



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen
Faculty of Liberal and Languages
Department of English



**Reading Comprehension Difficulties among EFL
Learners: The Case of Third-Year Learners
at Nehali Mohamed Secondary School**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English Language as a Partial

Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Studies

PRESENTED BY :

Mrs. Wahiba BABAIBA MEDJAHDI

SUPERVISOR:

Dr. Amine BELMEKKI

CO-SUPERVISOR :

Mrs. Fatima.Z. BELKHIR

Board of examiners

<i>Dr. Yahia ZEGHOUDI</i>	President	(University of Tlemcen)
<i>Dr. Amine BELMEKKI</i>	Supervisor	(University of Tlemcen)
<i>Mrs. Fatima.z. BELKHIR</i>	Co-supervisor	(University of Tlemcen)
<i>Ms. Fatima.z. ADDER</i>	Internal Examiner	(University of Tlemcen)

Academic Year : 2014-2015



Dedications

To my dearest parents, my husband,

my sisters and brothers.

To my parents-in-law.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Allah who gave me the ability to carry out this research work.

A great deal of appreciation to my supervisor Dr.

BELMEKKI Amine for his guidance, advice and encouragement in achieving this research.

Special thanks and great gratitude to Mrs.

BELKHIR Fatima.Z.

I would like to thank Dr. Zeghoudi and Miss Addar.

Many thanks go to teachers and students of Nehali Mohamed Secondary School.

My thanks also go to all those who contributed to my work in one way or another.

Abstract

The reading comprehension skill is considered as one of the four fundamental language skills that an EFL learner must perform. Actually, it is not an easy skill since most of learners have many reading issues. The purpose of this present work is to investigate on these reading difficulties that third-year Secondary School learners face, and to identify their reading problems and the reasons behind their weaknesses in performing the reading task. The questionnaire and interview have been used as research instruments which are addressed, respectively, to third-year learners and teachers at *Nehali Mohamed* secondary school. The results reveal that most of the learners have difficulties in reading comprehension at the level of pronunciation and ambiguous words, as well as the nature of the selected materials.

List of Tables

Table1.1. The Difference between Good and Poor Readers	13
Table 2.1. The Preferable Skill	23
Table 2.2. The Enjoyment of Learning English.....	25
Table 2.3. The Purpose of Reading.....	26
Table 2.4. The Difficulties Encountered by Students.....	28
Table 2.5. Time Sufficiency.....	29

List of Pie-Charts and Bare Graphs

Bare Graph2.1. The Materials that Learners Best Prefer.....	25
Bare Graph2.2. Learners' Strategies	27
Pie-Chart2.1. The Preferable Language	24

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF : Absolute Frequency

CBA : Competency Based Approach

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ELT : English Language Teaching

ICTs : Information and Communication Technologies

KWL : what I Know, what I Want to learn, what I Learned

RF : Relative Frequency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedications	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
List of Pie-Chart and Graphs.....	v
List of Abbreviations.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii.
General Introduction.....	2

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

1.1. Introduction.....	5
1.2. The Reading Skill Defined.....	5
1.3. Types of Reading.....	6
1.3.1. Intensive Reading.....	7
1.3.2. Extensive Reading.....	7
1.4. Reading Sub-skills.....	8
1.4.1. Skimming.....	9
1.4.2. Scanning.....	9
1.4.3. Careful Reading.....	9
1.4.4. Predicting.....	10
1.5. Reading Models.....	10
1.5.1 The Bottom-up Reading Model.....	10
1.5.2. The Top-Down Reading Model.....	11
1.5.3. The Interactive Reading Model	11
1.6. Reading and Text Selection	12
1.7. Teachings Reading comprehension.....	14

1.7.1.	Pre-reading stage.....	15
1.7.2.	While-reading stage.....	15
1.7.3.	Post-reading stage.....	16
1.8.	Reading Comprehension Difficulties... ..	16
1.9.	Conclusion	18

Chapter Two: Research Design and Data Collection and Interpretation

2.1.	Introduction.....	20
2.2.	ELT in Algeria.....	20
2.3.	Research Methodology.....	21
2.3.1.	Statement of the Problem.....	21
2.3.2.	Research Instruments	21
2.3.2.1.	Definition of a Questionnaire.....	21
2.3.2.2.	Definition of an Interview.....	22
2.3.3.	Informants' Profile.....	22
2.3.3.1.	Teachers' Profile.....	22
2.3.3.2.	Learners' Profile.....	23
2.4.	Data Analysis.....	23
2.4.1.	Learners' Questionnaire Analysis.....	23
2.4.1.1.	Data Interpretation of Learners' Questionnaire.....	29
2.4.2.	Teachers' Interview Analysis.....	30
2.4.2.	Data Interpretation of Teachers' Interview.....	32
2.5.	Discussion of the Main Results.....	33
2.6.	Conclusion.....	34

Chapter Three : Suggestions and Recommendations

3.1. Introduction.....	36
3.2. Teaching Techniques for Reading Comprehension.....	36
3.3. Practical Recommendations.....	37
3.3.1 Teachers' Role	37
3.3.2. Learners' Role.....	38
3.4. Classroom Procedures for Teaching Reading Comprehension	38
3.4.1. Pre-reading Activities	38
3.4.2. While-reading Activities.....	40
3.4.3. Post-reading Activities.....	43
3.5. Conclusion.....	45
General Conclusion.....	47
Bibliography.....	49
Appendices.....	53
Appendix A.....	54
Appendix B.....	60

General Introduction

General Introduction

Nowadays, the teaching of foreign languages has become very essential, and a complex process in the Algerian educational context. Because of the world-wide changes, teaching and learning foreign languages in Algeria has witnessed development at the level of many aspects. In fact, learning English needs the mastery of the four fundamental skills; namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, to master the language.

Reading being one of the language basic-skill, strives to teach the learner how to establish the necessary components in the reading process. It also attempts to model this process by specifying these components, and reveals correlations between them. Though the reading skill has an important role in language acquisition/learning, it is observed that EFL learners face a significant number of difficulties which prevent them to perform the reading task. In this respect, the following research questions are formed:

1. Which problems our third-year secondary school pupils often face when reading a piece of discourse?
2. What are the causes behind those problems?
3. How can text selection have a positive effect on their reading comprehension achievements?
4. What might be the suggestions to improve our pupils' reading comprehension achievement?

For this reason, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. EFL learners may suffer from some problems when reading in the English language at the level of vocabulary knowledge, ambiguous words, sentences coherence and cohesion aspect and pronunciation difficulties ...etc.
2. The causes behind these problems may be mainly related to the learners' lack of reading habit or to the difficulty of the reading skill itself.

