

READABILITY ASSESSMENT OF PRINTED MATERIALS: GOING BEYOND READABILITY FORMULAS

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ABSTRACT

Readability is the ease with which we read and understand a particular written text. The measurement of readability of a written text by using readability formulas is solely based on linguistic factors such as word and sentence length which can be easily measured and quantified. But as researches in readability gained grounds, researchers depicted that qualitative analysis involving the readers of the text is also one important feature for measuring the difficulty level and readability of the text. This paper presents a survey of researches on readability, taking into consideration the limitations of quantitative approaches and importance of inculcating the qualitative approaches to readability studies which involves the addition of readers' analysis in the determination of readability of a particular text. Moreover, the paper also features a critical evaluation of readability by analyzing the objective and subjective testing of a literary poetic text. Detail analysis reveal that along with vocabulary and sentence structure, the reader's reading ability, prior knowledge, familiarity, interest and expertise on the subject or related field in which the text is written are powerful contributors to determine text readability.

KEYWORDS: Readability; readability formula; linguistic factors; quantitative measurement; objective testing; subjective testing; reading ability; prior knowledge