How Much Material Do EFL College Instructors Cover in Reading Courses?

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Abstract

EFL students at the College of Languages and Translation take 4 reading courses in the first four semesters of the translation program. The textbooks used are Interactions 1 & 2 and Mosaic 1 & 2. The present study examines the amount of reading texts, reading exercises, and reading subskills covered by instructors in the Reading I, II, III, and IV courses. Subjects of this study consisted of 24 instructors (6 instructors per course). Since students usually mark texts, do exercises, and take notes on their textbooks, three reading textbooks per instructor were randomly collected from students enrolled in the Reading I, II, III, IV courses. Each book was examined page by page. The number of chapters, reading texts, reading subskills and exercises taught in each textbook were calculated. It was found that the typical instructor taught 50% of the reading texts in Interactions 1 and Interactions 2; one third of the reading texts in Mosaic 1; and one fifth of the reading texts in Mosaic 2. In Addition, the typical instructor taught 65% of the reading subskills and exercises in Interactions 1; half of the reading skills and exercises in Interactions 2; one third of the reading skills and exercises in Mosaic 1; and one fourth of the reading skills and exercises in Mosaic 2. Findings are reported in detail and are discussed in the light of some issues affecting content coverage as revealed by the instructors themselves in their responses to a questionnaire-survey.

Keywords: Reading textbooks, content coverage, reading material coverage, reading amount, EFL College reading, reading subskills taught, reading subskills, reading process skills

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are an essential part of the teaching-learning process, in all grade levels and all subject areas. About 98% of the instructors use textbooks for the courses they teach, and the majority of instructors do not assign extra reading material beyond the textbook (Griggs & Bates, 2014; Griggs, 2014).

Due to the importance of textbooks, numerous studies in the literature have investigated the amount of content/material covered by instructors in the courses that they teach in several subject areas including first and second language courses. For example, Griggs & Bates (2014) compared the topical coverage allocation patterns in introductory course textbooks and topical coverage in introductory course lectures. Results of the comparison showed that teachers allocate lecture time to chapter topics in proportion to the amount allocated to them in the textbooks. In another study, Griggs (2014) examined topic

coverage in introductory textbooks from the 1980s to 2014 to determine how topical coverage in introductory course textbooks might have changed over this period of time. In addition, he compared the textbook patterns to the lecture topical allocation patterns by abalyzing the syllabus. He discovered several changes in the textbook topic coverage since the 1980s, with a tendency towards covering topics equally. Lecture topical allocation corresponded to the textbooks, which means that textbooks strongly affect the structure of introductory courses and lectures.

In computer science, Burgiel, Sadler and Sonnert (2020) examined the topic coverage and instructional methods prevailing in high school computer science courses and how the topics covered in high school influenced students' performance in college computer science courses. They found higher frequency of coding-related activities in high school such as programming, debugging, studying algorithms, and lower frequency of "non-coding" computer topics such as computer security and data analysis. They noticed that coding-related activities benefited students who did not have coding help at home.

Furthermore, a study by Hong, Choi, Runnalls and Hwang (2020) compared volume and volume-related lessons (questions, activities, and display materials about volume) in two common core aligned U.S. textbook series and Korean elementary textbooks. They analyzed the various opportunities to learn provided in those textbooks such as exposition, examples, exercise problems, the number of volume and volume-related lessons, students' development, learning challenges in volume measurement and students' response types. Findings indicated that US and Korean textbooks pay limited attention to volume lessons and that learning challenges are not well addressed. Conceptual items were presented as isolated topics, and students needed to provide short responses only.