3. The nature of the texts may have some effects on the learners reading performance
4. The suggestions may include more reading outside the classroom, encouraging reading for pleasure, selecting more appropriate texts depending on the learners' level, interest and background.

This research paper is a case study dealing with reading difficulties among EFL learners. To collect data, a set of questions were addressed to third year secondary school learners and teachers at *Nehali Mohamed* Secondary School. This extended essay is composed of three chapters. The introductory one deals with theoretical background of reading comprehension skill, it provides the reading skill defined, the reading types, models as well as the teaching strategies and its reading difficulties.

The second chapter deals with the research design and data analysis, the research work makes use of two research tools used for data collection. A questionnaire is addressed to twenty-five third-year secondary school learners, and the interviewees were three secondary school teachers. While the third and last chapter provides some suggested, practical classroom activities, and pedagogical recommendations for the sake of improving and enhancing the target students' reading comprehension achievement, as well as facilitating the learning and teaching of the skill.

Chapter One

Reading Comprehension: Theoretical Background

- 1.1. Introduction**
- 1.2. The Reading Skill Defined**
- 1.3. Types of Reading**
 - 1.3.1. Intensive Reading**
 - 1.3.2. Extensive Reading**
- 1.4. Reading Sub-Skills**
 - 1.4.1. Skimming**
 - 1.4.2. Scanning**
 - 1.4.3. Predicting**
 - 1.4.4. Careful Reading**
- 1.5. Reading Models**
 - 1.5.1. The Bottom-up Reading Model**
 - 1.5.2. The Top-Down Reading Model**
 - 1.5.3. The Interactive Reading Model**
- 1.6. Reading and Text Selection**
- 1.7. Teaching Reading Comprehension**
 - 1.7.1. Pre-reading Stage**
 - 1.7.2. While-reading Stage**
 - 1.7.3. Post-reading Stage**
- 1.8. Reading Comprehension Difficulties**
- 1.9. Conclusion**

1.1. Introduction

This first chapter sheds some light on one of the four fundamental language skills which is ‘reading’. In fact, it is the most complex language skill which involves the interaction of other sub-skills namely skimming, scanning, and careful reading and predicting. The chapter offers definitions of ‘reading’ from different points of views, also deals with the ‘reading models’, and when a language learner is supposed to use one of them, then it presents various strategies that are used in the reading comprehension process. In addition to that, in this chapter, there exist some difficulties that English learners face in the reading comprehension task. The current chapter ends with some helpful techniques for the teaching of reading to EFL learners.

1.2. The Reading Skill Defined

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are regarded as the four fundamental skills to acquire/learn a foreign language. The reading skill is a necessary skill for a language acquisition because it has positive effects on vocabulary knowledge, spelling as well as the learners’ writings.

Reading is viewed as an interactive process between the reader and the writer in which the former has to understand the message of the passage and then to decode it. Moreover, it is a dynamic process in which information from the text and knowledge possessed by the reader interact to enable him to construct meaning before, during and after reading. In this respect, Goodman (1973: 162) states that the learner:

[...]interacts with a message encoded by the writer. He concentrates his total prior experience and concepts he has attained, as well as the language competence he has achieved.

Similarly, Dubin (1982:125) assumes that the task reading is a complex skill that contains a number of psychological, physical and social elements.

Therefore, reading is considered as the most difficult language skill, which involves the interaction of multiple cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. i.e.; some other sub-Skills operate all together in order to perform the task.

Reading is not a passive task, but rather an active one. In fact, reading requires both the learner's mental and experimental inputs of who is expected to comprehend the written message. In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension, Rivers (1981:147) stated that "*reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's which are knowledge of the language*". Reading is composed of two parts; the written form, and the meaning of the conveyed message. In this regard, Penny, Ur defines reading as follows:

Reading means 'reading and understanding.' A foreign language learner who says, 'I read the words but I don't know what they mean' is not, therefore, reading in this sense. He or she is merely decoding translating written symbols into corresponding sounds."

(1996: 138)

1.3. Types of Reading

The reading skill can be divided into two main types; intensive and extensive reading. Hafiz and Tudor compared between the two types:

In intensive reading activities learners are in the main exposed to relatively short texts which are used either to exemplify specific aspects of the lexical, syntactic or discoursal system of the L2, or to provide the basis for targeted reading strategy practice; the goal of extensive reading, on the other hand, is to 'flood' learners with

large quantities of L2 input with few or possibly no specific tasks to perform on this material.

(1989: 5)

1.3.1. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading refers to detailed focus on the reading texts which usually take place in classrooms. It tends to develop the strategies of the learners. In this respect, Nuttal (1962: 23) claims that: “*The intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies.*” However, sometimes the learner may prefer to read the text in which he/she divides it into parts and then to read each part alone in order to comprehend it very well.

In palmer’s view (1964) on intensive reading, the learner focuses on using the dictionary in which he has to analyze, compare and translate while reading texts. Therefore, the use of a dictionary helps the learner to progress in his language learning process. However, this may interrupt the learner’s reading speed. In the same line of thought, the Reading comprehension task for Harmer means not to stop for every word neither to analyze everything (Harmer 2001), that is to say, the reader should not stop at every single point or analyze each idea alone, but rather he should make a general comprehension of the text and to extract the meaning by taking the content into account.

1.3.2. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading refers to reading that learners often do away from the classroom for instance: reading novels, magazines, and newspaper articlesetc. Hafiz and Tudor mentioned that:

The pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners’ command of the L2.

(1989 : 5)

Extensive readers read for the sake of pleasure. This type is labeled as “joyful reading” by Richard Day in 1998. Through extensive reading, the reader enriches his background knowledge, and expands his vocabulary; he also recognizes the spelling forms. Therefore, the learner chooses his\her own books and reads at his\her pace. Then, the teacher has to guide learners to select books depending on their levels of comprehension that lead to comprehensible input. According to Day and Bamford (1998), extensive reading is a part of second language curriculum ,i.e. as a separate course, as a part of an existing reading course, as a non –credit addition to existing course, and as an extra-curricular activity.

Thus, students have to rely on themselves and gain knowledge from their readings outside the classroom.

1.4. Reading Sub-skills:

There are different types of learning strategies which help learners to solve their problems and improve their language competency. Many research works have been done on learning strategies and studied the effectiveness of using them in the learning process.

To start with, Oxford (1990) gives a definition to the concept of *reading strategies* as actions that make the learning task easier, enjoyable, effective and self –directed. The term strategy refers to learning techniques that help learners solve the problems they face whenever they read.

