

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



**THE INFLUENCE OF MORPHOLOGICAL AND LEXICAL COMPETENCES IN THE
READING PROFICIENCY OF FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS FROM MODERN
LANGUAGES MAJOR AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR DURING THE YEAR 2014.**

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FINAL RESEARCH REPORT IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF
ARTS IN MODERN LANGUAGES WITH SPECIALIZATION IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

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Abstract

English is a worldwide language and several researches have been done about this language. Many scholars have written books about English as a second language and books for teaching English but these investigations have been carried out in diverse countries with contexts totally different from the ones that Salvadorian students live in. This research has been conducted with the objective of providing sources to future English learners, especially for students and teachers of the Foreign Languages Department of the Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador; so that students of the Foreign Language Department can have access to researches done in their own context.

This study was aimed to determine how influential vocabulary knowledge and morphology are in reading comprehension. The research question was “What is the influence between the lexical, morphological competences and reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of Modern Language Major at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?” In this research, three main skills profile were taken into account: Vocabulary level (lexical competence), the morphology knowledge of words and the level of reading comprehension.

This study has been carried out by following the quantitative method. In order to collect the data required by the nature of this study it was necessary to use three different tests. The first one is a vocabulary test which is a section of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) that measures the ability of non-native speakers of English provided by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The second one, a morphology test that was designed to carry out an investigation about morphology at the University of Queensland in Australia, after being validated by some teachers of the Foreign Language Department . And the last one, a reading comprehension test of the TOEFL designed by the ETS. These tests were administered to 80 out of 90 students that are in the fourth academic year of

Modern Language Major at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2014.

After administering the tests, the students' results of each test were divided into levels in order to organize the information gathered. These levels were established by the points that the TOEFL provides to measure the students' performance in each test. This organization helped researches to analyze the data to answer the research question. Microsoft Excel was used for the statistical procedure. Pie graphs were done to represent the data so that researches could interpret the results for achieving the conclusions of the research. A general view is shown in a graph line.

The results of the research indicate the proficiency levels of the students in the different linguistic areas that took part of the test and remark the influence among morphological, lexical competences and reading proficiency as it is described in the theoretical framework.

The conclusions and recommendations of this research are going to be helpful not only for students but also for teachers since it gives an overview of the impact that vocabulary level and the morphology knowledge have on students' reading proficiency. This research has been carried out at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Science School of the University of El Salvador.

Introduction

The University of El Salvador has an interesting motto: “Hacia la libertad por la cultura.” According Dr. Napoleón Rodríguez Ruiz – creator of the motto – the meaning of this phrase is that culture contributes to open the path to freedom; moreover, people will never be free if it is not through culture. Nowadays, the Alma Mater develops culture through different dimensions: Art, science, technology and sports. These different branches give students the opportunity to make a choice among all the 169 majors that the university offers so far.

The Foreign Language Department (FLD) offers some of these options and with its three majors; it has the second most popular one from the School of Arts and Sciences. The Major in Modern Languages with specialty in English and French offers the linguistic knowledge of two languages: English and French. In addition, it offers a core of two elective courses with Minor in Teaching and Public Relations. The major contains 37 subjects that are subdivided in three big sections: Subjects of the French area, subjects of the English area and the subjects of the Minor specialty (elective courses and research courses). All these sections focus on training professionals in the teaching and learning of foreign languages with a critical and proactive perception so professionals are capable of contributing to the social, educational, scientific and technological development from a humanistic perspective in order to assist in the solution of socio-political problems of the country.

For future professionals to achieve the mission aimed by their major, they need to obtain the proper knowledge and skills intended by the curricula. As a result, the students learn all these set of techniques, abilities and information throughout different resources such as internet, videos, audios, books, etc. In all the sources mentioned previously, the

students need to apply a complex cognitive process that represents an important key to understand the contents. This process is known as *reading*.

“Think before you speak. Read before you think.” This quote offers an interesting point of view of how the ideas depend on the knowledge acquired through reading. In fact, it is the reading proficiency the one that might help students to have a better conception of the contents they are reviewing. So far, there have been several researches that deal with the importance and/or the level students get in reading but just a few of them have focused on describing the influence between the reading proficiency and some other linguistic areas. Considering the vocabulary as an important factor to understand texts and considering also how the structure of words might be helpful at the moment of reading, this research has focused its attention on describing and measuring the relevance of the influence of morphological and lexical competences in the reading proficiency.

In order to present the information of this project, the content has been divided into three chapters. First, the information related with basic concepts and the theory involved in the understanding of the competences mentioned before. The second chapter is devoted to data gathering and analysis of the results that have been obtained through the study; researchers have used tests to evaluate students’ lexical competence and morphological competence in order to compare it with a reading proficiency test that was administered to them. Finally, the third chapter contains the conclusions and suggestions and it highlights the main findings.

Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, English represents an important tool for students and professionals since it offers the opportunity to have access to information that is not available in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, for the students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador, English language is not only a tool but the core of their knowledge and the students read a lot to acquire all the contents they need to master the language. This leads to the outcome that reading is an important part of the development of students.

Reading is one of the four macro skills that a student who is learning English as a Foreign Language needs to master in order to become a proficient bilingual. However, the full understanding of it can be difficult to achieve. Students have to cope with it and look for strategies to overcome with difficulties that it generates. Some learners deal with it better than others. It is imperative that the majority of students at the Foreign Language Department have strong abilities on reading when they are in the fourth academic year of the major.

Despite the several subjects in which the knowledge of the English language is reinforced through reading, there is not a way to identify if the reading proficiency that students obtain by the end of their career depends on specific linguistics areas – such as morphology, syntax, lexis – that are practiced and learned throughout the major.

In response, the proposed research determined the possible influence of the morphological, lexical competences in the reading proficiency on students of the fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2014.

Objectives

General objective:

- To describe the influence between the lexical, morphological competences and reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador.

Specific objectives:

- To identify the morphological and lexical performance of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador.
- To determine the English reading proficiency of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador accomplished after finishing Reading and Conversation in English II.
- To present an analysis using the ETS scale of proficiency of the general performance of students' competences based on the results gathered from the research.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence between the lexical, morphological competences and reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador?
2. What is the morphological and lexical performance of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador?
3. What is the level of English reading proficiency of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador accomplished after finishing Reading and Conversation in English II?
4. What is the general performance of students' competences based on the results gathered from the research?

Justification

There are several researches concerning students' reading skills at the Foreign Language Department (FLD); yet only a few of them concerning the influence between specific linguistic areas and reading proficiency. The few information related to this topic might be preventing the FLD from reinforcing and taking priority of these competences based on a scientific source like the one which was intended to be obtained with this research. Therefore, the following research focuses on the lexical and morphological competences providing that these two are considered important keys in the learning process of the English language. Thus, the research describes the influence among English reading proficiency, lexical, and morphological competences in students of the fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major in semester II, 2014.

The students that were part of this research were chosen considering that at this point they should be able to have an advance level on the comprehension of the English language through the learning and practice of the four macro skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Among the four macro skills in communication, it is necessary to highlight the importance of reading as a way to increase the knowledge of the English language; this is the main reason of describing the link among reading and other areas developed on the curricula from the major. Hence, the importance of providing the FLD with relevant information related to this phenomenon in order to enhance these competences during the development of the current English curricula of the specialization offered in this department.

Moreover, enhancing reading performance throughout the understanding of the relation with morphology and vocabulary represents the relevance of the research since this can

be effectively used for teachers as a path to implement new strategies during the teaching and learning process and therefore to have a better understanding of the linguistic areas involved on this study.

Finally, the information obtained with this research helps the FLD to implement new methods or contents that can benefit the development of the curricula for students to end up dominating all these competences based on the results and levels of the three linguistics areas that have been measured and as a result this creates an awareness of the English reading proficiency of the students.

Significance of the Problem

The history of the English language started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what today is Denmark and Northern Germany. At that time, the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed West and North by the invaders mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" and their language was called "Englisc" from which the words "England" and "English" are derived. ("History of the English Language", May 28th , 2013).

Today, American English is particularly influential, due to the United States of America's dominance of cinema, television, popular music, trade and technology. But there are many other varieties of English around the world, for instance Australian, New Zealand, Canadian English, etc. English is used in over 90 countries as an official or semi-official language. It is the de facto working language of 98 percent of international research physicists and research chemists. It is believed that over one billion people worldwide are currently learning English.

One of the more remarkable aspects of the spread of English around the world has been the fact that Europeans are adopting it as their internal lingua franca.

Nowadays, it is noticed that to know English provides students more opportunities to succeed in the society since it is an important tool. To master English skills can give people many opportunities to get a job in different areas such as bilingual schools, call centers, tourism, etc. Reading is one of the skills that people need to focus on, since it allows them

to access any written information, understand and interpret that information. ESL students at the Foreign Language Department need to read a variety of English texts in different subjects and comprehend their content.

This research will aim at describing how vocabulary level and the knowledge of morphology affect the level of reading comprehension in students of fourth academic year at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School at the University of El Salvador.

The importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension cannot be overstated. Without a good working knowledge of words and their meanings, both written and verbal communication will be muddled or poorly understood. This definition states that vocabulary has a big impact in the level of reading comprehension that students have.

Taking into consideration both the vocabulary level and the morphology knowledge of the words, this study's main goal is to answer how vocabulary knowledge and the morphology knowledge of the words influence the reading comprehension in students of fourth academic year of the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador.