As for language courses and language skills, numerous studies in the literature investigated the relationship between vocabulary or lexical coverage and reading comprehension skill development such as Hendry and Sheepy (2017); Sun (2016); Güngör and Yayli (2016); Connor, Spencer, Day, Giuliani, Ingebrand, McLean and Morrison (2014); Prichard and Matsumoto (2011); and Chujo and Utiyama (2005) and others. By contrast, few studies focused on reading content coverage and how much material instructors cover in reading courses. A study by Allington (2014) indicated that reading volume, i.e., combination of time students spend on reading and the number of words they actually conceptualize as they read, is central to the development of reading proficiencies and reading fluency. He added that commonly used commercial core reading programs provide only material that requires about 15 minutes of reading activity daily. The remaining 75 minutes of the reading class are filled with other activities such as completing workbook pages or responding to low-level literal comprehension questions about what the students have read. He indicated that repeated readings foster reading fluency, but wide reading works faster and contributes more broadly to the development of reading proficiencies, including oral reading fluency.

In another study, Allington (1982) examined the amount of reading covered by good and poor L1 students. He analyzed teacher logs for 600 reading group sessions from grades 1, 3, and 5 to identify whether the amount and mode of assigned contextual reading

differed systematically between "good" and "poor" reading groups. Results demonstrated that in all grade level, the good readers' groups read more total words and more words silently than the poor readers' groups. The researcher concluded that teachers allocate the same amount of time for reading instruction to both good and poor readers, but good readers cover much more material during the same instructional time.

The relationship between reading and mathematics content coverage in kindergarten and student learning was the focus of a study by Claessens, Engel and Curran (2014). The researchers found that all children benefit from exposure to advanced content in reading and mathematics courses but do not benefit from basic content coverage. This proved to be true regardless of whether the children attended preschool, began kindergarten with more advanced skills, or are from families with low income.

The effects of content and amount of time individual L1 students spend in literacy instruction on their literacy learning and the global quality of the classroom learning environment was addressed by Connor, Spencer, Day, Giuliani, Ingebrand, McLean and Morrison (2014) who observed 315 3rd-grade students to determine variables in a classrooms system that affects students' reading development. Results revealed that both global quality of the classroom learning environment and time individual students spent in specific types of reading instruction covering specific content predicted students' comprehension and vocabulary gains.

In EFL reading, Sakurai (2017) explored the effects of the amount of extensive reading on writing ability in EFL freshman and sophomore students at a private university in Japan. Some of the students were reading extensively, while others had no experience in extensive reading. Results of a writing test that the students took revealed that extensive reading positively correlated with the students' total writing scores. In addition, the amount of reading made a statistically significant difference in the students' vocabulary mean scores and their grammar learning. This means that students who read more than 108,000 words wrote better lexically and grammatically.

Due to the dearth of studies that investigated the amount of reading material covered by instructors and students in reading courses in L2, in general, and EFL classrooms, in particular, the present study aims to explore the amount of content covered in the 4 reading textbooks assigned by the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in the first 4 semesters of the translation program. It aims to examine the amount of reading texts, reading subskills and reading exercises covered by reading instructors at COLT and to find out whether there are significant differences in the amount of reading material covered by reading instructors in terms of the instructors' academic degree and college level (reading course) taught. The study also aims to find out the factors that affect instructors' decisions as to which reading texts, subskills and exercises to teach as reported by the instructors themselves.

The amount of reading content covered and factors affecting content coverage will be based on a content analysis of students' textbooks and on surveying reading instructors' opinions about the factors they take into consideration in selecting the readings texts, subskills and exercises to cover.

Exploring the amount of reading texts and subskills taught by reading instructors at COLT will shed some light on the types of reading subskills acquired by translation students. The development of advanced reading skills is extremely important for subsequent courses in the translation program such as stylistics, semantics, text linguists, linguistics courses, in addition to the translation courses they take in 18 subject areas: Medicine, natural sciences, humanities, media, agriculture, education, sociology, literature, computer science, oil industry and others.

METHOD

Materials and Tasks

The translation program at COLT consists of 10 levels, i.e., semesters. In the first 4 semesters, the students take listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar courses (20 hours per semester). As for reading, the students take 4 courses: Reading I (4 hours per week), Reading II (4 hours), Reading III (3 hours) and Reading IV (2 hours). In each course, the students study a textbook assigned by the COLT Council. Below is a description of each course and textbook.