For Anderson (1991) *reading strategies* mean cognitive steps which readers can take into account in order to acquire, store and retrieve data.

In reading comprehension, there exist four major categories of strategies: skimming, scanning, careful-reading and predicting. These are considered at the same time as the sub-skills of reading. In this sense, Phan states that:

*The strategies may involve skimming, scanning ,
guessing, recognizing cognates and word families,*

reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, and separating main ideas from supporting ideas.

(Phan 2006:01)

1.4.1. Skimming

Skimming is a common technique in reading comprehension. It is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and a general overview of the content. In other words, skimming is to read more in less time and to help the learner to cover a vast amount of material very quickly.

In sum, when skimming, learners go through the text quickly in order to get the gist of it and have an idea of the writer's intention.

1.4.2. Scanning

Scanning is a speed-reading technique and a useful reading activity in which learners need specific information without dealing with the whole text. This means, they do not read all the text word by word, but rather they extract specific information (names, dates, statistics) without reading all the passage.

In short, when scanning, learners try to locate particular information by moving their eyes over the text rapidly, and then get the required information to complete a certain task.

1.4.3. Careful reading

This reading strategy requires from the reader to obtain detailed information from the entire text. Moreover, the reader is expected to read slowly, and to reread the text for the sake of connecting and comparing information with his prior knowledge. In the same line of thought, Urquhart and Weir (1998) argue that this type of reading takes the meaning of reading to learn i.e., the learner reads for the sake of learning also its reading

speed is rather slower than skimming and scanning since the reader attempts to obtain detailed information.

1.4.4. Predicting

Predicting is a very useful sub-skill that the reader may use it in which he makes predictions relying on his previous knowledge, and then extracts the meaning of the text even if there exists unfamiliar words in the text .so that, he gets the meaning from the whole passage. Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be read, viewed, heard and to actively adjust to comprehension while reading, for example before and after a chart, students' list predictions before and after reading. As they read, students either confirm or reject their predictions.

1.5. Reading Models

Reading comprehension is crucial in every grade level and in every subject. It has been divided into three models: the bottom- up reading model, the top-down reading model and the interactive model. It is agreed that the interactive model is the complete one in reading comprehension because it includes the interaction of both (the bottom-up and the top-down processes).

In this respect, Richards sees reading as : “ *an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema , as well as bottom-up processes that are primarily text or data driven .* ” (1990:77)

1.5.1. The Bottom-up Reading Model

The bottom-up model emphasizes the written or printed text, which is also called data driven. This model stresses the ability to decode or put into sound what is seen in the text in which the readers derive meaning in a linear manner. Moreover, the bottom-up model suggests that learning to read processes from learners learning the parts of language (letters) to understanding the whole text (meaning). In this regard, Nunan says:

*[...]These letters or graphemes are matched with
The Phonemes of the language. These phonemes,
the minimal units of meaning in the sound system
of Language are blended together to form words.
The derivation of meaning is thus the end of process
in which language is translated from one represent
action to another.*

(Nunan 1991:64)

This model of reading focuses on decoding the language, i.e, the learner is supposed to decode the words without understanding the entire text.

1.5.2. The Top-Down Reading Model

This reading model focuses on the readers' background knowledge in the reading process in which meaning takes precedence over structure. Hence, it tends to neglect that grammar is important for the use of higher levels. In this context, Clarke et al (1977) maintain that the reader brings information, ideas and attitudes from the text, in which this knowledge is accompanied with the capability to make linguistic predictions.

1.5.3. The Interactive Reading Model

The interactive reading model recognizes the interaction of bottom-up and top-down processes simultaneously throughout the reading process. Hence, it relies on both graphic and textual information, which means that there is a combination of both surface structure systems (bottom-up model of reading) with deep structure systems (top-down aspects of reading) to build meaning . In the same line of thought, Carrell and Eisterhold regard the processes involved in this interactive process where both bottom-up and top-down processes occur at the same time:

The data that are needed to instantiate, or fill out, the schemata become available through bottom-up processing; top-down processing facilitates their assimilation if they are anticipated by or consistent with the listener/reader's conceptual expectations. Bottom-up processing ensures that the listeners/readers will be sensitive to information that is novel or that does not fit their ongoing hypotheses about the content or structure of the text; top-down processing helps the listeners/readers to resolve ambiguities or to select between alternative possible interpretations of the incoming data.

(1983, 557)

Thus, this model views reading as an interaction between the reader and the text, and not simply a one-way exchange of information.

1.6. Reading and Text Selection

Reading materials play an important role in a successful reading comprehension process. Selecting proper text is important both for learners and teachers. There must be an appropriate, selected teaching material that depends mainly on the learner's cognitive level. In fact, learners themselves should select materials that go with their interests, i.e. it is better to let the learners to select what kind of texts they prefer to read and which topics interest them ...etc. Above all, selecting carefully texts creates a kind of motivation and participation in the classroom, and it is helpful for both the teacher and the learner. Text selection takes into account several factors that can lead to the successfulness use of texts; among them the use of authentic materials since the reader can react whenever s/he reads texts. Shahidullah (1995-96: 226) states: "*Students' present linguistic level, and the level of their content and cultural schemata have to be taken into consideration in selecting texts for them.*"

This is an essential point in order to make the reading process enjoyable, and offer learners pleasure. In this way, the learners will become more interested and will organize a specific time for reading. Thus, this will improve their reading skill. In the following table there exists the difference between good and poor readers during the three reading phases:

	Good or mature readers	Poor or immature readers
<u>Before Reading</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate prior knowledge. • Understand task and set purpose. • Choose appropriate strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start reading without preparation • Reading without knowing why. • Read without considering how to approach the material.
<u>During Reading</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus attention • Anticipate and predict. • Use fix-up strategies when lack or understand new terms . • Use text structure to assist. • Organize and integrate new information. • Self-monitor comprehension by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowing comprehension is occurring . ▪ Knowing what is being understood . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easily distracted. • Read to get done . • Do not know what to do when lack of understanding occurs. • Do not recognize important vocabulary. • Do not see any organization. • Add on, rather than integrate new information. • Do not realize they do not understand.

<u>After Reading</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on what was read. • Feel success is a result of effort. • Summarize major ideas. • Seek additional information outside sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop reading and thinking. • Feel success is a result of luck
----------------------	--	--

Table1.1. The Difference between Good and Poor Readers (Cook 1990: 116)

1.7. Teaching Reading Comprehension

Teaching reading comprehension is a challenging and demanding task which is at the same time difficult to improve the learner's capacities.