Limitations

Although the research team was able to carry out most of the plan for the present research, there were also some difficulties when doing this research. Here are some of the limitations the research team faced during the process of this work:

- The members in charge of conducting the research project had different schedules availability so the research process took more time to be done as planned due to the personal occupations of each one.
- The limited access to appropriate bibliography written by well-known researchers and updated information that could support this research work made researches to spend more time looking for reliable information.
- It was not possible to administer the instruments to all subjects under study since not all students were in classes the two days that the researchers administered the tests; therefore, the sample population was of 80 students out of 90 that had been calculated.
- In both groups of advanced grammar, a great amount of students did not attend regularly or they arrived late; consequently, it was so hard to administer the instruments to everyone at the same time.
- The instrument to measure reading was long, so some students did not finish it on time and left some questions unanswered.

Definition of Key Terms

It is important to define the main terms that are going to be used in thesis research so the readers can have a better understating of this project.

Reading Comprehension: This term is defined as understanding a text that is read, or the process of “constructing meaning” from a text. Comprehension is a “construction process” because it involves all of the elements for the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of a given text in the reader’s mind. (Partnership forReading, 2005), Susan Mcshane, 2005.

Vocabulary: It refers to the number of words of which a learner has at least some superficial knowledge of meaning. Another author defines it as the number of words that a person knows. Schmitt, 2000. <http://engres.ied.edu.hk/vocabulary/vocabulary2-3.html>.

Morphology: It refers to the study of words, their internal structure and the mental process that are involved in word formation. Ling, 2001.

ETS: Educational Testing Service

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

Morphological awareness: It is defined as the capability to reflect on and/or manipulate the morphological structure of words. John R. Kirby and Peter N. Bowers.

Non-experimental research: It is the research design that does not involve a manipulation of the situation, circumstances or experience of the participants. Also it is characterized by procedure of collection of data which often forfeit some degree of control in return for obtaining data. Short questionnaires can be used to get data for a non experimental research.

CEFF: The **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (CEFR) it was put together by the Council of Europe as a way of standardizing the level of language exams in different regions. It is very widely used internationally and all important exams are mapped to the CEFR. There are six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2.

C1: Effective Operational Proficiency. It is the ability to communicate with the emphasis on how well it is done, in terms of appropriacy, sensitivity and the capacity to deal with unfamiliar topics.

Inferring: When we infer we take what we know and combine it with clues from the text to draw a conclusion or predict a result. Making inferences is vital to developing understanding of a text. It enables students to discover the deeper meaning of the text and what is not directly stated by the writer or the creator of the image. When they infer, students form opinions and make assumptions and judgments about events, situations and issues in the text, and how the characters are thinking and feeling. http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/712assessments/naplan/teachstrategies/yr2012/index.php?id=literacy/reading/lr_cold/lr_cold_s23a2_12

Theoretical Framework

Since the late 1970s, many researchers and educators have agreed that reading is a language-based skill (Frost, 1998; Scanlon, 2004). This conception matches the theory proposed by Hoover and Shaywitz (2003) that proposes that phonological skill leads to decoding, which—with the language skills of vocabulary, morphosyntax, and discourse—leads to reading skill. As a result of these researches, the relation between reading and language in adult readers has been studied more frequently and there are researchers that consider that reading comprehension depends on the quality of an individual's representations of words. In fact, some authors as Landi (2009) have supported this idea by stating that vocabulary was the best indicator of reading comprehension in adult skilled readers. All these researchers consider that the link between the morphological or syntactic competence and the reading proficiency are complex and that they might be mediated by vocabulary skills.

Morphological Competence and Reading Proficiency

Morphology is the study and description of how words are formed in language. On the other hand, morphemes (words or a part of words that have a meaning and that contain no smaller part that has a meaning) are combined in order to form those words. Monomorphemic words (consisting of only one morpheme such as *window*, *sleep*, and *elephant*) are also called root words or basic words and must be learned individually. The multimorphemic words are the *complex words*. In the words *talking*, *talkative*, *backtalk*, and *double-talk*, the root word *talk* is a shared morpheme that links the words semantically. Morphemes supply the raw data required to create new words, and the agility of morphemes provides part of the “soul” of the English language.

It is considered that the morphological awareness (or morphology competence) is an important element of the reading proficiency (Carlisle, 2000; Nagy, 2006). The morphological competence can be defined as “the capability to reflect on and/or

manipulate the morphological structure of words” (Carlisle & Stone, 2003, p. 28). There are some researchers such as White and White (1989) that found out that morphology has an important role in the reading development of students. The authors demonstrated that for readers, understanding and processing the morphology is an important key that allows identifying the root form of a word. In addition, readers need to check the words for their meaning and finally add that meaning of the root word to the meaning of each of the morphemes to reveal the real meaning of the whole word. This is how they noted that morphology reinforce students’ vocabulary knowledge.

The morphological competence helps to increase the breadth and depth of word knowledge that affects the reading proficiency. For instance, if a student finds an unfamiliar word in a text such as *theology*, this reader could infer the meaning of theology from its component parts, such as *theo* (*theos*) or *logy* (*logos*). The possibility of recognizing the morphological structure of this word should aid the reader to interpret and to learn new words. Morphology plays a fundamental part in the formation and comprehension of English words. Even though it is commonly considered that words are only a group of letters, it is more accurate to note that words are spelled with letters for the purpose of placing sound into written form. Words are actually composed of morphemes, which link sound and meaning. Therefore, to have this level of language comprehension helps to obtain a higher level of vocabulary and reading proficiency. However, the role of morphology varies with each language, depending on the word formation processes used in each language. It is not even certain that there is a universal role of morphology that applies to all languages (Libben, 2004).

Identifying the root word in a complex word, and recognizing prefixes and suffixes are strategies for figuring out new words, and skilled readers are able to do this automatically without efforts. With a well based knowledge of English morphology, a person is able to learn new words.

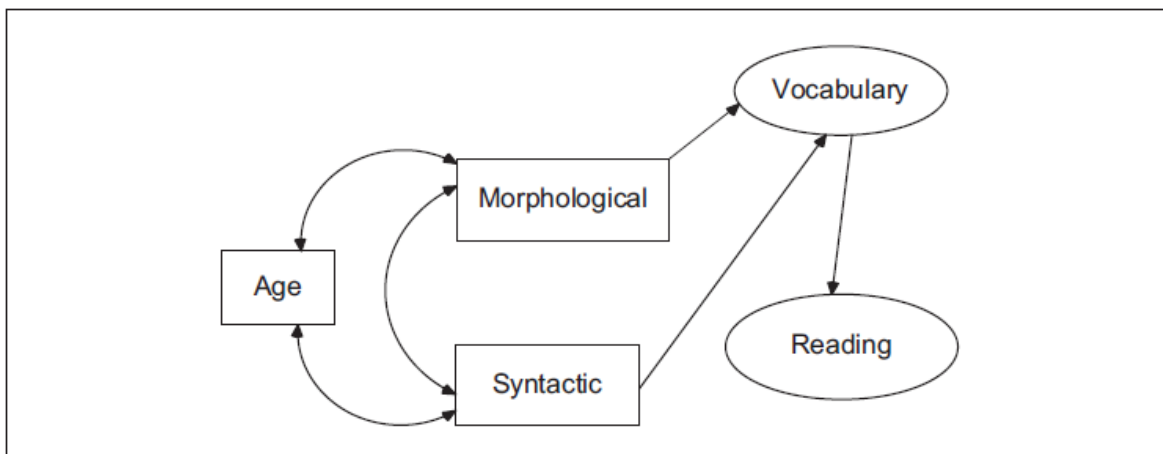
Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary knowledge is considered an important language skill that helps to develop fluency when using a language (Nation, 1993). Some other authors (Ellis 1997) state that vocabulary knowledge is an indicator of reading comprehension and this means that having an inappropriate vocabulary affects the reading proficiency of students; as a result, learners will have more difficulties during their academic development.

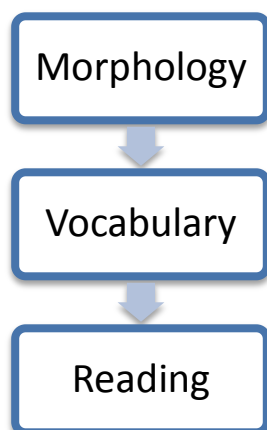
Mediation of Vocabulary Knowledge

Carlisle (2007) states that individual differences in the morphological competence apply a direct influence into the word knowledge and an indirect influence in reading comprehension via word knowledge. That is possibly because the meaning of so many English words could be deduced by their word structure (Nagy & Anderson, 1984), and awareness of morphological structures of words is believed to play an important role in vocabulary growth (Carlisle & Fleming, 2003), which at the end affects reading comprehension (Nagy et al., 2006). However, these studies proposed only the possibility of the mediating role of vocabulary in influencing the relation between morphological or syntactic competence and reading proficiency.

Layton (1998) offers a model with a description of the link among all the different elements involved on the process:



In this case, the model has been simplified in order to have a better perception of how the 3 main areas proposed on this research are related:



What does it mean to know a word in English?