The Reading I Course

In Reading I, the students study Interactions 1 by Elain Kirn and Pamela Hartman (2007). Middle East Edition. McGraw-Hill. This textbook is for high beginning to low intermediate-level students. It follows a reading-process approach. It consists of 12 chapters (240 pages). Each chapter consists of 4 parts, with 2 reading texts (a total of 24 texts) preceded and/or followed by exercises for practicing certain reading, vocabulary, testing and study skills. The students practice the following reading subskills as listed in the student's textbook:

Recognizing the reading structure in a textbook; recognizing/identifying main ideas; identifying paragraph and whole text topics; recognizing/classifying supporting details; understanding the literal meaning; making inferences; identifying cause and effect; skimming for topics and main ideas; evaluating and comparing advice; understanding and giving directions; paraphrasing information; using a timeline to take notes on time and time order; understanding/distinguishing facts and opinions/beliefs and scientific facts; identifying pros and cons; interpreting proverbs; recognizing point of view; classifying different types of stories; putting events in order; recognizing the reading structure; outlining; summarizing; and inferring meaning of new words from context.

The Reading II Course

In Reading II, the students study Interactions 2 by Pamela Hartman and Elain Kirn (2007). Middle East Edition. McGraw-Hill. This textbook is for low intermediate to intermediate-level students. It follows a reading-process skill development approach. It consists of 12 chapters (248 pages). Each chapter consists of 4 parts: 2 reading texts (a total of 24 texts) preceded and/or followed by exercises for practicing reading, vocabulary, testing and study skills. The students practice the following reading subskills as listed in the student's textbook:

Identifying/finding the topic and topic sentences; figuring out the main idea when there is no topic sentence; synthesizing information; summarizing; distinguishing general and specific, and facts from theories; recognizing time relationships; pronoun reference; making inferences; guessing meaning from context, punctuation, synonyms, clues in another sentence, opposites, details, abbreviations, and parts of speech; findings words that fit definitions; applying information; and analyzing parallel structure in sentences.

The Reading III Course

In Reading III, the students study Mosaic 1: A Content-based reading book by Brenda Wegmann and Miki Prijic Knezevic (2007). International Edition. McGraw-Hill. This textbook is for intermediate to high intermediate-level students. It follows a reading - process approach. It consists of 12 chapters (279 pages). Each chapter consists of 3 reading texts (a total of 36 texts) preceded and/or followed by exercises for practicing reading, vocabulary, testing and study skills. The students practice the following reading subskills as stated in the textbook:

Using techniques for faster reading; surveying extended reading; stating key ideas; skimming for main ideas; separating fact from opinion; finding/analyzing/ selecting/paraphrasing main idea/topic sentences; scanning for specific information; reading without understanding every word; reading for speed; making predictions; making inferences; making comparisons; identifying support for ideas; identifying organizational clues; identifying general and specific; hearing rhyme and rhythm in poetry; finding support for character inference; examining point of view; drawing conclusions; analyzing argument; analyzing anecdotal evidence; answering specific points of argument; understanding humor; guessing meaning from context; finding the point in long sentences; identifying sentence fragments comprehending complex sentences; reading a statistical chart; summarizing and outlining.

The Reading IV Course

In Reading IV, the students study Mosaic 2: A Content-based reading book by Brenda Wegmann, Miki Prijic Knezevic, and Marilyn Bernstein (2007). International Edition. McGraw-Hill. This textbook is for high intermediate to low advanced-level students. Mosaic 2 consists of 12 chapters (279 pages). Each chapter consists of 3 reading texts (a total of 36 texts) preceded and/or followed by exercises for practicing reading, vocabulary, testing and study skills. The students practice the following reading subskills as stated in the textbook:

Previewing an extended reading; making predictions; skimming for main ideas; scanning for specific information; recalling main idea/details/major points of contrast; finding support for main ideas/for or against hypothesis; sequencing ideas into chronological order; recognizing historical significance; relating the reading to a new perspective; recognizing an ironic tone; reading poetry for meaning; reading between the lines; paraphrasing complicated passages; making and applying inferences; identifying facts and opinions; using information to disprove false opinion; identifying bias; recognizing/describing/evaluating point of view ; forming a line of argument; focusing on a key issue; finding a moral for a story; drawing conclusions; summarizing; distinguishing

general and specific; critical reading; comparing personal experience to a reading; interpreting a graph/table; analyzing sentence structure; using the encyclopaedia to prepare a report; and guessing the meaning of words and idioms from context.