Good readers are flexible and have the capacity to choose the suitable reading strategy according to the specific text; they read according to the type of the text they are going to read. For instance, reading a poem is not like reading a newspaper. Skillful readers skim to extract general ideas of the text and scan to have specific needed information from it, hence, skimming and scanning are useful reading strategies.

In addition to that, teachers should train learners to skim, for example to extract the key sentences of the text. Skillful readers also interrogate texts of all sorts by looking for clues in titles, sub-titles and the written text itself.

Pre -reading questions are useful and helpful for a better understanding of the passage since they emphasise on the attention of learners on the types of data they are going to read. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to dialogue with the writer and guess what will come next.

To develop strategies and methodologies in teaching reading comprehension, pre-reading while reading and post-reading activities have been suggested

1.7.1.Pre-reading stage

Pre-reading is a very important stage in which the topic and type of the text are introduced first. Harmer clarifies this by saying:

We will not get students to interact properly with spoken and written materials unless we ensure that their desire to read or listen has been awakened. Especially where the subject matter of the texts may not be immediately appealing to them we have the responsibility to make students interested and to encourage them to tackle the text with positive anticipation

(1991: 188)

In this phase, the teacher can use various techniques in order to make the reading activity easier:

- a) Using picture or any visual aid that can help the learner to make predictions.
- b) Ask questions related to the topic.
- c) Prepare the learner for the content of the text.
- d) Think of some of the vocabulary items that will appear in the text.

These steps may arouse the student's interest and help to pre-teach some vocabulary as well as they set the mood for reading. Also ,the teacher should move gradually from easy to difficult in order to reach a better understanding. The pre-reading stage seeks to:

- a) Improve the interest of the students in the topic.
- b) Lead them to make predictions\guessing for the reading passage.
- c) Relate the students' background knowledge with the topic.
- d) Prepare them for the content.

1.7.2. While-reading stage

During this phase, the learners read the passage silently and the teacher plays the role of the monitor. Richards sees reading or the while reading stage: “*as an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom up processes that are primarily text or data driven.*”

(1990: 87)

The while- reading phase or simply the reading stage attempts to:

- a) Develop the student’s comprehension of the writer’ purpose.
- b) Develop the student’s linguistic knowledge.
- c) Make the student recognize the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- d) Develop conscious reading.
- e) Teach the student how to skim and scan.

1.7.3. Post-Reading Stage

At this last phase, the teacher acts the role of the evaluator; he has to look whether the objectives of the reading task have been achieved or not, taking into account the understanding of the text and recognizing the new vocabulary and the grammar and then evaluating the text .Students might ask comprehension questions.

After the reading comprehension task, it is better to follow it by giving the learners other activities that have relation with the text like asking questions about reading comprehension \true, false statements, matching activity...etc.

Therefore, readers can improve their reading having comprehension achievement by expanding their vocabulary knowledge having the ability to understand sentence structures

1.8. Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Researches on reading comprehension show that EFL learners face some difficulties when they read. In fact, students suffer mainly from understanding vocabulary. This problem may fall into multiple categories among them, learners may have difficulties for example with words that have similar lexical forms; Some

words seem to be phonetically the same (in terms of sounds) as in 'boss' and 'bus', also in 'cut' and 'cat', other words seem to be similar at the level of morphology like the words *receptive* and *deceptive*. The reader can come across one of this kind of words and even if he has learnt both of them, he might mix between the meanings of pairs of words because they seem to be the same. Another type of difficulties that can be found among EFL readers is the existence of various meanings within the same word, i.e. words that have more than one meaning. As the word "right" which means "exactly", "legal" claim to get something and a direction side which is the opposite of left. Another example is the word "present" that can mean a "gift" and "the act of existing". The problem with such category is that the learner knows only one meaning can lead him to a wrong understanding of the whole sentence.

One important category is represented; the idioms and proverbs which seem to be distinct from the learner's culture so that, he is going to translate a given proverb word by word, thus, he cannot obtain the real meaning but just the literary one. For example the proverb: 'he kicked the bucket' which means 'he died', the problem is that the learner will translate each word alone he will not obtain the meaning of the proverb.

Furthermore, insufficient vocabulary leads to many obstacles in reading comprehension since lexis has a very important role for a successful reading. When the learner has a large vocabulary, he will not face problems comprehension in understanding the whole text, and this comes from habitual reading, i.e. whenever the learner reads a lot he will acquire new vocabulary, and then improve his vocabulary knowledge which makes the reading task much easier for him.

1.9. Conclusion

This theoretical chapter attempts to define the reading skill, shedding light on its different types and models, relying on various scholars' views. It also strives to focus on the importance of text selection, and then it moves to distinct strategies that learners follow in reading texts, and how to successfully teach this skill to the learners.

The reading skill is a fundamental skill in language acquisition. For this purpose, the next chapter will present a case study, which will deal with some difficulties that an EFL learner encountered while performing the reading task.

Chapter Two

Research Design and Data Collection and Interpretation

2.1. Introduction

2.2. ELT Situation in Algeria

2.3. Research Methodology

2.3.1. Statement of the Problem

2.3.2. Research Instruments

2.3.2.1. Definition of a Questionnaire

2.3.2.2. Definition of an Interview

2.3.3. Informants' Profile

2.3.3.1. Teachers' Profile

2.3.3.2. Learners' Profile

2.4. Data Analysis

2.4.1. Learners' Questionnaire Analysis

2.4.1.1. Data Interpretation of Learners' Questionnaire

2.4.2. Teachers' Interview Analysis

2.4.2.1. Data Interpretation of Teachers' Interview

2.5. Discussion of the Main Results

2.6. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

This second chapter deals with the practical part of the research work. At first, it introduces the English language teaching situation in Algeria. Then, it identifies the research questions and hypotheses, the research instruments used for data collection. After that, the chapter provides the analysis of both teachers' interview and learners' questionnaire along with the interpretation and the discussion of the main results.

2.2. ELT Situation in Algeria

In Algeria, three main languages are taught: Arabic, the mother tongue, is taught for twelve years from first year of primary school till the third year of Secondary School. French, the first foreign language, is instructed for ten years, from third year of primary school till the third year of Secondary School, while English as a second foreign language is instructed for seven years, from first year of middle school till the third year of secondary school. Algeria has adopted several teaching approaches among them there is the grammar translation method that was applied during the 1960's and which focuses on grammar rules, later on, in 2003 a new teaching approach was introduced and among its key concepts, competencies, it is learners centered. Algeria has applied this new educational system which focuses on Competency Based Approach (CBA). Nowadays, the structure of the school system is based on 5+4+3 model: five years of Primary School, four years of middle school and three years of secondary education.

