of readability. Simply defined, readability is what makes one text more difficult or easier to understand than others. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010), it is the "sum total of the entire elements and their interactions that affect the success of a piece of printed material" (p. 331). The most comprehensive definition may be that of Dale and Chall (1949) who define readability as:

> The sum total (including all the interactions) of all those elements within a
> given piece of printed material that affect the success a group of readers
> have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it
> at an optimal speed, and find it interesting. (p. 12)

These elements make a reader's comprehension of a text a function of the difference between reader ability and text readability. It should be mentioned that in literature there is a distinction between *legibility* and *readability*, though sometimes the two terms are used

interchangeably. Actually, they denote different things. Research on legibility is concerned mainly with typeface and format factors. In contrast, readability research focuses on linguistic factors such as word and sentence length. Both seek the same objective, to ascertain the degree of reading ease of a piece of text and eventually find ways to improve it, but their approaches are totally different (Anagnostou and Weir, 2007).

Readability: a brief historical overview

According to Klare (1963), concerns about text readability can be dated back as far as the antiquity, around 900 A.D. when word counts were used as a rough index of reading ease by Talmudists who counted the occurrences of words and ideas seeking to distinguish differences in meaning. However, the publication of Thorndike's *Teacher's Word Book* (1921) which provided teachers with an objective means for measuring the difficulty of words and texts is considered as the major breakthrough in estimating reading difficulty. Chall (1988) reports that the beginnings of readability formula research came from two main sources: studies of vocabulary control and studies of readability measurement. Vocabulary control studies were concerned with the vocabularies that would be most effective for learning to read from reading textbooks while readability measurement were targeted at the evaluation of the comprehension difficulty of reading textbooks. Both types of studies sought objective means of measuring the difficulty of texts for learning to read and for comprehending and learning from textbooks, newspapers, novels, and so on. It follows that research on readability has a common ultimate goal consisting mainly in finding objective means to measure the difficulty of reading materials for the intended readers, or to predict how well reading materials will be comprehended by the intended readers. The basic tenet of readability research is that it assumes that words encountered frequently by readers are less difficult to understand than words encountered rarely, i.e., word frequency.

Readability pioneers focused on surface characteristics of written texts to determine the extent to which readers could comprehend texts. They considered any measurable elements of writing such as the number of personal pronouns in the text, the average number of syllables in words or number of words in sentences in the text. Then, they compared the data with certain predetermined standards. One such standard was tabulating the average grade level of students who could correctly answer a certain percentage of questions from the text. Researchers judged the characteristics with the most accurate standards as indicators of readability, which they developed into readability formulas. There ensued the design of mathematical equations which correlate these elements.

Over the past sixty years, the concept of readability has been revitalized and the notion that reading difficulty needs to be matched with student reading ability has been emphasized by readability investigators. Starting from the 1950s and influenced by new insights gained from linguistics and cognitive psychology, new variables such as reader's interest, motivation, and prior knowledge came to be explored as variables affecting reading comprehension and readability. This era was characterized by a certain number of features. The number of researchers and studies that took interest in readability grew considerably. A large number of researchers and studies took interest in readability and attempted to improve readability formulas. Presently, there are over 200 readability formulas with varying degrees of accuracy and success rate (DuBay, 2004).

Factors that influence readability

Graves & Graves (2003) identified a set of ten factors that can have an effect on a learners'

comprehension. These ten factors can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises six factors inherent to the text itself: vocabulary, sentence structure, length, elaboration, coherence and unity, and text structure (or organization, i.e., narratives or exposition). However, the authors are quick to point out that since reading is an interactive process that involves both the reader and the text, no text factors are fully independent of the reader. The second group comprises four factors that involve both the reader and the text: familiarity of content and background knowledge required, audience appropriateness, reader motivation and interest. Factors considered were described as "semantic" if they concerned the words used, and "syntactic" if they concerned the length or structure of sentences.

The level of reader comprehension of the text is, as research tends to confirm, determined by how well the reader variables interact with the text variables. Comprehension is, as already mentioned, seen as a function of the difference between reader ability and text readability. These studies have relied on readability formulas which are mathematical calculations based on some text features. Traditionally, studies on readability have focused on linguistic and psycholinguistic factors to explain text difficulties. Early readability studies (Dale and Chall, 1948; Flesch, 1943) investigated observable text characteristics (e.g., number of words in a sentence, number of syllables in a word, number of prepositions, and vocabulary frequencies). Studies conducted in the last decades have continued to be interested in factors affecting readability (Fry, 2002; Greenfield, 2003). More recently, researchers have made use of computer science (Litz, 2005; Crossley, 2006; Campbell and Weir, 2006). These studies have tried to explain text difficulties by measuring texts readability and the ability of readers by attempting to place the two constructs on the same scale. Examples of such studies are: The Lexile Framework, The Strathclyde Complexity Measure, and Corpus analysis studies.