It is necessary to point out that there are many ways to know a word and the simple form–meaning connection does not provide an accurate panorama of the types of word knowledge. In the case of the reading–vocabulary connection, when we know a word well, we access at least nine components of word knowledge (cf. Nation, 2001):

1. Orthography (spelling)
2. Morphology (word-family relations)
3. Parts of speech
4. Pronunciation
5. Meanings (referential range, variant meanings, homophones)
6. Collocations (what words very commonly go with a word)
7. Meaning associations (topical links, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms)
8. Specific uses (technical, common)
9. Register (power, politeness, disciplinary domain, formality, slang, dialect form).

This range of word knowledge remarks the argument exposed by Perfetti (2001), he states that the ability to know words may be one of the best indicators of reading proficiency. Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; a reader cannot understand a text without knowing the meaning of the words within the text. The proportion of difficult words in a text is the indicator of text difficulty, and a reader's general vocabulary knowledge is the indicator of how well that reader can understand text (Anderson & Freebody, 1981).

The obviousness of the need and the strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension invite an overly simplistic response: if we simply teach students more words, they will understand text better. However, not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension. In fact, according to several studies, many widely used methods of vocabulary instruction generally fail to increase reading comprehension (Mezynski, 1983; Gallagher & Fairbanks, 1986).

Vocabulary knowledge is not a simple ensemble of words learnt. In reality, to know a word well, a learner not only has to know the definition of the word but also its relationship to other words, including other morphological forms of the word (Nagy & Scott, 2000). Students with this knowledge are prone to have a better understanding of words. Readers use the morphology of known words to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar multi-morphemic words while reading and therefore expand their vocabulary and comprehension of text (Nagy & Anderson, 1985).

What does it mean to comprehend during reading?

There are many theories of what actually means successful reading comprehension; a common idea of most definitions is that it involves the construction of a coherent mental representation of the text in a reader's memory. This mental representation of the text is the product of reading comprehension that is at the same time the result of reading.

Reading is an important source, since a lot of information can be acquired from books, magazines, literary works, and from any other source. When learning how to read in English, not only the reading skill is necessary, but also the linguistic components help students to become proficient readers. Bratt (1976) considers that proficient readers are the kind of readers who interrelate sound symbol, grammatical structures, lexical and cultural meaning when reading.

Reading is understood to a mental and active process gathered toward comprehending and understanding any written source through the use of previously acquired abilities. As Van and Kintsh (1983) state" reading involves the use of different levels of internal information, as a well as various types of information all interacting simultaneously to allow optimal interaction, the readers rely on perceptual processing, the phonemic processing and internal recall of many types, (syntactic knowledge, lexical, story, grammar, descriptive script, schematic arrangements, and connecting related set of information, intonation of the text and of the readers' effect mechanisms). In addition, issues of accuracy and speed of processing are major components of overall models of reading".

Methodological Framework

Design of the study

This project is a transactional, correlational and non-experimental research design due to the nature of the investigation. In this project, the design is focused on determining and describing linguistic areas, lexical, morphological, and reading, on students of Modern Languages Major.

It is a non-experimental because the research variables are not manipulated at all, since the intension of the researchers is to determine and to describe how the issue happens. This research was carried out during the semester II, 2014.

Universe

The population that was considered to carry out this research was the amount of students of fourth academic year, eighth semester, of Modern Languages Major at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. There were 90 students signed up in the fourth academic year, semester II, 2014. They were considered by the researchers as the 100% of the population in which the study was carried out.

Sampling

For the purposes of this research no formula was used to determine the students who participated; instead, the researchers used a Census meaning that all the students from the universe took the tests. The reason behind including all the 90 students was to get more reliability on the results from the tests; therefore neither formulas nor random selection was used.

Method

In this research, the team used the quantitative method. The quantitative that focuses mostly on numbers and statistic process to analyze the results of the instruments administered. With the use of a statistical process, the researchers analyzed, determined, and described the students' performance on the linguistic areas mentioned previously. Tables and charts were used to present the results and conclusions by showing a clear representation of graphics.

Instruments

To gather the information, the instruments to apply were three tests. These instruments were applied to the students to determine and to describe the influence of the lexical, morphological performance on the reading proficiency. These tests are described in the following way:

- Lexical test.

The lexical test was administered in order to know the performance on students' vocabulary knowledge. This sample test was taken from the vocabulary section of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), that is a standard test designed by the Educational Testing Service for the TOEFL Program. It is based on the Knowledge of Standard English language. It assesses vocabulary knowledge on written contexts and the ability to identify the meaning of the words in phrases or contexts. This test consists of twenty vocabulary items with multiple-choice. It was administered on students in order to know their performance on vocabulary. The time estimated for learners to take this test was 30 minutes.

- TOEFL reading section.

The researchers took a sample reading test from the TOEFL reading section to determine learners reading performance, and to describe the influence of the lexical and

morphological knowledge. This test is based on updated readings, and it is one of the most accurate tests used nowadays to determine the proficiency in reading. Readings consist on academic and meaningful texts to determine reading skills on students who study English as a foreign language. It is a useful test to study abroad and has validation in many universities in the world. The reading section consists of one single item: the multiple-choice item. It had thirty six questions and three passages. Learners had to analyze, infer, etc. And choose a single answer from the multiple-choice item. The estimated time was 50 minutes.

- Morphology test.

The morphology test consisted on a specific field that is the discrimination of morphemes like affixes (morphemes which attach to roots, changing their meaning in regular ways), and root morphemes (The primary piece of meaning in a word, to which affixes can be added). To assess morphological knowledge, since there is neither a standard test nor a guideline that measures this linguistics area, the research team took a morphology test from a research project and considered it as an adaptation to measure the morphology knowledge on a specific field of morphology, which is the discrimination of morphemes. This test was designed to carry out a research project: Measuring Morphological Awareness in Adult Readers: Implications for Vocabulary Development, by Mag Kay Lisa, 2007. The words to design this test were taken randomly from the American Heritage Word Frequency Book by John Carroll, 1971. This test has fifty words, some of them are commonly used and some others are less used in everyday language. The students had to discriminate the affixes and find the root morpheme or the basis of the whole word. The student had to choose the correct root morpheme of the target word between three options that are provided. The time estimated to take the test was thirty minutes.

Instrument Validity

- Validation of the lexical and reading tests

The research team validated the tests by administering a pilot test. The researchers chose 10 students to take the test in order to make some corrections and determine the time estimated to answer the assessments, and also to verify if the directions of the tests were clear. No corrections were made on the tests and the time was established. Both tests, the lexical and reading test were sample from the ETS for the TOEFL Program.

- Validation of the Morphology test

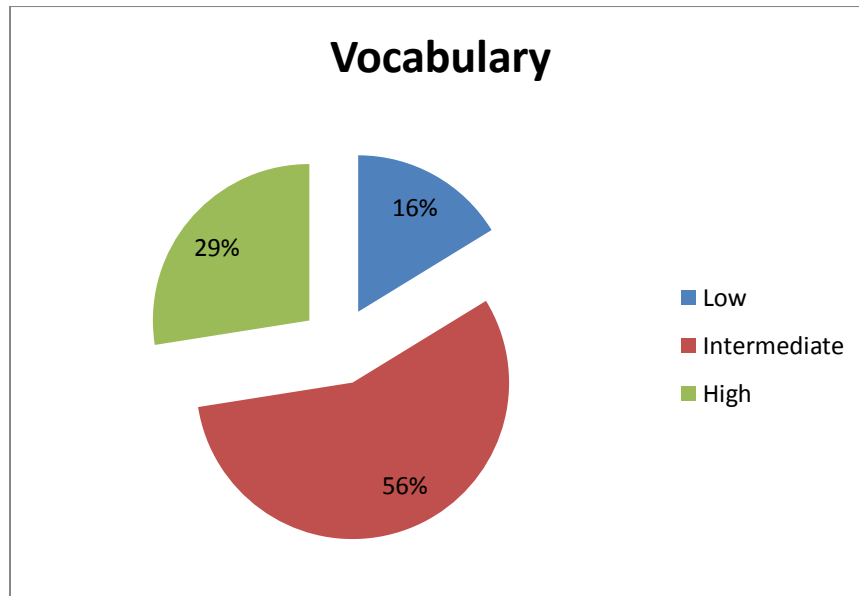
Since there is not a standard test to measure morphological knowledge as described before, the research team chose three teachers from the Foreign Language Department, who know about English morphology, in order to adjust the test to this research project and to find a way to analyze it. The test was validated and considered as an adaptation to assess the students' morphology knowledge in this study. This was analyzed and scored the same way to the TOEFL; considering that the score represents an adaptation to measure English morphology because there is not a specific or an official standard guideline to assess this linguistic area.

Data analysis

Vocabulary Test Analysis

Vocabulary	
Items	20
TOEFL Score	30
Students	80

Vocabulary				
Correct Answers	Students	Standard Grade	TOEFL Score	Level
6	2	3	9	Low
7	3	3.5	10.5	Low
8	5	4	12	Low
9	3	4.5	13.5	Low
10	8	5	15	Intermediate
11	10	5.5	16.5	Intermediate
12	9	6	18	Intermediate
13	7	6.5	19.5	Intermediate
14	11	7	21	Intermediate
15	8	7.5	22.5	High
16	7	8	24	High
17	1	8.5	25.5	High
18	4	9	27	High
19	2	9.5	28.5	High



Based on the data gathered in the vocabulary test, the results show that a 16% of students are in the category named as Low, the percentage corresponds to 13 students; the lowest score obtained in this category was 9 and the highest one was 13.5.