Primary education is compulsory at the age of six for five years, the middle school for four years, students in secondary school study for three years in which there are different branches: literary stream; foreign languages, literature and philosophy and scientific stream; natural sciences, exact sciences and technology. Secondary school education prepares students to the Baccalauriate examination that gives them access to a higher education.

2.3. Research Methodology

This section is almost reserved to exposing the different aspects of research methodology including the statement of the problem.

2.3.1. Statement of the Problem

This extended essay is concerned with difficulties encountered in reading comprehension task in the English language by third- year secondary school pupils at the level of many aspects. Infact, it has been observed that such learners cannot read appropriately and fluently, though they have dealt with the English subject for, at least, seven years.

2.3.2. Research Instruments

In this work the questionnaire has been used as a research tool, which contains nine multiple types of questions. It has been chosen as a research instrument because it does not take a long time, and it is the best way to collect data in which the informants feel confident, they answer the questions without control of anybody, they give the right answers and they have the opportunity to express their ideas at ease.

For the sake of obtaining valid information, the questionnaire has been addressed in dialectal Arabic; this is because of the learners' low English proficiency level. In fact, their English proficiency level does not allow them to understand the questions in English. It should be pointed out that the questions have been formulated in English, translated to Arabic and afterwards addressed to learners. The research work has been also based on teachers' interview to conduct the experimental research; the interview contains eight questions that are adressed to three secondary school teachers.

2.3.2.1. Definition of a Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data gathering tool designed to meet specific, needed information. It can collect data more than any other instrument because all the

informants receive the same questions in the same form. It involves a set of questions that are addressed to the research informants for data collection purposes. In this regard, Dornyei (2007: 101) states that:

The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily accessible

2.3.2.2. Definition of an Interview

An interview is direct face-to-face research instrument in the form of verbal set of questions. It is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee to yield reliable and valid data. It can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In this respect, Patton (1990: 464) states that: “*the interviews were considered a method of triangulation, a checking out the consistency of the data obtained from the questionnaire responses.*” There are three types of interview; the structured, semi-structured and the unstructured. In this respect, MC Donough and Mc Donough (1997: 184) regard the semi-structured interview as: “*being closer to the qualitative paradigm because it allows for richer interaction and more personalized responses.*”

2.3.3. Informants’ Profile

The informants are twenty five EFL learners at *Nehali Mohamed secondary school* and three teachers from the same school.

2.3.3.1. Teachers’ Profile

The interview was done with three secondary school teachers; one female and two males, they are teaching learners between first year to third year. Such informants have a Licence degree in English, their experience ranges from sixteen to twenty seven years in the domain of teaching English.

2.3.3.2. Learners' Profile

The informants to whom the questionnaire has been given are third year secondary school pupils belonging to *Nehali secondary school in Beni- snous*. Their age varies between seventeen to twenty years-old. Such learners have an experience of learning French for ten years, being the first foreign language introduced in the third year of primary school, and English for seven years, being the second foreign language introduced in the first year of middle school.

2.4. Data Analysis

This section will present a qualitative and quantitative analysis of both learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview.

2.4.1. Learners' questionnaire Analysis

Question one: *What is your favourite skill?*

When students were asked about their frequency concerned with their favourite skill, varied answers were given. Indeed, 52% of the learners prefer the listening skill, while 20 % was the answer of writing. As for the reading skill, it was about 16% but only 12% of learners state that their favorite skill is speaking. The results are summarized in the following table :

The preferable skill	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
Listening	13	52%
Speaking	3	12%
Reading	4	16%
Writing	5	20%
Total number	25	100%

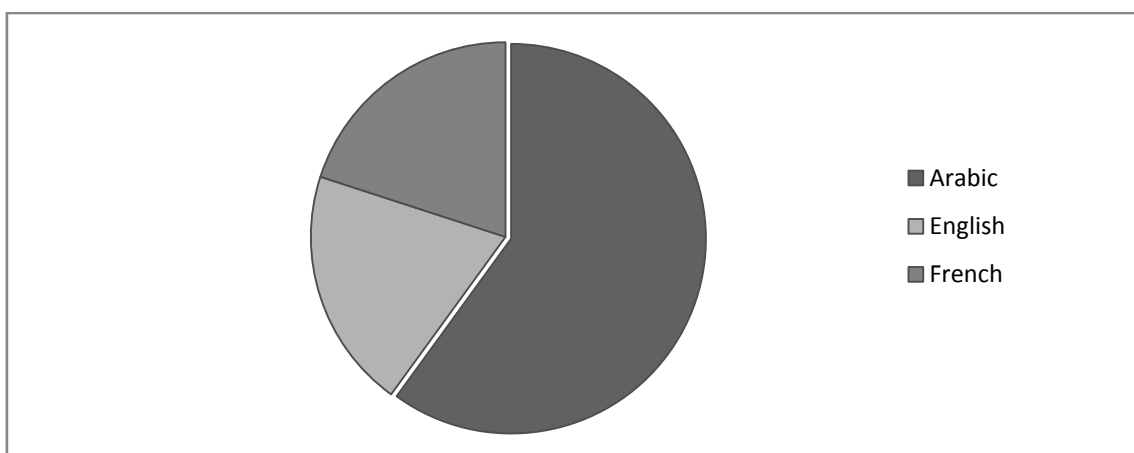
Table 2.1: The Preferable Skill to Learn.

The purpose behind this question is to know if the learners prefer the reading skill, because from this point, it can be noticed that learners are motivated to read or not.

Question two: *What is the language you best prefer?*

The majority of learners (60%) prefer the Arabic language, either because it is for being: _ their mother tongue _ the language of Quraan _ they understand it better than any other language. In addition, _ Arabic is used everywhere in the Algerian society _ they can express themselves and their thoughts by using the Arabic language and they can understand each other when they communicate _ the other foreign languages are difficult for them to learn.

While 20% of the participants selected the French language stating that French is the language of the world and almost everyone speak it because of its simplicity. Others state that French is a very important language for them. As for the remaining 20%, it was the answer of English. The pie chart 2.1 below represents the above results :



Pie-chart.2.1. The Preferable Language

Question three: Do you like learning English?