Readability formulas

Readability formulas serve to give an estimate of text difficulty. Their sole purpose is to predict such difficulty. They are multiple regression equations in which the dependent variable is the reading difficulty predicted of a text and the independent variables are two or more directly measurable characteristics of the text, such as the number of letters per word and the number of words per sentence. The purposes for which readability formulas are designed might vary, but they tend to have one objective in common, that is, to predict the difficulty of the text for the intended readers without the latter's actual participation in the course of readability evaluation. The prediction of the text's difficulty is expressed as a grade level, a cloze score, or a score on some set scale (Greenfield 2004). Text difficulty is measured according to the familiarity of the vocabulary to the reader. It is assumed that if a word is familiar to the reader, its level of difficulty is low, and vice versa. The common measurement of vocabulary familiarity is word frequency. By word frequency, it is meant the frequency with which a given word occurs in a sample of the target language. Word frequency and vocabulary difficulty vary inversely. The higher the word frequency, the smaller will the vocabulary difficulty be, and vice versa (Lin, 2002, p.170)

According to Prichard and Hayden (2008), in the United States of America, many government agencies now require that documents, such as loan agreements, rental agreements, and property purchase contracts meet specific readability levels. Over thirty states have some form of plain language, or readability component in their insurance laws, and a number of states specify that insurance policies must be written at a minimum Flesch Reading Ease score to be judged "sufficiently readable".

It should be mentioned that readability formulas differ in the features they consider in their analysis. Common parameters include: average word length in characters, average sentence length, average word length in syllables, ratio of difficult sentences, ratio of difficult words, ratio of unfamiliar words, and number of unique words.

Below is a consideration of the four most popular English readability formulas listed by the United States Institute for Academic Excellence (1998). All four formulas base their calculations on at least two variables: (1) semantic difficulty as measured by word length, word familiarity, or word frequency, and (2) syntactic difficulty as measured by sentence length—the average number of words per sentence. As a result, the formulas tend to measure similar factors, correlate well with one another, and, on average, yield only slight differences. These formulas are: (1) The Dale-Chall Readability Formula; (2) The Flesch Reading Ease formula; (3) The Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease formula and (4) The Lexile Formula.

The validity of these formulas for predicting the readability of English texts in English as a Foreign Language contexts has been demonstrated in a number of studies such as Nilagupta (1975), Hamsik (1984), Brown (1998), (Greenfield, 2003), Crossley (2006), and many others. For this reason, they were used in this research.

Flesch Reading Ease formula. The Flesch Reading Ease formula developed in 1948 is one of the most widely used readability formulas in use today. It is considered suitable for all kinds of text. This formula uses average sentence length and number of syllables. It multiples the average number of words in the sentence by 1.015 and the total syllable count by .846. The sentence length and syllable count are then added and subtracted from 206.835 to arrive at a readability score (DuBay, 2004, p. 20).

The formula reads as follows:
Flesch Reading Ease Score = 206.835–84.6 x ASW – 1.015 x ASL
ASW = average number of syllables per word
ASL = average sentence length

It measures reading from 100 (for easy to read) to 0 (for very difficult to read). The higher the score, the easier the document is to read. It is based upon a 50% comprehension rate. A zero score indicates text has more than 37 words on the average in each sentence and the average word is more than 2 syllables. This formula also has been incorporated into most word processing programs including MS word.

Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease formula. The Flesch Reading Ease Score was later revised by other readability researchers (Kincaid et al., 1975, cited by Klare, 1984, p. 692) in a study commissioned by the U.S. Navy, in order to provide grade level scores (Table 1). The adapted formula became known by different names, like Flesch-Kincaid Index, Flesch-Kincaid Scale, Flesch-Kincaid Score, Flesch-Kincaid Readability Score, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Score, Flesch-Kincaid Readability Statistics, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Index, Flesch-Kincaid Readability Index, Flesch-Kincaid readability equation, and so on. The result is a number that corresponds with a grade level.
The specific mathematical formula is:

FKRA = (0.39 x ASL) + (11.8 x ASW) - 15.59

Where: FKRA = Flesch-Kincaid Reading Age
ASL = Average Sentence Length (i.e., the number of words divided by the number of sentences)

ASW = Average number of Syllable per Word (i.e., the number of syllables divided by the number of words)

A score of 5.0 indicates a grade-school level. It means that a student in the fifth grade would be able to read the document. Such a score would eventually help teachers, parents, librarians, and others to choose reading material.

