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

Saad TORKI
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Setif 2, Algeria

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.