The third question was addressed to learners, aims to know if the English language is important for them. An important number of informants (72%) prefer learning English, they see that it helps them to have access to the internet, and it is

almost used in all domains, so that they have to learn it. Some others mention that they enjoy learning this language since they regard it as a global language which enriches their general knowledge. The results are shown below:

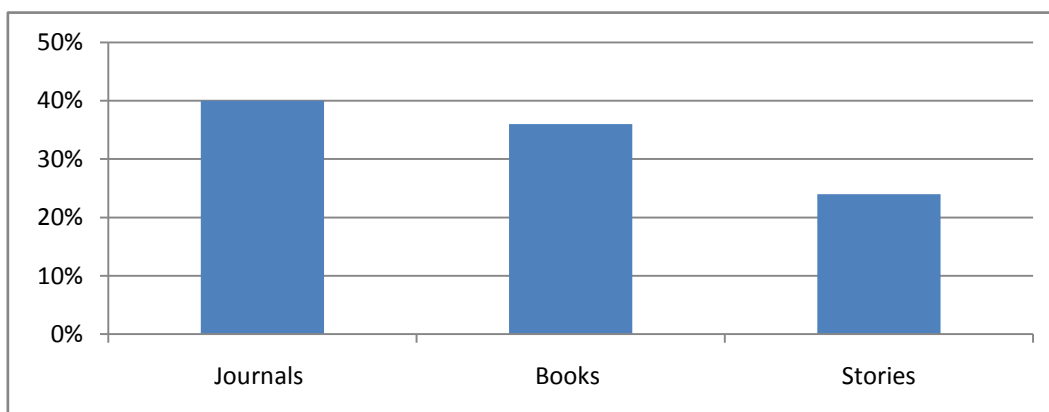
	A F	R F
Yes	18	72%
No	7	28%
Total number	25	100%

Table 2.2: *The Enjoyment of Learning English*

The informants add that learning English helps them to be aware of the English culture and all Western cultures, and then it allows them to communicate with people all around the world. The remaining participants stated that they do not enjoy learning English. They explain that it is difficult relating this to their teacher’s role. Some informants relate their dislike of learning English mainly to their teacher.

Question four: *What kind of materials you best prefer?*

When asked about teaching materials, most of the participants (40%) choose journals, while (36%) of them prefer books and 24% of the participants choose to read stories. The purpose behind asking this question is to know what kind of materials the target pupils are interested in. The bare graph.2.2 shows the results obtained:



Bare graph.2.2: *The Materials that Learners Best Prefer.*

A number of informants added some other materials that they enjoy reading on them. Among these they write: poems, proverbs and magazines.

Question Five: *What is your purpose from reading?*

Most of learners (52%) said that their purpose from reading is to enrich their general knowledge, while (20%) state that their objective from reading is to enlarge their vocabulary knowledge, the same percentage is the answer of reading for the sake of answering needs related to their studies, while only (8%) claim that they read for pleasure. For the purpose of knowing the kinds of materials that learners' best prefer this question was asked. The results are represented in the following table:

	A F	R F
Reading for getting the general knowledge	13	52%
Reading for pleasure	2	8%
Reading to enrich the vocabulary knowledge	5	20%
Reading for academic researches	5	20%

Table 2.3: *The Purpose of Reading*

The purpose behind asking this question was to know if the learners are extensive readers or intensive readers and for what reason they read.

Question six: *what will you do if you do not understand when reading?*

(32%) of the informants state that when they read and do not understand they try to translate to their mother tongue which is Arabic, while (32%) answered that they carry on reading without understanding, and (24%) of the participants said that they use the dictionary. Only (13%) of them stop reading when they do not understand the reading materials at hand.

Some of the participants add that they ask the teacher or their classmates whenever they come across some ambiguity in the text. The results above are shown in figure 2.3 below:

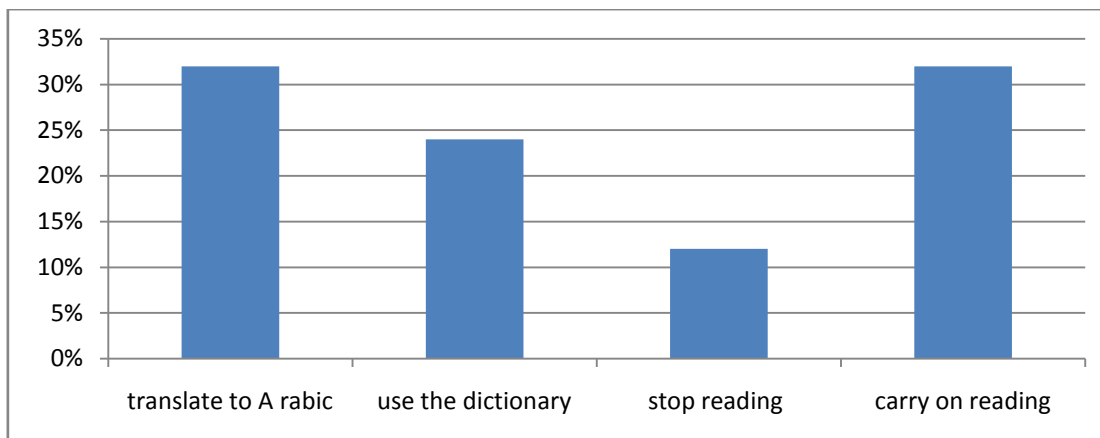


Figure 2.3: *Learners' Strategies*

Question seven: What are the difficulties that you face when reading?

Some informants (48%) agree that when they often read they have problems with ambiguous words and that they cannot understand the whole text. While (20%) of them claim that they face problems with words that seem to be confusing sometimes, like some deceptive words. Just (16%) of the informants answer with the problems of reading aloud in the classroom, some of them say that while they are reading loudly some of their classmates laugh at them when they cannot read perfectly, and for this reason they consider reading aloud as an obstacle. As for difficulties of pronunciation, it was the same percentage (16%).

In this respect, a number of informants said that they do not have the habit of reading in English and they add that they dislike learning this language, and it does not interest them. They related this to the teacher. They claim that their teacher does not give them enough time to read, this is because of problems of time management (problem of finishing the programme). They add that the teacher comes late and he has problems of controlling the class. More than that, some of them are not interested with the session of reading in which they claim that they feel bored, especially when there are discipline problems inside the class. They mentioned that

the programme is too long, so that there is no sufficient time to read in the class. Among the reasons proposed by some participants is because of the repeated stricks which obliged them to ignore the reading session and move directly to other activities. The table below demonstrates the obtained results :

	A F	R F
Ambiguous words	12	48%
Reading aloud	4	16%
Pronunciation difficulties	4	16%
Meaning of words	5	20%
Total number	25	100%

Table 2.4: The *Difficulties Encounterd by Students*

Question eighth: *What are the reasons behind reading difficulties?*

When asked about the main reasons behind reading problems, (40%) of learners agree that they do not have the habit to read, while (24%) of them considered that the main reason behind their reading problems is due to the lack of time and (20%) of the answer relate reading difficulty to the kind of texts that they read. Lastly, the remaining (16%) agree on the difficulty of the reading skill itself.