For the purpose of comparison, *Reader's Digest* magazine has a readability index of about 65, *Time* magazine scores about 52, and *Harvard Law Review* has a general readability score in the low 30s.

Table 1

Interpretation of the Flesch Reading Ease Score

Flesch Score	Readability
90 - 100	Very Easy
80 - 90	Easy
70 - 80	Fairly easy
60 - 70	Standard
50 - 60	Fairly Difficult
30 - 50	Difficult
0 - 30	Very Difficult

The Dale-Chall Formula. Published by Dale and Chall in 1948, this is a very influential formula. It was meant to bring improvements to the Flesch Reading formula. The formula uses two variables, average sentence length and a percentage of difficult words. The idea behind this formula is that readers typically find it easier to read, process and recall a passage if the words are familiar. The Formula uses a count of difficult words. These difficult words are words that do not appear on a specially designed list of common words familiar to most students. It is based on the Dale list of 3,000 familiar words, 80 percent of which are known to fourth-grade readers (DuBay, 2004, p. 23). In addition to the percentage of words found on the Dale list, the formula uses average number of words per sentence (Chall and Dale 1995).
The formula is as follows:

Raw Score = 0.1579 PDW + 0.0496 ASL + 3.6365

Raw Score = Reading Grade of a reader who can answer one-half of the test questions on the passage.

The first measure (PDW = Percentage of Difficult Words) is the percentage of words in the passage not found on the Dale Word List. The second measure (ASL = Average Sentence Length) is the average number of words per sentence, which is calculated by dividing the total number of words in the passage by the total number of sentences in the passage. Table 2 displays the correspondence of the raw score to grade level as calculated by The Dale-Chall Readability Formula.

Table 2

Mapping Raw Score to Readability

Raw Score	Readability
4.9-	Very Easy

5.0 - 5.9	Easy
6.0 - 6.9	Fairly easy
7.0 - 7.9	Standard
8.0 - 8.9	Fairly Difficult
9.0 - 9.9	Difficult
10+	Very Difficult

The main idea behind the Dale-Chall readability formula is that when a text is written with familiar words, it becomes easier to read and, therefore ideas expressed therein are easier to comprehend and recall.

The Lexile Formula. A more recent application of traditional readability formulas is known as the Lexile Framework and which has been defined by its designers (Wright and Stenner, 1998) as a scientific approach to reading and text measurement.

The Lexile Formula is based on two components. The first is a measure of sentence length, which by hypothesis indicates the level of syntactic complexity. It is based on what the proponents of the formula call the syntactic axiom: the shorter the sentence, the easier the passage is to read. Worded differently, the length of a sentence is a good indicator of how hard it is to read. Longer sentences take longer to read and require more concentration to understand. The longer a sentence, the more likely it is to contain complex phrases and clauses, which will complicate things for the reader, especially in a foreign language (Fry, 1989).

The second component is a measure of semantic complexity, based on word familiarity. The more frequently a word is encountered the more chances there are for the reader to know its meaning.

Lexiles evaluate the semantic difficulty of words by their frequency in standard written text. The authors have developed a process that assigns a value to the reading capacity of a person. The central idea is that, when a person is reading with 75% comprehension, he/she is at optimal reading capacity. The process, therefore, assesses a person's level of reading comprehension, and then calculates what they called the lexile value of texts they can read with 75% comprehension. This is the measure of their reading capacity.

Designers of The Lexile Framework for Reading explain that it is made up of Lexile reader measures and Lexile text measures, both of which are put on the Lexile scale. A Lexile measure is defined as the numeric representation of an individual's reading ability or a text's readability (or difficulty), followed by an "L" (Lexile). There are two types of Lexile measures: The Lexile reader measures and The Lexile text measures. The Lexile reader measure typically is obtained when an individual completes a reading comprehension test. Once a field study has been performed to link Lexile Framework with the test, the individual's reading score can be reported as a Lexile measure. A Lexile text measure is obtained by evaluating the readability of a piece of text, such as a book or an article. The Lexile Analyzer, a software program specially designed to evaluate reading demand, analyzes the text's semantic (word frequency) and syntactic (sentence length) characteristics and assigns it a Lexile measure.

The Lexile scale runs from below 0L (Lexile) to above 2000L. Scores 0L and below are reported as beginning reader and scores above 2000L are reported as high Level. By way of example, the novel *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell scores 1100L, *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens scores 990, and American university textbooks 1250L-1450L.