In all textbooks, the skill to be practiced is clearly marked by a numbered subheading with a distinct color, font size and type above each text and exercise.

Subjects

Subjects of the present study consisted of 24 instructors who taught the Reading I, II, III, IV courses to students in levels I to IV over four semesters, i.e., 6 instructors per level. 20% of the subjects held a Ph.D. degree, 40% held an M.A. degree and 40% held a B.A. degree in TEFL, linguistics and/or translation. None of the instructors is specialized in the teaching of reading in L1 or L2 per se and none of them had received any training in reading instruction.

Each reading course is usually offered to several sections. For example, in the current semester, 5 sections (192 students) take Reading I; 4 sections (122 students) take Reading II; 4 sections (124 students) take Reading III; and 4 sections (153 students) take Reading IV. Each instructor may teach one or more sections of any reading level. No specific levels are assigned by the department head or coordinator to instructors based on their academic degree and/or teaching experience.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Since students enrolled in the Reading I, II, III, IV at COLT usually mark the texts (underline main ideas, certain details, circle words, write meanings of words), do the reading exercises, and take notes on their textbooks, 3 reading textbooks per instructor were randomly collected from students in levels 1 to 4 (a total of 72 textbooks or 18 textbooks per level).

A content analysis of the textbooks was performed. No checklist of reading skills and subskills was designed by the author for use in the content analysis, as the reading subskills in each chapter are already outlined in a table at the beginning of each textbook. The chapters have the same parts/selections and follow the same format and order of sections, subsections, and exercises. There are headings and subheadings using the same color, font size and type to mark the main parts, sections and subsections. Exercises targeting specific reading subskills as labelled in the textbooks were grouped into:

- **Interaction 1 reading subskills:** recognizing main ideas and details, guessing meaning from context, recognizing text structure, skimming, scanning, inferring, viewpoint, summarizing, outlining, pronoun reference, parallel structure in sentences.

- **Interactions 2 reading subskills**: recognizing main ideas, figuring out the main idea when there is no topic sentence, finding the topic sentence, distinguishing general and specific ideas, identifying the text structure, skimming, guessing meaning from context, finding out words that fit a definition, pronoun reference,

making inferences, analyzing parallel structure in sentences, synthesizing information, summarizing and outlining.

- **Mosaic 1 reading subskills:** making predictions, selecting the main idea, analyzing topic sentences, reading for speed, scanning for facts, skimming the whole text for details, finding main ideas/topics, identifying organizational clues, describing an author by inference, examining point of view, inferring the author's purpose, making inferences, using keywords to make a summary, identifying sentence fragments.

- **Mosaic 2 reading subskills:** skimming for main ideas, scanning for specific information, recognizing an ironic tone, distinguishing general from specific, making predictions, identifying facts and opinions, drawing conclusions, critical reading, recognizing point of view, guessing meaning of new words from context, summarizing, using the encyclopedia to prepare a report.

Each book was examined page by page. The number of chapters, reading texts, reading subskills and exercises marked by the students, i.e., taught in each reading course was calculated. Vocabulary, study and testing skills were ignored as they are not the focus of the study. The median and percentages of the reading texts and reading subskills in each reading course were computed. Medians of all the teachers teaching the same course and percentages were calculated for each reading course separately.

Teachers' Questionnaire Survey

All the instructors were individually surveyed. They were asked an open-ended question about the factors that affect their selection of the reading texts, reading subskills and exercises to teach. Instructor's responses were compiled, classified and are reported qualitatively.