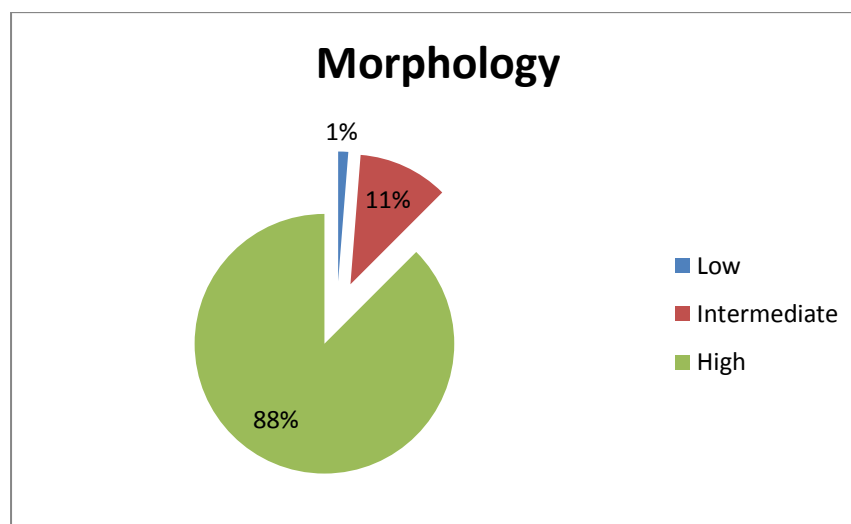
The students on the Intermediate level were 56% of the total population that took the test; this is equal to 45 students. The lowest score for the intermediate level is 15 and the highest score reported is 21. Students at this level are capable of understanding the words a text has, but not only understand but also apply the words.

A total of 22 students make a percentage of 28%. This percentage reached the high level in the vocabulary skills. This is the quantity of students in 4th year of the Modern Languages Major capable of understanding words from text of an academic level. The lowest score is 22.5 while the highest score is 28.5.

Morphology Test Analysis

Morphology	
Items	50
TOEFL Score	30
Students	80

Morphology				
Correct Answers	Students	Standard Grade	TOEFL Grade	Level
17	1	3.4	10.2	Low
28	1	5.6	16.8	Intermediate
29	1	5.8	17.4	Intermediate
34	1	6.8	20.4	Intermediate
34	1	6.8	20.4	Intermediate
35	1	7	21	Intermediate
36	4	7.2	21.6	Intermediate
37	1	7.4	22.2	High
38	2	7.6	22.8	High
39	9	7.8	23.4	High
40	4	8	24	High
41	10	8.2	24.6	High
42	10	8.4	25.2	High
43	14	8.6	25.8	High
44	14	8.8	26.4	High
45	4	9	27	High
47	2	9.4	28.2	High



The graph shows the results of the morphology test administered by the researchers. Within the chart it is possible to identify the TOEFL score and the levels that provide the ETS so the reading proficiency of the students that took the test can be measured.

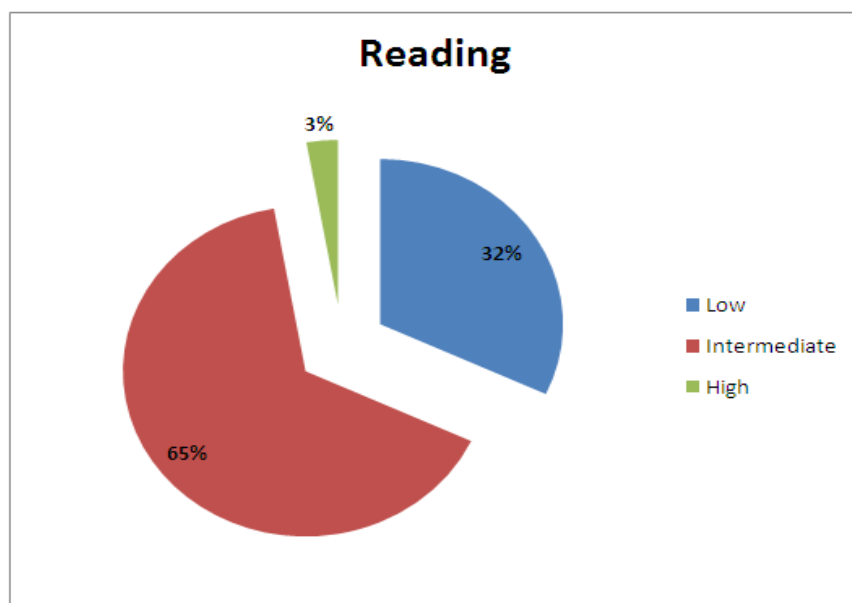
The TOEFL score is divided into three levels to measure the reading performance in reading. These levels are visible in this chart, Low (0-14); Intermediate (15-21); and High (22-30). Each one has a range of that score. The score in reading is 30, and this is distributed into these levels. The low score is 10.5, the intermediate score goes from 16.8 to 21.6, and the high score goes from the 22.2 to the 28.2 which makes the majority of the students tested.

The graph shows the percentage of students' performance on morphology knowledge regarding the discrimination of morphemes to figure out the meaning of the words. Using the same levels provided by the ETS for the TOEFL, the majority of students have a high level of knowledge in discrimination of morphemes. That makes the 88% of the students. The 11% of them has an intermediate performance on this linguistic field, and the last level involves the 1% of the students, who are in low performance. The whole pie graph shows that the students have a high knowledge on discrimination of morphemes. So, the knowledge of this area of morphology is not difficult to be identified by student when identifying word.

Reading Test Analysis

Reading	
Items	36
TOEFL Score	30
Students	72

Reading				
Correct Answers	Students	Standard Grade	TOEFL Score	Level
10	1	2.8	8.3	Low
12	3	3.3	10.0	Low
14	2	3.9	11.7	Low
15	6	4.2	12.5	Low
16	6	4.4	13.3	Low
17	5	4.7	14.2	Low
18	6	5.0	15.0	Intermediate
19	6	5.3	15.8	Intermediate
20	5	5.6	16.7	Intermediate
21	6	5.8	17.5	Intermediate
22	7	6.1	18.3	Intermediate
23	7	6.4	19.2	Intermediate
24	7	6.7	20.0	Intermediate
25	1	6.9	20.8	Intermediate
26	2	7.2	21.7	Intermediate
27	2	7.5	22.5	High



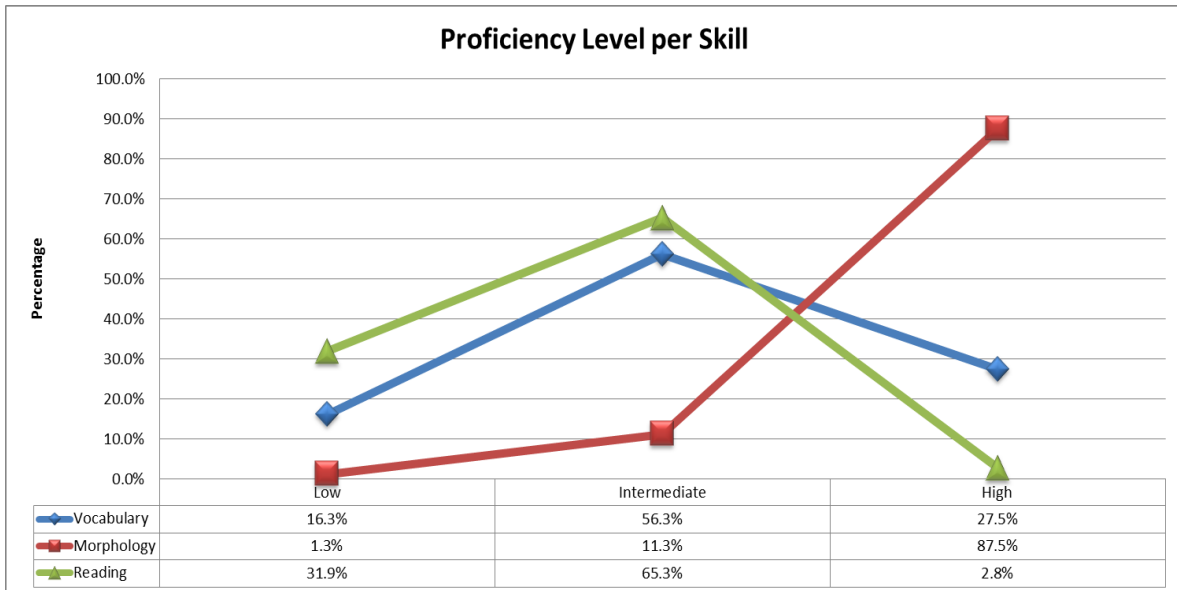
Based on the results shown on the graph, it is possible to identify that a 31.9% of students are categorized on the Low level; this is equal to a total of 23 students. The lowest score was 8.3 and the highest 14.2. With an average of 11.7, the students at this level can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. In addition, the people on this level can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken.

A total of 47 students seemed to have reached an Intermediate level on the test; this is 65.3% of the total population that took the test. The lowest score was 15.0 and the highest one was 21.7. On this level, there is an average of 18.3 which means these students, in addition to the previous abilities stated before, can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Moreover, they can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

For the last 2 students that represent a 2.8% achieved a High level of reading proficiency. Both students achieved a 22.5. This means the students can understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Besides, at this level it is possible to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Finally, people can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Major findings

At the beginning of this study, some research questions were formulated. They were related to the Influence of Morphological and Lexical Competences in the Reading Proficiency of Fourth Year Students of Modern Languages Major of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. These questions were answered based on the data collected and analyzed. The responses were presented as follows:



1. What is the influence between the lexical, morphological competences and reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador?