In sum, The Lexile Framework for Reading is an approach to reading measurement that matches readers to text. The Lexile Framework measures both reader ability and text difficulty on the same scale, called the Lexile scale (Table 3).

Table 3

The Lexile scale

Grade 1	200-350	Grade 7	880-1090
Grade 2	350-500	Grade 8	910-1140
Grade 3	500-750	Grade 9	1030-1160
Grade 4	620-910	Grade 10	1080-1210
Grade 5	730- 960	Grade 11	1130-1260
Grade 6	800-1030	Grade 12	1180-1300

Source: http://www.lexile.com/findabook/

In order to give the reader an idea about these measures, Table 4 gives the Lexile for a few well known books.

Table 4

Lexile for a few well known books

Title	Author	Lexile
The Cat in the Hat	Dr. Seuss	260L
The Giving Tree	Shel Silverstein	530L
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	J. K. Rowling	880L
A Tale of Two Cities	Charles Dickens	990L
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen	1100L
The Trial	Franz Kafka	1100L
A Brief History of Time	Stephen Hawking	1290L
The Last of the Mohicans	J. F. Cooper	1350L
Don Quixote	Cervantes	1410L

Source: http://www.lexile.com/findabook/

Limitations of Readability Formulas.　The main criticism that has been addressed to readability formulas is that they can only measure the surface characteristics of text. Qualitative factors such as sentence structure, concreteness and abstractness, and incoherence cannot be measured mathematically. They have pointed out that material which receives a low-grade level score may be prove to be incomprehensible to the target audience. As an example, they suggest to consider what happens if the words are scrambled in a sentence, or on a larger scale, the sentences are randomly rearranged in a whole text. The readability score could be high, but comprehension would be lacking. In addition, readability formulas cannot give an idea of how complex the ideas are, whether or not the content is in a logical order, whether the vocabulary is appropriate for the audience, and whether there is a gender, class or cultural bias. For these reasons, Klare et al. (1969, cited in DuBay, 2004) stated that formula scores are better thought of as rough guides than as highly accurate values. Used as rough guides, however, scores derived

from readability formulas provide quick, easy help in the analysis and placement of educational material.

Methodology

Reading Material

In order to answer the research questions asked above, it was necessary to collect reading material used in secondary schools and material used in Departments of English. In the latter case, given the limitations of this study, materials (described hereafter) were collected by the researcher from colleagues and students at the department of English Language and Literature at the University Setif 2, Algeria. The university texts used in this study were handouts given by teachers to students in the courses of literary studies and Linguistics.

Concerning secondary school material, it is available in the Ministry of Education-approved secondary school textbooks, in term papers, and in the 'Baccalaureate' English paper. The latter, being a paper taken nationwide by secondary school final year students, it is assumed that it is aimed at the student with an average reading ability and hence as representative of the "national reading ability level" as it has been designed by professionals working very close to the secondary school students and the best aware of their reading ability.

Readability formulas used

The readability formulas used were: The Dale-Chall Readability Formula, The Flesch Reading Ease formula, Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease formulas, and The Lexile Formula. It should be pointed out once again that these formulas were selected for the present study mainly because they have been proved to be valid for English as a Foreign Language context. Another reason is their ease of accessibility online. In addition, The Flesch Reading Ease formula, Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease formulas are easily accessible via MSWord.

Procedure

The reading material selected was scanned using an OCR program. Then each passage was transferred to a Microsoft Word (Microsoft Software 2007) document so that standard readability statistics such as the Flesch and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Scale could be calculated via the formulas included with MSWord's grammar checker. Next, the readability of these passages using The Dale-Chall and Lexile formulas was assessed via software tools available online.
The passages selected were:

Secondary school material:

1- Two passages from the Ministry of Education-approved secondary school reading textbook *New Prospects*, Secondary Education Year 3, were chosen for analysis of readability. These were *The Unicorn in the Garden* (pp. 189-90), and *Satellites* (p. 206).

2-   Baccalaureate English papers: Two Baccalaureate 2013 papers were selected. The first was taken by students of the "Experimental Sciences" stream, the second by the students of the stream "Foreign Languages".

These streams were selected on the basis that the overwhelming majority of students incoming to the department of English come from them.
University material:

1- A handout in linguistics from the first lectures of the academic year entitled *The Syllable* intended for freshmen.

2- A handout in literary studies from the first lectures of the academic year entitled *The Origins of a Nation* intended for sophomores.

Results

For the interpretation of the results, the purpose here is not to compare Algerian student reading abilities to that of American students. The idea is to use the American grade level as a benchmark, a measuring tool and, most importantly, as a unit of measurement only in order to compare Algerian secondary school and university reading material. The closer the level of Algerian reading material is to the American one, the more it is difficult, and vice versa. The fact to use the American grade level does not affect in any way the results.