Reliability and Validity

A colleague who holds a Ph.D. degree in TEFL analyzed the content and calculated the general and specific skills in a 30% sample of the chapters in each textbook for the 4 reading courses. She went through the sample chapters and calculated the number of reading texts, subskills and exercises. Analyses and calculations made by the author and the second rater were compared. There was a 98% agreement between the author and the second rater. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion.

RESULTS

Percentage of Content Covered in the Reading Textbooks

Results of the content analysis of the students' textbooks collected showed that the typical instructor at COLT taught 50% of the texts in Interactions I (Reading I) and Interactions 2 (Reading II); one third of the texts in Mosaic 1 (Reading III); and one fifth of the texts in Mosaic 2 (Reading IV). This means that instructors teach an average of one text per week in a 14-week semester taking into consideration time spent on interm tests and final exams. In addition, findings show that the typical instructor taught 65% of the

reading subskills in Interactions I; half of the reading subskills in Interactions II; one third of the reading subskills in Mosaic 1. In Mosaic 2, the typical instructor taught one fourth of the reading subskills (See Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of Chaptered, Reading Texts and subskills Taught by the Typical Instructor in Each Textbook

Reading Content	Reading 1 Interactions 1	Reading 1I Interactions 2	Reading III Mosaic 1	Reading 1V Mosaic 2
Allocated time per week	4 hours	4 hours	3 hours	2 hours
Total Chapters in textbook	12	12	12	12
Total Texts in textbook	24	24	36	36
Reading texts taught	50%	50%	33%	20%
Reading Subskills taught	65%	50%	34%	26%

No significant differences were found in the amount of reading material (texts, subskills and exercises) covered by reading instructors teaching the same reading course. Likewise, no significant differences were discovered in the amount of reading material covered by reading instructors at COLT in terms of their academic degree (Ph.D., M.A. and B.A.). This means that instructors holding a Ph.D. degree did not teach more reading material than instructors holding an M.A. or B.A. degree.

Furthermore, results in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, show the specific reading subskills taught in each textbook and those that were ignored. In the chapters covered in Interactions I, the instructors taught all the exercises that focus on the following reading subskills: Identifying main ideas/topics, text structure, skimming, guessing meaning from context, and pronoun reference (100%). They only taught two thirds of the exercises that focus on recognizing/classifying/ordering supporting details and summarizing; half of the exercises that focus on analyzing parallel structure in sentences and viewpoint, and two fifths of the scanning exercises. They ignored the making inferences, distinguishing facts and opinions, and paraphrasing information subskills (See Table 2).

Table 2. Percentage of Reading Subskills Taught in Interactions 1 (Reading I) by the Typical Instructor

Reading Subskills	Percentage Taught
Identifying main ideas/topics	100%
Text structure	100%
Skimming	100%
Guessing meaning from context	100%
Pronoun reference	100%
Recognizing/classifying/ordering supporting details	69%
Summarizing	67%
Analyzing parallel structure in sentences	50%
Viewpoint	50%
Scanning	42%
Making inferences	0%
Distinguishing facts and opinions	0%
Paraphrasing information	0%

In the chapters covered in Interactions II**,** the instructors taught all exercises that focus on text structure, recognizing main ideas, and guessing meaning from context (100%); 80% of the exercises that focus on scanning; 70% on pronoun reference and summarizing; 60% of the exercises that focus on analyzing parallelism in sentence structure and finding the topic sentence, and over half the exercises focusing on skimming. They completely ignored the following subskills: synthesizing information, making inferences, finding out words that fit a definition, figuring out the main idea when there is no topic sentence, and distinguishing general and specific ideas (see Table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of Specific Reading Subskills Taught in Interactions 2 (Reading II) by the Typical Instructor

Reading Subskills	Percentage Taught
Text structure (100%)	100%
Recognizing main ideas (100%)	100%
Guessing meaning from context	100%
Scanning	80%
Pronoun reference	70%
Summarizing	70%
Analyzing parallel structure in sentences	60%
Finding the topic sentence	60%
Skimming	55%
Synthesizing information	0%
Making inferences	0%
Finding out words that fit a definition	0%
Figuring out the main idea when there is no topic sentence	0%
Distinguishing general and specific ideas	0%