Question nine: *Is the time devoted for the reading session sufficient?*

A significant number of students (72%) stated that the time devoted for the reading session is insufficient, and only (28%) say that the time devoted for reading is sufficient. The results are shown in the table that follows :

	A F	R F
No	18	72%
Yes	7	28%
Total number	25	100%

Table 2.5: *Time sufficiency*

At last, from this questionnaire the results show that the great majority of learners face difficulties in reading comprehension at the level of many aspects, and this is due to various causes.

2.4.1.1. Data Interpretation of Learners' Questionnaire

The findings obtained from learners questionnaire reveal that most of students (52%) prefer the listening session and only a minority of them (16%) prefer reading, these results are deduced from the answers of the first question. Moreover, the majority of students (60%) prefer reading in Arabic; this is shown in the findings of the second question.

In addition to that, from the results obtained from the third question, it can be noticed that most of learners (72%) enjoy learning English by giving different arguments, and from the answers of question four (40%) of students prefer journals as the best reading material to read, (36%) prefer books, while (24%) like to read stories. Then from question number five, it is observed that (52%) of learners read for the purpose of getting general knowledge. Results of question six show that all students use different ways when do not understand words, while (32%) of them claim that they try to translate to Arabic, (24%) use the dictionary as the preferable tool when they do not understand, whereas (16%) stop reading and lastly (32%) carry on reading without understanding. (48%) of learners in the results of question seven agreed that they have difficulties with ambiguous words, as far as the answers of question eighth, it is noticed that the majority of learners (40%) do not

have the reading habit. Finally, the findings of the last question reveal that most of learners (72%) agree on the fact that the time devoted for the reading session is insufficient.

2.4.2. Teachers' Interview Analysis

➤ The preferable skill

When asking about the skill that learners enjoy better, teacher (A) says that it is the speaking skill, justifying the answer by saying that they like to express themselves and give their opinions. Teacher (B) who has an experience of 25 years in teaching English claimed that none of the four skills interested them adding that there are too many weaknesses since the start. Teacher (C) regards the reading skill as the preferable task, in which pupils have sufficient time to understand and check meaning and to remember new words.

➤ Teaching Materials that Are Used in Reading Comprehension

Regarding the second question, which seeks information about the materials used in teaching reading comprehension, teacher (A) suggests passages and texts because they help learners to have organized work. According to teacher (B), textbooks, visual aids and drawings are regarded as helpful teaching materials. As for teacher (C) suggested that pictures and textbooks as useful teaching materials because they help to introduce the topic.

➤ Text Selection and Reading Achievement

Teacher (A) says that text selection has an effect on reading comprehension achievement in which when the teacher selects a text it will be easy to reach its teaching aims, as the teacher can have texts according to the learners' social, educational and affective backgrounds.

Teacher (B) also agrees on this in which it should be at the reach of the learners in terms of vocabulary, structure and size. Teacher (C) says that the length

of text selected should be taken into account as well as the students' cultural background.

➤ **Teachers ' Way for Helping Students**

The answers of this question that revealed different points of view that are represented in the notes below:

Teacher (A) suggests :

- Using dictionaries.
- Using pictures.
- Using illustrations.

For teacher (B) :

- Selecting texts in the way that students can understand them

While teacher (C) gives the following list of procedures:

- Using synonyms
- Collocations
- Mimics / gestures
- Equivalent
- Considering topic sentences
- Considering supporting sentences

➤ **Students' Difficulties While Reading**

For teacher (A) pronunciation difficulties and ambiguous words are the obstacles that students face when reading. As for teacher (B) he also says that students suffer from difficulties of pronunciation and difficult words, however, teacher (C) says that the main problem that learners have when reading is the text length and the student's unfamiliarity with the topic.

➤ **The Causes Behind Reading Problems**

Concerning this question, teacher (A) claims that the lack of reading habit is the main cause behind reading problems, while teacher (B) states that it is the whole

policy of English teaching which is behind all calamities. Teacher (C) relates reading problems mainly to the nature of the text which leads the learner to have such difficulties.

➤ **The Time Devoted For Reading Comprehension**

In this question both teacher (B) and (C) agree that the time devoted for reading comprehension session is sufficient, but without justifying their answers. Teacher (A), however, has the opposite view. This teacher claims that the programme is too long that she has to devote a short time for reading.

➤ **Suggestions for Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement**

The answers of this question are reported in the form of notes:

For teacher (A), she suggests:

- Giving the learner short stories to read and summarize.
- Asking them to take part in some activities and report.
- Devoting more time for reading.

As for teacher (B), he suggested:

- Urging students to read outside the classroom.
- Motivating them to develop the reading habit through short stories and passages.

While teacher (C) suggests :

- Encouraging learners to read.
- Rewarding them when reading.
- Providing them with the appropriate textbook.
- Guiding their reading.

2.4.2.1. Data Interpretation of Teachers' Interview

The results obtained from teachers' interview reveal that these teachers have different answers concerning their students' preferable skill except for one teacher who did not mention any of these skills. The results were deduced from the answers

of the first question. Moreover, these teachers use different teaching materials in teaching reading comprehension, focusing on their students' needs and level, as it is shown in the results obtained from the answers of the second question. In addition to that, the answers of the third question show an agreement among these teachers on the fact that text selection can have an effect on reading comprehension achievement by stating different arguments to support their views. Then, these teachers show care about their students since they state different ways to help them when they do not understand while reading. The findings of the teachers' interview also shows that all teachers have listed a number of difficulties that their students face during reading.

Besides, these teachers gave distinct causes behind their students' reading problems. Furthermore, the results reveal that the time devoted for reading comprehension session is sufficient. Finally teachers show responsibility of improving their learners reading performances by using a number of techniques for doing that.

2.5. Discussion of the Main Results

The purpose of this study is to investigate the multiple difficulties that EFL learners may have when reading, as well as to select the causes of these difficulties and then to seek for solutions that can be overcome their reading difficulties. This section will state the main finding with relation to the research questions, thus, the results will confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses:

Research question one: which problems do third year secondary school learners have when reading? The relevant hypothesis: such learners may suffer from some problems when reading in the English language, as ambiguous words and the difficulty of pronouncing words. The analysis of learners' questionnaire and teachers' interview reveal that these learners are suffering from such problems; therefore, one may notice that the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Research question two: what are the causes that lead learners to have reading difficulties? The hypothesis of this question is the causes behind these difficulties may be related to the learners' lack of reading habit or to the difficulty of the reading task itself. This hypothesis is confirmed. As the results of this question

reveal that the main reasons which cause reading problems is that learners do not have the habit of reading (they do not read).