Based on the TOEFL grading scale proposed by the ETS, the results obtained through the instruments evidence that there is a strong knowledge of the morphological competence by the students meaning they are in a high level. On the contrary, the performance during the vocabulary and reading test keep almost a same pattern allocating the majority of students in an intermediate level. However, as stated by Layton, the results lead the researchers to believe that there is an influence between the morphological performance and the vocabulary knowledge (lexical competence) of

the students that took the tests. For instance 87.5% of students from the sample were able to achieve a high level on the morphology test; as a result, it is possible that the general knowledge of morphemes helped students to mostly reach an intermediate (56.3%) and high (27.5%) level during the second test (vocabulary test).

On the other hand, the vocabulary proficiency acquired by students might be the key that helped them to achieve their performance on the reading test. As mentioned before, it is interesting to remark the patterns followed by the vocabulary and reading test results in which the majority of students have gotten an intermediate level on both tests. This reinforces the idea that lexical competence (vocabulary knowledge) represents a strong influence on the reading proficiency of students.

The results of the research indicate that despite the different results obtained in each test in which each of the students got different scores, as a group there is a tendency that can be easily identified in which there might be a sequence between the influence of morphology on the reading proficiency through the reinforcement of the lexical competence that at the end could allow the majority of the sample (65.3%) to reach the intermediate level on the reading test.

2. What is the morphological and lexical performance of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador?

Based on the vocabulary test and morphology test administered to Fourth Year Students of Modern Languages Major of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, the students have a strong ability of recognition of the morphemes (this is noticed with the results of the morphology test) this means students are able to distinguish morphemes in complex words while reading and they are able to divide them by their roots, prefixes and suffixes; therefore, applying the ETS scale it is possible to allocate students in a high level of proficiency. Regarding

lexical performance, most of the students can deal with unknown words while reading. This means that students can understand texts even when there are unfamiliar words, this is proved in the TOEFL vocabulary test, just few of the tested students have problems in this area and that makes the 16.3% of them which is considered a low amount of students compared with the other levels. Despite having these sets of skills, students were not able to identify some words which leads to the conclusions there are some weaknesses at the moment of inferring and/or providing meaning to some words, this is why the major part of students are on intermediate level.

3. What is the level of English reading proficiency of students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador accomplished after finishing Reading and Conversation in English II?

Based on the analyzed data retrieved after evaluating the Reading TOEFL test from the ETS, the level of English reading proficiency that students have achieved is intermediate which means that according to the ETS, students accomplish these criteria:

Test takers who receive a score at the INTERMEDIATE level typically understand academic texts in English that require a wide range of reading abilities, although their understanding of certain parts of the texts is limited. Test takers who receive a score at the INTERMEDIATE level typically:

- have a good command of common academic vocabulary, but still have some difficulty with high-level vocabulary
- have a very good understanding of grammatical structure
- can understand and connect information, make appropriate inferences, and synthesize information in a range of texts, but have more difficulty when the vocabulary is high level and the text is conceptually dense

- can recognize the expository organization of a text and the role that specific information serves within a larger text, but have some difficulty when these are not explicit or easy to infer from the text
- can abstract major ideas from a text, but have more difficulty doing so when the text is conceptually dense.

The level that students of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador are accomplishing after finishing the fourth academic year of the Major, could be categorized as intermediate level of reading proficiency. But still, there are many of students in the low level, and very few of them in high level which means not all of the students that took part of the research are at the same level.

4. What is the general performance of students' competences based on the results gathered from the research?

As it is stated, it seems that the majority of the Modern Languages major students have been able to achieve an intermediate level of performance according to the vocabulary test from the TOEFL. This makes the majority of them, but there are some of students that have the high level, the 27.5% of the students tested. Most of the students have a strong knowledge on vocabulary that allows them to deal with difficult readings.

On the morphology knowledge, students' competence is very high. Students do not have problems with this area. They passed the test with high grades and by using the same scale of the TOEFL from the ETS, most of the learners of fourth year of the Major in Modern Languages of the University of El Salvador have a high level of performance on the recognition of morphemes in familiar or unfamiliar word when dealing with reading. The 87.5% of the students passed the test with good grades and were classified in the high level.

On reading proficiency, students have intermediate level, but there are many of them with low performance as it is proved with the TOEFL test. This is very important to highlight because just few students reached a high performance. With these results it can be inferred that students, after being studying English for four years and taking some other subjects, could reach and finish their fourth academic year with an intermediate level on reading proficiency, which means that it is not enough and it is necessary to make an effort to increase this ability to pass from intermediate to high performance.

Conclusions

Reading can be considered a process in which several linguistic areas provide a direct or an indirect support to the reader in order to ease the understanding of the contents in a text.

The vocabulary knowledge seems to take a great role on students' reading performance. They need to have a strong knowledge so they can handle readings with a high level of difficulty and as a result they should be ready to deal with any kind of reading. It is showed that the amount of students having the same level in vocabulary and in reading performance is similar. In fact, the major amount of students are in the same intermediate level. Therefore, if the vocabulary is reinforced it is for sure that the performance on reading will increase. There were some students that have a high performance but the majority of students have a good level despite the fact they were in the intermediate level as classified by the ETS, which is good. It is just a matter of increasing the numbers of students to the high level by enhancing the learning of more meaningful texts during classes to make students increase their lexical knowledge.

The independent variable –lexical competence – could have a stronger influence in the dependent variable - reading proficiency - because the amount of students who got higher grades in vocabulary is very similar to the ones that obtained a higher grade in reading comprehension. That is the reason why researchers conclude that in order to have a high level in reading comprehension it is necessary to have high levels in vocabulary. Since students have already taken several subjects regarding the reading skills that help to have a better comprehension it can be shown that students have problems with reading abilities. At this fourth academic year, there should be a higher percentage of students in high or advanced level in reading performance.

Concerning the morphology test, since there is not a standard test with guidelines and criteria to evaluate this linguistic area, but it is measured with the same levels of the TOEFL, it is shown that it does influence reading throughout the vocabulary knowledge.

Students got high level of performance on this area and they were intermediate level on reading. Just few students are in intermediate in morphology knowledge. It can be stated that morphology does not influence directly the reading proficiency but it seems that it reinforces vocabulary, and this linguistic area has been proven to be one of the indicators of the level in which students are at the moment of reading a text.

The researchers conclude that it is necessary to pay close attention to vocabulary development to increase the reading performance because as the study was carried out with morphology as another independent variable that influences reading performance, the results do not show a direct relation between them. However, it is necessary to pay close attention to morphology as an important key that helps students to have better vocabulary knowledge and as a result a better reading proficiency thanks to the lexicon that a reader is able to understand and to manage in a text.

Recommendations

This investigation offered some interesting information that can be considered to give recommendations to students and teachers as well, in order to improve the lexical competence through vocabulary and therefore increase reading performance.

- Students can begin by acknowledging their own difficulties in order to face the likely repercussions it might bring their actual level of lexical competence when dealing with any type of reading. For students that are on fourth year of the Modern Language Major this is something that should be taken into consideration.
- Moreover, students should look for strategies that can help them achieve an improvement of reading proficiency once they have already completed the fourth academic year, and they have already taken all the subjects regarding reading skills and they should have a strong ability to read and understand different types of texts.
- Teachers are suggested to encourage students to read newspapers, books, magazines and internet articles of a variety of topics written in different genres since the beginning of the major so students can become more familiar with the English language.
- Encourage students to make presentations of different meaningful texts in any course, in order create a reading environment where all of them share readings of different genres. This can be done through the four years of the linguistic development in order to train student in reading skills. So, the students can create this habit since the beginning of the major.

- Teachers should create a space for reading in class and not to wait to specific courses to teach and encourage students to be proficiency in language.
- Additional researches can take place to have a better understanding of some other linguistic areas that might impact the reading proficiency of students.

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Annexes

☑ CEF LEVELS

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, abbreviated as CEFR or CEF, is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries (for example, Colombia and the Philippines). It was put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996.