In the chapters covered in Mosaic 1, the instructors taught two thirds of the exercises that focus on the following subskills: Skimming the whole text for details, scanning for facts, identifying the organizational clues, finding main ideas/topic, and analyzing topic sentences. They taught one third of the exercises that focus on the following reading subskills: summarizing, selecting the main idea, reading for speed, making inferences, inferring the author's purpose, identifying sentence fragments, examining point of view, and describing an author by inference. The following reading subskills were not taught at all: Making predictions, outlining, guessing meaning from context, comprehending complex sentences, and finding the point in long sentences (See Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of Specific Reading Subskills Covered in Mosaic 1 (Reading III) by the Typical Instructor

Reading Subskills	Percentage Taught
Skimming the whole text for details	67%
Scanning for facts	67%
Identifying the organizational clues	67%
Finding main ideas/topic	67%
Analyzing topic sentences	67%
Summarizing	34%

Selecting the main idea	34%
Reading for speed	34%
Making inferences	34%
Inferring the author's purpose	34%
Identifying sentence fragments	34%
Examining point of view	34%
Describing an author by inference	34%
Making predictions	0%
Outlining	0%
Guessing meaning from context	0%
Comprehending complex sentences	0%
Finding the point in long sentences	0%

In the chapters covered in Mosaic 2, the instructors taught 80% of the summarization exercises, and two thirds of the exercises that focus on skimming for main ideas, guessing meaning of words/idioms from context, recognizing an ironic tone, and distinguishing general from specific. They taught one third of the exercises that focus on scanning for specific information, making predictions, drawing conclusions, using the encyclopedia to prepare a report and identifying facts and opinions. They did not teach recognizing point of view, critical reading, sequencing ideas into chronological order, paraphrasing complicated passages, making inferences, interpreting a graph/table, identifying bias, analyzing sentence structure, focusing on a key issue, and outlining skills at all (See Table 5).

Table 5. Percentage of Specific Reading Subskills Taught in Mosaic 2 (Reading IV) by the Typical Instructor

Reading Subskills	Percentage Taught
Summarizing	80%
Skimming for main ideas	67%
Guessing meaning of words/idioms from context	67%
Recognizing an ironic tone	67%
Distinguishing general from specific	67%
Scanning for specific information	34%
Making predictions	34%
Drawing conclusions	34%
Using the encyclopedia to prepare a report	34%
Identifying facts and opinions	34%
Recognizing point of view	0%
Critical reading	0%
Sequencing ideas into chronological order	0%
Paraphrasing complicated passages	0%
Making inferences	0%
Interpreting a graph/table	0%
Identifying bias	0%
Analyzing sentence structure	0%
Focusing on a key issue	0%
Outlining	0%

Factors Affecting Reading Content Coverage

Findings of the present study have shown that the most important factor that affects content coverage in the reading courses offered at COLT is number of hours allocated to reading instruction per week. Although 4 hours are allocated to the Reading I and Reading II courses, half of the chapters in the textbooks is covered. Fewer hours are allocated to Mosaic 1 (3 hours a week) and Mosaic 2 (2 hours a week) which are insufficient especially because these textbooks are condensed in terms of number of reading texts, their length, difficulty level and difficulty level of the reading skills to be practiced (See Table 1). In other words, less reading material and fewer reading subskills are covered as the college level gets higher, reading texts grow longer and more difficult, and reading subskills become more advanced. Instructors pick and choose the chapters, reading texts, reading subskills and exercises to be covered. They tend to ignore exercises that focus on higher level thinking reading skills such as recognizing point of view, critical reading, paraphrasing complicated passages, making inferences, interpreting a graph/table, identifying bias, distinguishing facts and opinions, paraphrasing information, making predictions, outlining and others.