Table 5 below displays the overall results for all the reading passages analyzed.
Texts analyzed:

1. The Unicorn in the Garden

2. Satellites

3. Baccalaureate Paper Foreign Languages

4. Baccalaureate Paper Experimental Sciences

5. Origins of a nation

6. The Syllable

Table 5

Overall results

		Secondary school material			University material		
	Passages	1	2	3	4	5	6
Counts	Words	515	337	286	256	587	676
	Characters	2217	1632	1466	1244	2707	3220
	Paragraphs	4	6	4	5	11	17
	Sentences	38	25	13	13	21	31
Averages	Sent. / parag.	12.16	5.0	3.2	2.6	5.2	3.1
	Words / sent.	13.4	13.4	22	19.16	22.9	19.1
	Charact/ word	4.0	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.6	4.6
Readability	Passive sentences	0%	20 %	46%	0%	23%	29%
	Flesch Reading Ease	80.0	64.0	69.3	67.7	45.9	47.3
	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	5.1	6.6	5.8	6.4	12	12
	Lexile Formula	640L	790L	780L	620L	1250L	1230L
	Dale-Chall Formula	5.0	5.3	5.1	5.2	7.9	8.7

The analysis of the data revealed that all the formulas used agree on the degree of difficulty of each text under investigation. That is, the four formulas used yield roughly the same result related to reading ease. For ease of presentation and interpretation, the averages of the results yielded by the formulas have been calculated. These are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Readability averages

	Averages	
	Secondary school material	University material
Flesch Reading Ease	70,25	46,6
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	5,9	12
Lexile Formula	683	1240
Dale-Chall Formula	5,15	8,4

The following is an attempt to answer the research questions which guided this study.

Research question 1: What is the reading difficulty of Algerian secondary school English language teaching material?

A close examination of the results in Table 5 and Table 6 shows that the reading texts used in secondary schools do have more or less the same readability level. However, the passages used in the official Baccalaureate paper do have a readability level a bit higher than those taken from the textbook. The readability level of the secondary school material was rated by the Flesch Reading Ease as 70.25, by the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level as 5.97, by Lexile Formula as 683, and by the by the Dale-Chall Formula 5.15. Any of these score corresponds to either 'easy' or 'fairly easy'. However, this is not the main point in this research. This was done to serve as a benchmark to answer the next research questions.

Research question 2: What is the reading difficulty of Algerian university English language teaching material?

The readability of university reading materials was rated by all the formulas used as being fairly difficult, difficult or even very difficult. According to the Flesh Reading Ease, the readability score of university material (46.6) is between *Time* magazine scores (52) and … *Harvard Law Review* (30).

According to the Lexile formula score (1240L), the university lectures are harder to read than *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (1100L) and *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens (990L). They are at the same level as novels written by renowned novelists such as Kafka, Austin, and Hawking (see Table 4). They are not far from American university textbooks whose score is 1250L-1450L (MetaMetrics, 2010). Obviously, this is too far out of the reach of freshmen and sophomores.

Research question 3: How does the reading difficulty of Algerian university English language teaching material compare with the difficulty of Algerian secondary school English language teaching material?

Referring to Table 6 above, it appears that on the whole, the difference between the readability level in the secondary school and the university varies from simple to double. That is, university material is twice as harder as secondary school material. There appears to be no common measure between what students are exposed to in secondary school and what they are exposed to at the university.

Conclusion and Implications

The major findings of this research reveal that, in general, the reading levels of the reading material and the lectures at the university do not match with reading abilities of the freshmen and sophomores. Specific implications drawn from these findings include the following:

1. There is a need for a more careful matching of the readability of reading material and Algerian students' level.

2. Reading material and lectures need careful analysis to determine their readability level to match it with students' abilities.

3. English Teaching will be more effective if instructional materials are selected for students after their reading levels have been determined.

4. University teachers should be made aware of the reading level of students incoming to the university to help them improve their reading abilities and to make their lectures understood. Otherwise, students will reach the frustration level.

5. Careful consideration of relative syntactical difficulty is needed.

6. Educational authorities should find a way for bridging the gap between the secondary school and the university

About the Author:

Dr. Saad Torki has a thirty-five-year long teaching experience at all levels in Algeria and the Middle-East where he worked as a teacher trainer on a professional development program he designed and implemented for native teachers of English. His scholarly interests include EFL/ESL, vocabulary teaching and learning, reading, readability, phonetics, phonology, teacher development, and materials development.

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