B	Independent User	B1	Threshold or intermediate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
		B2	Vantage or upper intermediate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C	Proficient User	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. • Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

<http://www.examenglish.com/CEFR/cefr.php>

READING SKILLS

LEVEL	HIGH (22–30)	INTERMEDIATE (15–21)	LOW (0–14)
YOUR PERFORMANCE	<p>Test takers who receive a score at the HIGH level typically understand academic texts in English that require a wide range of reading abilities regardless of the difficulty of the texts.</p> <p>Test takers who score at the HIGH level typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a very good command of academic vocabulary and grammatical structure • can understand and connect information, make appropriate inferences and synthesize ideas, even when the text is conceptually dense and the language is complex • can recognize the expository organization of a text and the role that specific information serves within the larger text, even when the text is conceptually dense • can abstract major ideas from a text, even when the text is conceptually dense and contains complex language 	<p>Test takers who receive a score at the INTERMEDIATE level typically understand academic texts in English that require a wide range of reading abilities, although their understanding of certain parts of the texts is limited.</p> <p>Test takers who receive a score at the INTERMEDIATE level typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a good command of common academic vocabulary, but still have some difficulty with high-level vocabulary • have a very good understanding of grammatical structure • can understand and connect information, make appropriate inferences, and synthesize information in a range of texts, but have more difficulty when the vocabulary is high level and the text is conceptually dense • can recognize the expository organization of a text and the role that specific information serves within a larger text, but have some difficulty when these are not explicit or easy to infer from the text • can abstract major ideas from a text, but have more difficulty doing so when the text is conceptually dense 	<p>Test takers who receive a score at the LOW level typically understand some of the information presented in academic texts in English that require a wide range of reading abilities, but their understanding is limited.</p> <p>Test takers who receive a score at the LOW level typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a command of basic academic vocabulary, but their understanding of less common vocabulary is inconsistent • have limited ability to understand and connect information, have difficulty recognizing paraphrases of text information, and often rely on particular words and phrases rather than a complete understanding of the text • have difficulty identifying the author's purpose, except when that purpose is explicitly stated in the text or easy to infer from the text • can sometimes recognize major ideas from a text when the information is clearly presented, memorable or illustrated by examples, but have difficulty doing so when the text is more demanding
ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT	<p>Read as much and as often as possible. Make sure to include academic texts on a variety of topics written in different genres and with different degrees of conceptual density as part of your reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read major newspapers, such as <i>The New York Times</i> or <i>Science Times</i>, and websites (National Public Radio [NPR] or the BBC). • Write summaries of texts, making sure they incorporate the organizational pattern of the originals. <p>Continually expand your vocabulary. Continually practice using new words you encounter in your reading. This will help you remember both the meaning and correct usage of the new words.</p>	<p>Read as much and as often as possible.</p> <p>Study the organization of academic texts and overall structure of reading passages. Read an entire passage from beginning to end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to the relationship between the main ideas and the supporting details. • Outline the text to test your understanding of the structure of the reading passage. • Write a summary of the entire passage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the text is a comparison, be sure that your summary reflects that. If the text argues two points of view, be sure both points of view are reflected in your summary. <p>Continually expand your vocabulary by developing a system for recording unfamiliar words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group words according to topic or meaning and study the words as a list of related words. • Study roots, prefixes and suffixes; study word families. • Use available vocabulary resources, such as a good thesaurus or a dictionary of collocations (words commonly used together). 	<p>Read as much and as often as possible.</p> <p>Develop a system for recording unfamiliar words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group words into lists according to topic or meaning and review and study the words on a regular basis so that you remember them. • Increase your vocabulary by analyzing word parts; study roots, prefixes and suffixes; study word families. <p>Study the organization of academic texts and overall structure of a reading passage. Read an entire passage from beginning to end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at connections between sentences; look at how the end of one sentence relates to the beginning of the next sentence. • Look for the main ideas and supporting details and pay attention to the relationship between them. • Outline a text to test your understanding of the structure of a reading passage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by grouping paragraphs that address the same concept. • Write one sentence summarizing the paragraphs that discuss the same idea. • Write a summary of the entire passage.

http://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/performance_feedback_brochure.pdf

☑ Score Interpretation

There is a score range for each skill measured on the test. There are three or four proficiency levels for each skill.

ETS administers some test forms with one or more sections omitted. When one of these forms is administered, scores are given only for the sections that were included in the form, and no total test score appears on the score report. If an institution receives such a score report and desires more information about the circumstances under which the test was administered, the institution should contact the test taker.

TOEFL iBT® Test Scores

Skill	Score Range	Level*
Reading	0–30	Low (0–14) Intermediate (15–21) High (22–30)
Listening	0–30	Low (0–14) Intermediate (15–21) High (22–30)
Speaking	0–4 points converted to 0–30 score scale	Weak (0–9) Limited (10–17) Fair (18–25) Good (26–30)
Writing	0–5 points converted to 0–30 score scale	Limited (1–16) Fair (17–23) Good (24–30)
Total Score	0–120	

*Data taken from test taker score reports.

<http://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/scores/interpret/>

Morphology Test

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

Research Project

Morphology test.

This test is designed to measure your morphology knowledge on discrimination of prefixes, suffixes, and root morphemes.

Objective:

To describe the influence of the morphological competences on reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador.

Directions:

In each line, the word in **bold** font was formed from one of the words on the right. Select the letter of the word on the right which is the basis or the root morpheme for the **bold** word. This test contains 50 items.

Examples:

<u> </u> c teacher	a. tea	b. each	c. teach
<u> </u> a undamaged	a. damage	b. dam	c. aged

<u> </u> 1. noncombatant	a. comb	b. bat	c. combat
<u> </u> 2. mistreating	a. mist	b. treat	c. eating
<u> </u> 3. allegorical	a. all	b. leg	c. allegory
<u> </u> 4. believable	a. belief	b. belie	c. lie
<u> </u> 5. discredited	a. disc	b. credit	c. edited
<u> </u> 6. unmitigated	a. mit	b. gate	c. mitigate
<u> </u> 7. correspondence	a. respond	b. dense	c. pond
<u> </u> 8. decadence	a. decay	b. decade	c. cadence
<u> </u> 9. hypothetically	a. hypothecary	b. thesis	c. the
<u> </u> 10. explanatory	a. plane	b. planetary	c. explain
<u> </u> 11. impiety	a. imp	b. pious	c. pie
<u> </u> 12. presumptuous	a. presume	b. sump	c. sumptuous
<u> </u> 13. readmission	a. read	b. admit	c. mission
<u> </u> 14. indefatigable	a. fat	b. gable	c. fatigue
<u> </u> 15. bedevilment	a. evil	b. bed	c. devil
<u> </u> 16. diversification	a. diverse	b. versify	c. diver
<u> </u> 17. enduring	a. ring	b. during	c. endure
<u> </u> 18. detestable	a. stable	b. detest	c. testable
<u> </u> 19. reciprocity	a. recipe	b. reciprocal	c. receipt

_____ 20. commendable	a. commend	b. mend	c. mendable
_____ 21. irreverent	a. reverse	b. revere	c. rent
_____ 22. provocation	a. prove	b. provoke	c. vocation
_____ 23. despicable	a. spice	b. cable	c. despise
_____ 24. expensive	a. expend	b. pensive	c. pens
_____ 25. protestation	a. station	b. testate	c. protest
_____ 26. licensure	a. censure	b. license	c. ensure
_____ 27. despotism	a. despot	b. spot	c. pot
_____ 28. incomparable	a. income	b. parable	c. compare
_____ 29. apparently	a. parent	b. rent	c. appear
_____ 30. fundamental	a. fun	b. mental	c. fundament
_____ 31. liberation	a. beration	b. liberate	c. ration
_____ 32. demolition	a. demo	b. mole	c. demolish
_____ 33. improvisational	a. improve	b. provide	c. improvise
_____ 34. contender	a. ender	b. contend	c. tend
_____ 35. redacting	a. red	b. redact	c. acting
_____ 36. operationalize	a. rationalize	b. opera	c. operate
_____ 37. presentiment	a. present	b. resentment	c. sentiment
_____ 38. bravery	a. raver	b. very	c. brave
_____ 39. indecision	a. incision	b. decide	c. indecent
_____ 40. opacity	a. opaque	b. pace	c. city
_____ 41. incessant	a. cess	b. ant	c. cease
_____ 42. demotion	a. demo	b. motion	c. demote
_____ 43. reforestation	a. station	b. forest	c. fore
_____ 44. dependable	a. depend	b. deepen	c. endable
_____ 45. obliterating	a. literate	b. rating	c. obliterate
_____ 46. addressing	a. dress	b. address	c. dressing
_____ 47. coordination	a. ordination	b. ordinal	c. coordinate
_____ 48. discovery	a. disco	b. cover	c. discover
_____ 49. placidity	a. acidity	b. placid	c. place
_____ 50. defamation	a. fame	b. famish	c. family

Vocabulary Test

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
ARTS AND SCIENCES SCHOOL
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

VOCABULARY TEST.

This section belongs to the TOEFL vocabulary section and it is designed to measure your comprehension of standard written English. There are 20 items.

Objective:

To describe the influence of the lexical competences and reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador

Directions: Each sentence has an underlined word or phrase. Below each sentence are four other words or phrases marked (A); (B); (C); and (D). Choose the one word or phrase that best keeps the meaning of the original sentence that is substituted for the underlined word or phrase. Then, mark the word or phrase with a circle.

Example

Passenger ships and aircraft are often equipped with ship-to shore or air-to land radio telephones.

- (A) highways
- (B) railroads
- (C) planes
- (D) sailboats

The best answer is (C) because "passenger ship and planes are often equipped with ship-to shore

or air-to land radio telephones" is closest in meaning to the original sentence.

Therefore, you should choose answer (C).

Now begin to work on the questions.