Another issue that affects the amount of time allocated to reading instruction is the problem of absenteeism by instructors. Some miss classes for personal reasons. Others go to class late and leave early and this affects the amount of instructional time and reduces the amount of material covered, especially because instructors who miss classes do not usually give extra class sessions to make up for the classes they missed.

The second factor is college policies. Although the COLT Council assigns the textbooks, it does not impose the number of chapters nor the types of exercises to be covered by the instructors in each reading course. The instructors are free to choose and cover any chapters, any texts, any subskills and exercises they like. However, since several teachers teach the 4-5 sections enrolled in each level, the instructors reported that the the COLT Council mandates that interm tests and final exams be unified, i.e., students in all the sections of the same course should take the same test, taking into consideration the number of chapters and skills covered by all the instructors. So, the least number of chapters, skills and exercises covered constitute the standard material to be covered on the test. Those who cover more material feel that they are wasting time and effort teaching "extra" material that the students will not be tested on. Therefore, they choose not to cover a lot of material.

The third factor is students' proficiency level. The instructors reported that they cannot cover much material because the students' English proficiency level is low, and the textbooks are too difficult for them. Samia indicated:

The weak level of some students is a great obstacle in passing and achieving actual benefits from the reading course.

Layla noted:

The College has no control over the quality of freshman students admitted to the COLT because the university has open admission policies. Poor high school graduates are admitted to the translation program without taking any admission tests (the College cancelled the

admission test). High school grades are inflated because English language teaching in high school depends on rote memorization unlike the Reading 1 course in college that depends on learning and applying reading skills to new texts.

Nadia said:

Although students enrolled in the Reading III and Reading IV courses took the Reading 1 course when they were in Level 1, they do not seem to have acquired any reading process subskills. Their general proficiency level in English is too poor. Their proficiency level is lower than students in level 1.

The reading course coordinator added that:

Most students pass without having developed their language skills to an acceptable level. The students suffer academically and cannot make it through level 5 specialized courses such as stylistics, semantics, text linguistics and others. Students' will not be parallel in knowledge and skills acquired.

Lama pointed out:

What aggravates the students' low proficiency level is that the students have negative attitudes towards reading and they lack motivation. Absenteeism is a chronic problem. The students miss classes. They do not do homework. They do not answer the practice test and miss the practice test session.

The fourth factor is that instructors are under pressure from the students to cover less material as they find the reading texts and subskills too difficult. The students cannot cope with the text length and content difficulty and cannot handle a lot of material.

The fifth factor is the reading instructors' testing policies. In their responses to the questionnaire, some pointed out that they do not teach a lot of material and do not cover many subskills in class to make the reading tests easy for the students and to help the students pass the course. Nancy, an English literature major with an M.A. degree explained:

The reading textbook has more reading subskills than necessary, i.e., focuses on unnecessary subskills. I only teach the subskills that will be assessed by the test. The first interm covers certain subskills that I taught; the second interm covers another set of subskills taught in the second part of the semester after the first interm; and on the final exam I do not include the subskills covered on the first and second interms except for the reading vocabulary items. I focus on vocabulary to make the test easy and so that the test does not cover reading skills only. I require the students to memorize a lot of vocabulary items from the reading selections.

Other instructors make the reading tests easy for the students by not teaching a lot of reading material and eliminating difficult reading subskills to avoid students' complaints to the college and university administration. They do not like to go through investigations if a student fails and complins.

Finally, many instructors indicated that they like to get high scores on students' end-of-course evaluations of instructors. They asserted that students' evaluations of the instructors are usually affected by the course grade they get. If a student gets a good grade, her evaluation of her instructor will be positive, but if she fails or gets a low grade, her evaluation of her instructor will be negative and unfavourable.

