

Title: Readers and their Lexical Inferencing Strategies
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Researchers (Haastrup, 1991; Fraser, 1999; Wesche and Paribakht, 2010) have studied how ESL learners deploy lexical inferencing strategies (e.g., skipping an unknown word, guessing word meaning based on context, guessing word meaning based on background knowledge, using phonological processing to guess word meaning, using word formation cues to guess word meaning, etc.) when reading informational texts. This empirical study complements those studies by describing how fifth-semester English L1 readers of L2 Russian deploy lexical inferencing strategies. Subjects performed think-alouds while reading two texts: one written for the general adult reader; the other for schoolage children. Reader think-alouds were coded for lexical inferencing strategies. Results reveal that readers varied their strategies depending on the text. Although Russian's vocabulary should allow readers to use phonological and morphological analysis for inferring the meaning of many unknown words, readers had only mixed success with these strategies. As in Heien (1984), readers did not apply phonological processing strategies to all possible loan words (e.g., эксплуатация went unrecognized), while sometimes using the strategy with inappropriate words (e.g., количество was understood as "collective"). Readers used word formation cues more frequently, although while readers could often break words into their component parts, this did not always help them uncover meanings. Implications for reading instruction will be considered.

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