1. Many short stories are composed primarily of dialogue.
(A) conversation
(B) description
(C) fantasies
(D) witticisms
2. In just a few minutes, a desert rainstorm can deposit the normal amount of rainfall for one year.
(A) standard
(B) consistent
(C) absorbed
(D) restricted
3. When plutonium undergoes fission, its atoms break apart, giving off a great deal of energy.
(A) recoil
(B) soften
(C) fester
(D) split
4. Henry Tanner received widespread recognition for his naturalistic paintings of plantation life.
(A) profits
(B) storage
(C) attention
(D) invitations

5. Ice can be used to keep food from spoiling.
 (A) rotting
 (B) aging
 (C) toughening
 (D) evaporating
6. When he formed his own company in 1949, Minoru Yamasaki had had years of experience with New York's top architectural.
 (A) tallest
 (B) chief
 (C) international
 (D) private
7. The enormous size of the sea turtle is a deterrent to all predators save the shark.
 (A) and
 (B) of
 (C) except
 (D) like
8. Over thirty cities around the world boast more than five million residents.
 (A) jobs
 (B) dwellings
 (C) blocks
 (D) inhabitants
9. An expert in any field may be defined as a person who possesses specialized skills and is capable of rendering very competent services.
 (A) obtaining
 (B) mastering
 (C) providing
 (D) financing
10. It is risky to keep wild animals as pets because there is no effective rabies vaccine for immunizing wildlife.
 (A) disadvantageous
 (B) impossible
 (C) hazardous
 (D) unwise
11. College admissions officers use high school grades as one important factor in predicting a student's success in college.
 (A) experiment
 (B) benefit
 (C) topic
 (D) consideration
12. Plays that entail direct interaction between actor and audience present no unusual difficulties for actors.
 (A) advocate
 (B) involve
 (C) elicit
 (D) exaggerate
13. An allergy results when the body reacts adversely to certain substances introduced to it.
 (A) negatively
 (B) spontaneously
 (C) purposefully
 (D) quickly
14. The Red River gains its name from the color of the soil it picks up as it flows through rich prairie land
 (A) nourishes
 (B) produces
 (C) gathers
 (D) reaps
15. There has been no twentieth-century anthropologists more celebrated or more controversial than Margaret Mead.
 (A) imaginative
 (B) hardworking
 (C) distinguished
 (D) strong-minded

16. The American antelope possesses remarkable powers of sight and can pinpoint potential danger at tremendous distances.

- (A) spot
- (B) relay
- (C) attach
- (D) sustain

17. Despite notions to the contrary, a great deal of technical writing is at best awkward and at worst actually unclear.

- (A) denials
- (B) laws
- (C) attempts
- (D) ideas

18. The fragrant scent of the lilac is said to herald the beginning of spring.

- (A) symbolize
- (B) hasten
- (C) exult
- (D) announce

19. Communication satellites transmit information more reliably than do ordinary shortwave radios.

- (A) conveniently
- (B) dependably
- (C) accessibly
- (D) concisely

20. The near extinction of the leopard is the direct result of wanton destruction by humans.

- (A) ongoing
- (B) senseless
- (C) ignorant
- (D) accelerated

Educational Testing Service (ETS) for the TOEFL program.

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
ARTS AND SCIENCES SCHOOL
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

Research Project

TOEFL Reading Section.

This section belongs to the TOEFL reading section provided by the ETS and it is designed reading comprehension. There are 36 items.

Objective:

To describe and measure the reading proficiency of English learners of fourth academic year of the Modern Languages Major at the University of El Salvador.

Directions: Read the paragraphs and answer the questions. Choose with a circle the correct answer.

Questions 1-9

The canopy, the upper level of the trees in the rain forest, holds a plethora of climbing mammals of moderately large size, which may include monkeys, cats, civets, and porcupines. Smaller species, including such rodents as mice and small squirrels, are not as prevalent overall in high tropical canopies as they are in most habitats globally.

5 Small mammals, being warm blooded, suffer hardship in the exposed and turbulent environment of the uppermost trees. Because a small body has more surface area per unit of weight than a large one of similar shape, it gains or loses heat more swiftly. Thus, in the trees, where shelter from heat and cold may be scarce and conditions may fluctuate, a small mammal may have trouble maintaining its body temperature.

10 Small size makes it easy to scramble among twigs and branches in the canopy for insects, flowers, or fruit, but small mammals are surpassed, in the competition for food, by large ones that have their own tactics for browsing among food-rich twigs. The weight of a gibbon (a small ape) hanging below a branch arches the terminal leaves down so that fruit-bearing foliage drops toward the gibbon's face. Walking or leaping species of a
15 similar or even larger size access the outer twigs either by snapping off and retrieving the whole branch or by clutching stiff branches with the feet or tail and plucking food with their hands.

Small climbing animals may reach twigs readily, but it is harder for them than for large climbing animals to cross the wide gaps from one tree crown to the next that typify the
20 high canopy. A macaque or gibbon can hurl itself farther than a mouse can: it can achieve a running start, and it can more effectively use a branch as a springboard, even bouncing on a limb several times before jumping. The forward movement of a small animal is seriously reduced by the air friction against the relatively large surface area of its body. Finally, for the many small mammals the supplement their insect diet with fruits or seeds,
25 an inability to span open gaps between tree crowns may be problematic, since trees that yield these foods can be sparse.

1. The passage answers which of the following questions?

- (A) How is the rain forest different from other habitats?
- (B) How does an animal's body size influence an animal's need for food?
- (C) Why does rain forest provide an unusual variety of food for animals?
- (D) Why do large animals tend to dominate the upper canopy of the rain forest?

2. Which of the following animals is less common in the upper canopy than in other environments?

- (A) Monkeys
- (B) Cats
- (C) Porcupines
- (D) Mice

3. The word "they" in line 4 refers to

- (A) trees
- (B) climbing mammals of moderately large size
- (C) smaller species
- (D) high tropical canopies

4. According to paragraph 2, which of the following is true about the small mammals in the rain forest?

- (A) They have body shapes that are adapted to life in the canopy.
- (B) They prefer the temperature and climate of the canopy to that of other environments.
- (C) They have difficulty with the conditions in the canopy.
- (D) They use the trees of the canopy for shelter from heat and cold.

5. In discussing animal size in paragraph 3, the author indicates that

- (A) small animals require proportionately more food

- than larger animals do.
- (B) a large animal's size is an advantage in obtaining food in the canopy.
 - (C) Small animals are often attacked by larger animals in the rain forest.
 - (D) Small animals and large animals are equally adept at obtaining food in the canopy.

6. The word "typify" in line 19 is closest in meaning to

- (A) resemble
- (B) protect
- (C) characterize
- (D) divide

7. According to paragraph 4, what makes jumping from one tree crown to another difficult for small mammals?

- (A) Air friction against the body surface.
- (B) The thickness of the branches.
- (C) The dense leaves of the tree crown.
- (D) The inability to use the front feet as hands.

8. The word "supplement" in line 24 is closest in meaning to

- (A) control
- (B) replace
- (C) look for
- (D) add to

9. Which of the following terms is defined in the passage?

- (A) canopy (line 1)
- (B) warm blooded (line 5)
- (C) terminal leaves (line 13)
- (D) springboard (line 21)

Questions 10 – 19

5 During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almost nothing was written about the contribution of women during the colonial period and the early history of the newly formed United States. Lacking the right to vote and absent from the seats of power, women were not considered an important force in history. Anne Bradstreet wrote some significant poetry in the seventeenth century, Mercy Otis Warren produced the best contemporary history of the American Revolution, and Abigail Adams penned important letters showing she exercised great political influence over her husband, John, the second President of the United States. But little or no notice was taken of these contributions. During these centuries,

10 women remained invisible in history books.

Throughout the nineteenth century, this lack of visibility continued, despite the efforts of female authors writing about women. These writers, like most of their male counterparts, were amateur historians. Their writings were celebratory in nature, and they were uncritical in their selection and use of sources.

15 During the nineteenth century, however, certain feminists showed a keen sense of history by keeping records of activities in which women were engaged. National, regional, and local women's organizations compiled accounts of their doings. Personal correspondence, newspaper clippings, and souvenirs were saved and stored. These sources form the core of the two greatest collections of women's history in the United States –
20 one at the Elizabeth and Arthur Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, and the other the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. Such sources have provided valuable materials for later generations of historians.

25 Despite the gathering of more information about ordinary women during the nineteenth century, most of the writing about women conformed to the "great women" theory of history, just as much of mainstream American history concentrated on "great men". To demonstrate that women were making significant contributions to American life, female authors singled out women leaders and wrote biographies, or else important women produced their autobiographies. Most of these leaders were involved in public life as reformers, activists working for women's right to vote, or authors, and were not
30 representative at all of the great mass of ordinary women. The lives of ordinary people continued, generally, to be untold in the American histories being published.

10. What does the passage mainly discuss ?

- (A) The role of literature in early American histories.
- (B) The place of American women in written histories.
- (C) The keen sense of history shown

- By American women.
- (D) The “great women” approach to History used by American historians.

11. The word “contemporary” in line 5 means that the history was

- (A) informative
(B) written at that time
(C) thoughtful
(D) faultfinding

12. In the first paragraph, Bradstreet, Warren, and Adams are mentioned to show that

- (A) a woman’s status was changed by marriage.
(B) even the contributions of outstanding women were ignored.
(C) only three women were able to get their writing published.
(D) poetry produced by women was more readily accepted than other writing by women

13. The word “celebratory” in line 12 means that the writings referred to were

- (A) related to parties
(B) religious
(C) serious
(D) full of praise

14. The word “they” in line 12 refers to

- (A) efforts
(B) authors
(C) counterparts
(D) sources

15. In the second paragraph, what weakness in nineteenth-century histories does the author point out?

- (A) They put too much emphasis on daily activities.
(B) They left out discussion of the influence on money on politics
(C) The sources of the information they were based on were not necessarily accurate.
(D) They were printed on poor quality paper.