DISCUSSION

The factors that affect reading material coverage at COLT as reported by reading instructors are consistent with findings of other studies in the literature such as Barr (1983), Chujo and Utiyama (2005); Yoshinobu and Jones (2012). Barr (1983) found that the amount of material covered during a reading class was influenced by two main sets of conditions: characteristics of the group, particularly its mean aptitude, difficulty of reading materials and time allocated to reading instruction. Results of Chujo and Utiyama's (2005) study demonstrated that text coverage is greater from a larger number of shorter samples than from a fewer number of longer samples. As a practical guideline for educators, a table showing minimum parameters is included for reference in computing text coverage calculations. Since reading texts in the present study are long and followed by many exercises, the time limit affects the amount of material covered. Students' proficiency level in English also affects the amount covered.

On the other hand, findings of the present study are inconsistent with findings of a study by Yoshinobu and Jones (2012) in which they reported that many instructors are concerned with how to cover all of the material in the courses they teach. They indicated that mathematics teachers of all levels have some external and internal pressures to "get through" all the required material, i.e., cover a lengthy list of topics in the course. Among those challenges is that the course material must be presented to the students quickly, to ensure that all the topics in the syllabus are covered. At COLT, no pressures are imposed on the number of chapters, texts, and exercises that reading instructors should cover in each reading course. Material coverage is left up to the instructors themselves. On the contrary, reading instructors are under pressures from the students to cover less reading material, fewer texts, subskills and exercises. Students' negative attitudes and lack of motivation affect the number of texts they like to read and exercises they are willing to do and hence their reading skill development.

CONCLUSION

The Interactions and Mosaic textbooks used in the reading courses at COLT are based on a reading theory that focuses on the teaching of reading process skills. Skills in each chapter complement each other and form an interconnected chain. They are based on the subskills taught in the previous chapters and constitute a basis for the new reading subskills in the following chapters. Reading subskills in each textbook are a prerequisite for those in the following textbooks. Therefore, all of the skills and parts in a given chapter must be covered. In addition, coordination among instructors teaching the same level (reading course) and those teaching different levels is mandatory as a novice instructor might be asked to teach Reading III without having any idea about the skills emphasized in Reading I and II. Instructors at each level should know which reading skills were taught

in the previous level(s) and which ones will be taught in the next level(s). The instructors must take into consideration the purpose for which students are studying the language courses in the first 4 semesters of the translation program at COLT and the relevance of the reading skills to the upcoming linguistics and translation courses in the upcoming college levels. Translation is a tough skill, and it requires mastery of advanced reading skills.

For better instruction and learning outcomes, this study recommends that novice instructors go sequentially, i.e., start teaching Reading I then Reading II, III and IV in that order. Good planning, informing students of course objectives, the need for acquiring advance reading skills and what is expected of them in subsequent courses, rigorous teaching, engaging students and setting a time limit for finishing an activity will help instructors cover more material.

All instructors should receive some training with regards to the teaching of reading to translation students. Training workshops should introduce instructors to: (i) reading skills needed for translation and other content courses in the program; (ii) reading theories; (iii) reading process skills (decoding, text structure, anaphora, recognizing inter-and intra-sentence relationships, deriving meaning from context … etc.); (iv) reading comprehension levels (literal, evaluative, critical and appreciation); and (v) skills' order of importance. Specialized and experienced reading instructors who can cover most of the material in the textbooks in the same designated instructional time can be invited to give workshops that show instructors how to cover more reading material and some effective instructional reading strategies to use.

Moreover, since it may not be possible to allocate more teaching hours to Reading III and IV, instead of 3 and 2 hours per week, this study recommends the integration of an online course where students can do supplementary reading comprehension activities out of class under the instructor's supervision. The instructors can give credit for participating in online reading comprehension activities. The integration of an online course in reading instruction proved to be effective in enhancing EFL college students' reading skills and their attitudes towards reading compared to students who did not receive online instructions (Al-Jarf, 2019; Al-Jarf, 2009). Students enrolled in the different sections of the same reading level and/or different levels of reading courses together with their instructors may share and collaborate in the same online reading course(s) to enhance the students' reading comprehension skills and to save time and effort. Such collaborations will also help both students and instructors exchange knowledge and experiences and achieve better learning outcomes.

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