Keep calm and carry on skimming – an exploration of expeditious reading strategies

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Speed reading miracle #1

- Research shows that the average person's reading speed is limited to the rate at which they speak — between 160 and 220 words per minute. Yet with proper training, you can read 2 to 5 times faster with improved comprehension and recall by eliminating the reading habits that hold you back.

http://www.readfaster.com/tre.asp
Speed reading miracle #2

• **Dramatically increase your reading speed** - most people double and even treble their reading speed whilst maintaining comprehension. So if you spend 40% of your day reading and just double your reading speed (without losing comprehension) you'll save a day a week.

http://www.illumine.co.uk/assimilate/effective-speed-reading.html
Speed reading miracle #3

Do you want to feel better or change your mood? Do you want to feel more energetic? PhotoReading and Speed Reading is the answer. Research done in Princeton University (Emily Pronin) suggests that people who speed up their thinking with timed activities such as reading fast a piece of text that scrolled quickly - felt happier and more powerful, creative and energetic.

Structure

- Construct/operationalization of expeditious reading strategies
- Results of main trial
- Reading efficiency
An exploration of expeditious reading strategies

READING CONSTRUCT

Explicit information
- Global
  - Above sentence level
    - Main ideas, elaboration
  - Text level
    - SKIMMING
      - Text organization
      - (Multiple texts)

Implicit information
- Local
  - Inferencing

SCANNING
- Text organization
  - Info at sentence level

(Multiple texts)

SSU Oct. 2015
Cognitive processing (Khalifa & Weir 2009)

• Coverage of text relating to item
  • Word/clause/sentence – across sentences – overall text – across several texts

• Timing
  • Careful vs. expeditious reading

• Level of processing
  • Word recognition – lexical access – parsing – propositional meaning – inferencing – mental model – text level structure – comparing several texts
Test items

• Six skimming items (MC)

• Six scanning items (short answers in citation form)
  • + demonstration items to get used to the speed

• 14 short texts (MC)

• One long text with seven items (MC)

• One gapped text (multiple matching)
Skimming

• Skimming is usually used to get an overall idea of the text, to find the main ideas, to identify text type, etc.

• The programmed rate is 400 words per minute.

• The red "timer" shows how many seconds are left (approx. 10 second intervals).

• You have 10 seconds to write down your answer after the text has disappeared.
What type of book is this extract taken from?

a. Autobiography
b. History book
c. Guidebook
d. Travelogue
The following Sunday at six in the morning the three of us set off from International Backside into the thick early morning mist. As we neared the cemetery, the streets began to fill with people, all heading in the same direction. Some were carrying bulky packages covered with thick quilted cloths. Every so often one of the packages would let out a loud squawk.

The cemetery lay within a high walled enclosure at the back of the Old Delhi Idgah. Despite the early hour, the arched gateway into the cemetery was already jammed with *chai* wallahs and snack sellers trying to push their barrows through the narrow entrance. On the far side a crowd of two or three hundred people had already gathered: craggy old Muslims with long beards and mountainous turbans; small Hindu shopkeepers in blue striped *lungis*; Kashmiri pandits in long frock coats and Congress hats.

The crowd milled around chatting and exchanging tips, hawking and spitting, slurping tea and placing bets. As the partridge enthusiasts pottered about, three elderly men tried to clear a space in the centre of the cemetery. They strutted around, sombre and authoritative, clearly in charge of the proceedings. These, explained Balvinder in his (characteristically loud) stage whisper, were the *khalifas*, the headmen of the partridge fights.
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REMINDER: What type of book is this extract taken from?

a. Autobiography
b. History book
c. Guidebook
d. Travelogue
Main trial (111 test takers)

• Questionnaire

• Reliability of test
  • Sub-divisions: 3-6 semesters vs. 7+ semesters;
    Klagenfurt, Vienna, Salzburg, Graz

• Correlations between results and various learner characteristics
Questionnaire

- Age, sex, languages spoken
- Education prior to university incl. CLIL
- Information about course of studies incl. length, degree, main subject
- Time spent abroad
Questions about the test (Likert)

• Too much time/not enough time for individual parts
• Instructions easy/difficult to understand
• Familiarity with item format (high/low)
• Nervousness & motivation (high/low)
• Attitudes towards test (easy, fair, boring, pleasant, authentic)
• Test as good/bad measure of reading skills
Reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha$)

- Pilot test in KLU: .762 (N=19)
- Entire group: .613 (N=111)
  - 3-6 semesters: .528 (N=54)
  - 7th semester & above: .671 (N=57)
- Motivated: .649 (N=63)
  - Not motivated: .455 (N=41)
- Motivation + Sem7+: .699 (N=30)
Reliability cont.