16. On the basis of information in the third paragraph, which of the following, would most likely have been collected by nineteenth-century feminist organizations?

- (A) Newspaper accounts of presidential election results.
- (B) Biographies of John Adams.
- (C) Letters from a mother to a daughter advising her how to handle a family problem.
- (D) Books about famous graduates of the country's first college.

17. What use was made of the nineteenth-century women's history materials in the Schlesinger Library and the Sophia Smith Collection?

- (A) They were combined and published in a multivolume encyclopedia about women.
- (B) They formed the basis of college courses in the nineteenth-century.
- (C) They provided valuable information for twentieth-century historical researchers.
- (D) They were shared among women's colleges throughout the United States.

18. In the last paragraph, the author mentions all of the following as possible roles of nineteenth-century "great women" EXCEPT

- (A) authors
- (B) reformers
- (C) activists for women's rights
- (D) politicians

19. The word "representative" in line 29 is closest in meaning to

- (A) typical
- (B) satisfied
- (C) supportive
- (D) distinctive

Questions 20 – 29

The end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century were marked by the development of an international Art Nouveau style, characterized by sinuous lines, floral and vegetable motifs, and soft evanescent coloration. The Art Nouveau style was an eclectic one, bringing together elements of Japanese art, motifs of ancient cultures, and natural forms. The glass objects of this style were elegant in outline, although often deliberately distorted, with pale or iridescent surfaces. A favored device of the style was to imitate the iridescent surface seen on ancient glass that had been buried. Much of the Art Nouveau glass produced during the years of its greatest popularity had been generically termed “art glass”. Art glass was intended for decorative purposes and relied for its effect upon carefully chosen color combinations and innovative techniques.

France produced a number of outstanding exponents of the Art Nouveau style: among the most celebrated was Emile Gallé(1846-1901). In the United States, Louis Comfort Tiffany(1848-1933)was the most noted exponent of this style, producing a great variety of glass forms and surfaces, which were widely copied in their time and are highly prized today. Tiffany was a brilliant designer, successfully combining ancient Egyptian.

The Art Nouveau style was a major force in the decorative arts from 1895 until 1915, although its influence continued throughout the mid-1920’s. It was eventually to be overtaken by a new school of thought known as Functionalism that had present since the turn of the century. At first restricted to a small avant-garde group of architects and designers. Functionalism emerged as the dominant influence upon designers alter the First World War. The basic tenet of the movement – that function should determine form – was not a new concept. Soon a distinct aesthetic code evolved: form should be simple, surfaces plain, and any ornament should be based on geometric relationships. This new design concept, coupled with the sharp postwar reactions to the style and conventions of the preceding decades, created an entirely new public taste which caused Art Nouveau types of glass to fall out of favor. The new taste demanded dramatic effects of contrast stark outline, and complex textural surfaces.

20. What does paragraph 1 mainly discuss?

- (A) Design elements in the Art Nouveau style
- (B) The popularity of the Art Nouveau style
- (C) Production techniques for art glass
- (D) Color combinations typical of the Art Nouveau style

21. The word “one” in line 4 refers to

- (A) century
- (B) development
- (C) style
- (D) coloration

22. Paragraph 1 mentions that Art Nouveau glass was sometimes similar to which aspect of ancient burial glass?

- (A) The distortion of the glass
- (B) The appearance of the glass
- (C) The shapes of the glass objects
- (D) The size of the glass objects

23. What is the main purpose of paragraph 2 ?

- (A) To compare different Art Nouveau styles
- (B) To give examples of famous Art Nouveau artists
- (C) To explain why Art Nouveau glass was so popular in the United States
- (D) To show the impact Art Nouveau had on other cultures around the world

24. The word “prized” in line 14 is closest in meaning to

- (A) valued
- (B) universal
- (C) uncommon
- (D) preserved

25. The word “overtaken” in line 19 is closest in meaning to

- (A) surpassed
- (B) inclined
- (C) expressed
- (D) applied

26. What does the author mean by stating that “function should determine form” (line 22) ?

- (A) A useful object should not be attractive.
- (B) The purpose of an object should influence its form
- (C) The design of an object
- (D) The form of an object should not include decorative elements.

27. It can be inferred from the passage that one reason. Functionalism became popular was that it

- (A) clearly distinguish
- (B) appealed to people who liked complex painted designs
- (C) reflected a common desire to break from the past
- (D) was easily interpreted by the general public

28. Paragraph 3 supports which of the following statements about Functionalism?

- (A) Its design concept avoided geometric shapes.
- (B) It started on a small scale and then spread gradually.
- (C) It was a major force in the decorative arts before the First World War
- (D) It was not attractive to architects and designers

29. According to the passage, an object made in the Art Nouveau style would most likely include

- (A) a flowered design
- (B) bright colors
- (C) modern symbols
- (D) a textured surface

Questions 30 – 36

During most of their lives, surge glaciers behave like normal glaciers, traveling perhaps only a couple of inches per day. However, at intervals of 10 to 100 years, these glaciers move forward up to 100 times faster than usual. The surge often progress along a glacier like a great wave, proceeding from one section to another. Subglacial streams of meltwater might act as a lubricant, allowing the glacier to flow rapidly toward the sea. The increasing water pressure under the glacier might lift it off its bed, overcoming the friction between ice and rock, thus freeing the glacier, which rapidly slides downhill. Surge glaciers also might be influenced by the climate, volcanic heat, or earthquakes. However, many of these glaciers exist in the same areas as normal glaciers, often almost side by side.

Some 800 years ago, Alaska's Hubbard Glacier advanced toward the sea, retreated, and advanced again 500 years later. Since 1895, this seventy-mile-long river of ice has been flowing steadily toward the Gulf of Alaska at a rate of approximately 200 feet per year. In June 1986, however, the glacier surged ahead as much as 47 feet a day. Meanwhile, a western tributary, called Valerie Glacier, advanced up to 112 feet per day. Hubbard's surge closed off Russell Fjord with a formidable ice dam, some 2,500 feet wide and up to 800 feet high, whose caged waters threatened the town of Yakutat to the south.

About 20 similar glaciers around the Gulf of Alaska are heading toward the sea. If enough surge glaciers reach the ocean and raise sea levels, West Antarctic ice shelves could rise off the seafloor and become adrift. A flood of ice would then surge into the Southern Sea. With the continued rise in sea level, more ice would plunge into the ocean, causing sea levels to rise even higher, which in turn would release more ice and set in motion a vicious cycle. The additional sea ice floating toward the tropics would increase Earth's albedo and lower global temperatures, perhaps enough to initiate a new ice age. This situation appears to have occurred at the end of the last warm interglacial (the time between glaciations), called the Sangamon, when sea ice cooled the ocean dramatically, spawning the beginning of the Ice Age.

30. What is the main topic of the passage?

- (A) The classification of different types of surge glaciers.
- (B) The causes and consequences of surge glaciers.
- (C) The definition of a surge glacier.
- (D) The history of a particular surge Glacier.

31. The word “intervals” in line 2 is closest in meaning to

- (A) records
- (B) speeds
- (C) distances
- (D) periods

32. The author compares the surging motion of a surge glacier to the movement of a

- (A) fish
- (B) wave
- (C) machine
- (D) boat

33. Which of the following does the author mention as a possible cause of surging glaciers?

- (A) The decline in sea levels.
- (B) The occurrence of unusually large ocean waves.
- (C) The shifting Antarctic ice shelves.
- (D) The pressure of meltwater underneath the glacier.

34. The author provides a definition for which of the following terms?

- (A) Tributary (line 14)
- (B) Ice dam (line 15)
- (C) Albedo (line 23)
- (D) Interglacial (line 24)

35. According to the passage, the Hubbard Glacier

- (A) moves more often than the Valerie Glacier.
- (B) began movement toward the sea in 1895
- (C) is 800 feet wide.
- (D) has moved as fast as 47 feet per day.

36. Which of the following statements is supported by the passage?

- (A) The movement of surge glaciers can be prevented.
- (B) The next ice age could be caused by surge glaciers.
- (C) Surge glaciers help to support Antarctic ice shelves.
- (D) Normal glaciers have little effect on Earth's climate.

Answer Keys

TESTS		
Morphology	Reading	Vocabulary
1.C	1.B	1.A
2.B	2.D	2.A
3.C	3.C	3.D
4.A	4.C	4.C
5.B	5.B	5.A
6.C	6. A	6. B
7.A	7.A	7.C
8.A	8.D	8.D
9.A	9.A	9.C
10.C	10.B	10.C
11.B	11. B	11. D
12.C	12.B	12.B
13.B	13.D	13.A
14.C	14.B	14.C
15.C	15.C	15.C
16.A	16.C	16.A
17.C	17.C	17.D
18.B	18.D	18.D
19.B	19.A	19.B
20.A	20.B	20.B
21.B	21. C	
22.B	22.B	
23.C	23.B	
24.A	24.A	
25.C	25.A	
26.B	26.B	
27.A	27.D	
28.C	28.B	
29.C	29.D	
30.C	30.B	
31.B	31.D	
32.C	32.B	
33.B	33.D	
34.B	34.A	
35.B	35.D	

36.B	36. A	
37.C		
38.C		
39.B		
40.A		
41.C		
42.C		
43.B		
44.A		
45.C		
46.B		
47.C		
48.B		
49.B		
50.A		