

**THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL CONTEXTUAL
CUES ON ESL READING COMPREHENSION**

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ABSTRACT

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The intent of this experimental study was to gain a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between visual contextual cues (VCC) , reading ability and content familiarity in the ESL reading comprehension process . More specifically , it examined the effect of VCC on reading comprehension and their relationships with reading ability and content familiarity on reading comprehension and its relationship with reading ability were investigated .

A 2 (VCC – visual and no visual) X 2 (reading ability - good and poor) X 2 (content familiarity - familiar and unfamiliar) factorial design with repeated measures on the last factor was adapted in the investigation . The subjects involved were 40 Form One Malay students randomly selected from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Geliga , Kemaman , Terengganu . They were two different levels of reading ability (good and poor) . Each of

the ability groups was randomly divided into 2 equal subgroups , the visual group and the no visual groups . Each subject was required to read two expository texts , one familiar and the other unfamiliar and to recall the text content . The total number of perusal or idea counts correctly recalled by each individual subject for each text was taken as his comprehension score .

The results of the study indicated that exposure to VCC prior to reading on expository text facilitated its overall comprehension , irrespective of whether the text was familiar or unfamiliar . However , the facilitation effect appeared to be greater for good readers than poor readers. Likewise , familiarity with text content was found to enhance comprehension but again good readers tended to benefit more from content familiarity compared to poor readers.

These findings were discussed in relation to schema theoretic news of reading as an interactive process between the text and the reader and in relation to their implications for ESL reading pedagogy .

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