Statement of Intent
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Reading as the ability to make sense of written or printed symbol has been a ‘higher order perceptual process’ which decodes the symbolic configuration in print, extracts the thought or idea out of it and matches them with the background knowledge or schemata of the reader for arriving at meaning. It involves an interaction between the reader and the text leading to comprehension of the writer’s intent. The various definitions of reading and diversity of approaches to the understanding of reading process have pedagogical implications for the instructional strategies. The present research is an attempt in this direction. It focuses on improving the reading skills of the learners through listening tasks, for the exposure to listening tests/tasks helps the learners in reading comprehension. The present study merely evolves a programme to test the reading skills in ESL classes. It is to be assessed for the achievement of the specific objective of teaching reading skills to learners.

The learners in the ESL classes are a heterogeneous group, with widely differing levels and range of English language proficiency, depending on their background. As a result, the
difficulties of ESL learners appear to evolve not only from the contrast between L₁ and L₂ but also from the constraints of the art of composing itself. The purpose of this study is to explore the following for investigation.

(1) To assess the ESL learners’ processes in reading and testing at the undergraduate level at AMU, Aligarh.

(2) Comprehension and ESL reading.

The present study consists of six chapters.

Chapter One is The State of Art. An overview of reading research is presented in this chapter. Reading is a complex process and the failure to develop appropriate reading skills at the beginning stage of language teaching programme often impairs the learners’ reading ability. Reading research points towards these crucial issues.

The various definitions of reading, its analysis, description, nature and characterization and models and theories are discussed in Chapter Two.

The reader in the process of reading, uses the symbols to guide the recovery of information from his/her memory as the ability to make sense of written or printed symbols and
subsequently, uses the information to construct a plausible interpretation of the written message. This chapter not only provides the diversity of definitions of reading but also makes an attempt to specify the procedures by which each sub-process achieves its purpose and to describe how all of the separate units interact and work together within the whole process. With regard to models, Goodman's model, Rumelhart's model and interactive approaches have been discussed in this chapter. These models of reading are concerned with the perceptual, linguistic and cognitive processes that come into play during the act of reading.

Chapter Three attempts to give an overview of evaluation and testing in reading comprehension. Studies point towards the various ways in which tests are conducted among the different levels of the learners.

The methodology of the study was conducted to describe the testing of reading processes at the undergraduate level (boys and girls) in AMU, Aligarh and has been presented in Chapter Four. The study aimed at looking at reading comprehension by administering a number of different tests i.e. multiple choice test, cloze test, editing test and recall test. Data were collected from 90 boys and 90 girls from science, social science and arts streams.
The different groups of arts, social science, and science streams were administered a series of tests with a view to monitoring their reading comprehension. This was in the form of a questionnaire.

The questionnaire carries four parts. Part one consists of multiple choice questions. Part two consists of cloze test items. Part three is the editing test, where the blanks gave them an option of correct and incorrect answers. Part four is the free recall test.

Chapter Five provides an analysis, findings and the result of the study. The observed difference was noted and the analysis was done for the different groups of undergraduate students.

Chapter Six provides the conclusion of the study.