• Feeling rushed on 22 careful reading items:
  • Entire group: .539 (N=107)
  • No: .548 (N=94)
  • Yes: .463 (N=13)

• Feeling rushed on 12 expeditious items:
  • Entire group: .453 (N=108)
  • No: .622 (N=29)
  • Yes: .338 (N=79)
Learner characteristics & results

- Motivation
- Not feeling rushed in expeditious section
- Familiarity with item format in expeditious section
Implications

- Importance of effective reading strategies
- “Rauding” -> increased flexibility
- Unidimensionality?
- Automaticity of processing


Thank you for your attention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>Careful reading</th>
<th>Expeditious reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Slowish, careful.</td>
<td>More rapid while locating information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of text</td>
<td>Comprehensive.</td>
<td>Sketchy, focussing on overall meaning or relevant information, and not attempting to understand every word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Reader accepts writer's organization, including emphasis on important points.</td>
<td>Reader can be selective in order and scope of reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven by</td>
<td>Text-driven: standard, usually subconscious process of applying linguistic skills to understand main ideas and supporting detail.</td>
<td>Reader-driven: appropriate reading strategies chosen to read as rapidly and efficiently as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of</td>
<td>Reader can change to expeditious reading if running out of time and/or interest.</td>
<td>Reader can revert to careful reading as and when appropriate (or if given too much time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>Sequential (bottom-up or top-down) or interactive processing skills, including access to mental lexicon, syntactic parser and thematic organiser.</td>
<td>Strategies for sampling the text (words, topic sentences or important paragraphs); formal knowledge of the structure of the text and background knowledge can be important; interactive or sequential processing can be involved once the appropriate information has been located.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-1: General distinctions between careful and expeditious reading.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Careful reading</th>
<th>Expeditious reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Interactive with some top-down strategies to facilitate inferencing and extraction of main ideas &amp; supporting detail. Macrostructure = main ideas, links between them, any elaborations. Reading of multiple texts.</td>
<td>Skimming (selective reading for gist; building up macrostructure of whole text) and search reading (sampling the text to locate information on a predetermined topic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Bottom-up: comprehension of lexical items and syntactical structure of sentences, i.e. pronominal reference. Microstructure = sentence- and clause-level propositions.</td>
<td>Scanning (very specific reading goals, e.g. specific words/phrases, figures, names, dates, etc.; irrelevant parts of the text ignored).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-2: Careful and expeditious reading at global and local levels.
About you

1. Nickname for results .................................................. Initials of teacher ..............
2. Sex: ☐ male ☐ female
3. Age: in years ........ And months: ........
4. My strongest language (incl. mother tongue) is: ............................................
5. My second strongest language is: .................................................................
6. My third strongest language is: .................................................................

School

7. I attended secondary school in (name of town(s)): ...........................................
8. I was in a class at school where English was used as the language of instruction (CLIL, EAA, bilingual class, etc.) for subjects other than English, i.e. BIU, ME, GWK, etc.  ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. If yes: write down in which subjects and in which school years (VS 1-4; AHS/ BHS 1-8/9): ........................................................................................................

An exploration of expeditious reading strategies
University

10. I am in my ............... semester of studying English. (Write down number.)

11. Please underline the degree for which you are studying English:
   "Bacheloratsstudium" "Magisterstudium" "Diplomstudium" "Lehramt"

12. If English is not your main subject, write down what is:

13. I am doing this test voluntarily □ Yes OR it's taking place in class time □ Yes

Extra English "qualifications"

14. I've taken official examinations in English (e.g. CAE, BEC, etc.). □ Yes □ No

15. I have spent time in an English-speaking country:
   □ Yes □ No

   □ On holiday □ ...........................
   □ On a language course while at school □ ...........................
   □ As an exchange student at school □ ...........................
   □ As an au-pair □ ...........................
   □ On a language course while at university □ ...........................
   □ As an exchange student while at university □ ...........................
   □ Work □ ...........................
   □ Other: □ ...........................
### A. Timing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>too much time</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>not enough</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed reading (PowerPoint®)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest of test on paper</td>
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</table>

### B. The instructions were

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>difficult to understand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>easy to understand</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. I have answered similar types of reading comprehension questions before:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>never</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed reading</td>
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<td>Missing paragraphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
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</table>
D. During the test I was:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nervous</td>
<td></td>
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<td>not motivated</td>
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<td>relaxed</td>
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<tr>
<td>motivated</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

E. Overall the test was

<table>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
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<td>fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>boring</td>
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<tr>
<td>pleasant</td>
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<tr>
<td>authentic</td>
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<td>difficult</td>
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<td>unfair</td>
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<tr>
<td>interesting</td>
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<td>unpleasant</td>
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<tr>
<td>inauthentic</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. How well – in your opinion – does this test measure your reading skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed reading (PowerPoint®)</th>
<th>really well</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>really badly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Careful reading (the rest)</td>
<td>really well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>really badly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>