Research question three: how can text selection have an effect on reading comprehension achievement? Its hypothesis is: the nature of text may have some effects on the learners reading performances. The findings show that the text length and the learners' level affect the students' reading achievements, this is observed in the answers of question five, in which students have selected distinct kinds of materials to read. More than that, they have added others of their own choices. Therefore, such results confirm the third hypothesis.

Research question four: what might be the suggestions to improve reading comprehension achievement? Its hypothesis is: the suggestions may be more reading outside the classroom, selecting more appropriate texts depending on the learners' level, encouraging reading for pleasure. The results of teachers' interview confirm this hypothesis; in addition to that they suggest other ways to improve learners' reading habit such as: motivating students to develop the reading habit through reading short stories, and to guide their reading.

2.6. Conclusion

The present practical chapter provides a practical analysis case study that was done both qualitatively and quantitatively by using two research tools. Infact, from the data analysis phase, the finding showed that third year secondary school learners cannot read fluently, because they face a number of difficulties in reading comprehension. The results reveal that EFL teachers related the learners' reading comprehension achievement mainly to their lack of reading habit; learners do not often read and this is due to the globalization age and under the use of ICTs, that is why the following chapter seeks to present some suggestions and solutions in order to expand the learners' vocabulary knowledge, and thus to lead to a better comprehension while reading.

Chapter Three

Suggestions and Recommendations

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Reading Comprehension Teaching Technique

3.3. Practical Recommendations

3.3.1. Teachers' Role

3.3.2. Learners' Role

3.4. Classroom Procedures for teaching Reading Comprehension Skill

3.4.1. Pre-reading Activities

3.4.2. While-reading Activities

3.4.3. Post-reading Activities

3.5. Conclusion

3.1. Introduction

This last chapter presents some practical techniques for teaching reading comprehension in EFL classrooms for the sake of helping both the teachers and students; on the basis that third-year secondary school EFL learners do have difficulties in reading comprehension achievement at the level of many aspects. The chapter also provides suggested activities concerning the reading skill that may help learners to enrich their vocabulary background, and to facilitate the reading comprehension task for them.

3.2. Reading Comprehension Teaching Techniques

To help students develop effective reading comprehension, there exist multiple teaching strategies which teachers can use. Among them, the KWL strategy which stands for (what I know, what I want to learn, what I learned), the strategy aims to activate the students' prior knowledge in relation to the text, identify the purpose for reading, control their comprehension and expand their ideas. In this respect, Shayee (2000) finds out that the KWL strategy has an improvement on reading comprehension of Secondary School students with comparison to the traditional strategy.

Several investigations show the effectiveness of implementing the KWL strategy as a means to improve the students reading comprehension. Furthermore, Sasson (2008) states that the KWL works as an instructional reading strategy which helps teachers to support student reading comprehension by activating prior knowledge and make students interested on what they want to know, and what they have learned.

According to Ogle (1986), using the KWL strategy should consider some steps: choose a text, create a KWL chart, ask students to brainstorm words, terms and phrases that they can associate with the topic, ask students what they want to learn about the topic, and encourage students to research any questions that were not answered in the text.

3.3. Practical Recommendations

This section proposes some suggested practical remedial recommendations for both teachers and learners for the sake of a better reading comprehension achievement.

3.3.1. Teachers' Role

Teachers' role depends on their students' needs and level. In the same line of thought, Papaefthymiou – Lytra (1993 : 94) maintains that :

Foreign language teachers, therefore, must be flexible enough and sensitive enough to respond well to the individual learning preferences, interests and needs of their learners in terms of materials, techniques classroom methodology and teacher talk. After all, language learning is not a monolithic process since not all personality and environmental factors can be kept under control in a foreign language situation.

- ❖ The teacher should help the students to identify their reading purposes first.
- ❖ The teacher should provide them with suitable reading materials taking into account the students' interest and the proficiency level.
- ❖ The students have to be provided with appropriate teaching strategies depending on learning styles and learners' needs.

In this respect, Nuttal (1982), states that the reading teacher has first, to provide the students with appropriate texts, and second, to use activities which focus the students' interest .

3.3.2. Learners' Role

For a better understanding and comprehension while reading, an EFL learner has to enlarge his vocabulary amount in which words familiarity plays a vital role in understanding the whole text. Thus, learners can develop the vocabulary knowledge through increasing the reading habit and extensive reading, learners have to regard reading as a long-life learning.

Another point is that students must have the ability to learn words that they have never come across before. In this respect, Nagy et.al, (1994: 46) maintains that: *“skilled readers depend not just on knowing a large number of words, but also on being able to deal effectively with new ones.”*

Similarly, Nunan (1991) views the reading course as being learner-centered more than teacher-centered.

3.4. Classroom Procedures for Teaching Reading Comprehension

It has been suggested that evaluating reading comprehension inside the classroom should compose three phases; pre-reading activities, while- reading activities and post -reading activities (Williams 1996) .Classroom activities are important for a better achievement in teaching reading skill.

3.4.1. Pre-reading activities

These tasks are important for both teachers and learners, because they prepare students for the text they are going to read. In this respect, Abraham (2002) maintains that an interactive approach demands that the teachers should activate the students' shemata during the pre-reading phase by helping them recognize their prior knowledge about the topic of the text. Urquhart and Weir (1998: 184) have suggested some pre-reading activities:

1. thinking about the title
2. checking the edition and date of publication

3. reading appendices quickly
4. reading indices quickly
5. reading the abstract carefully
6. reading the preface, the forward and the blurb carefully

In fact, many research works have been done on pre-reading activities, Carrell (1984: 334) claims that: “*Activating existing background knowledge as well as building new background knowledge should be done through pre-reading activities to help the reader to read better.*” According to Chartian (1988), such kind of activities seek for motivating learners to be prepared in order to have the ability of reading the text. Pre-reading strategies such as drawings, pictures quotations...etc stimulate the students’ prior knowledge about the theme and leads him to make predictions, connections and then to ask questions. Such strategy begins with the teachers’ role of introducing the topic.

Similarly, Drucker (2003: 22-29) suggests the following procedures that the teacher can use before reading a text:

... relate the passage students are going to read to something that is familiar to them. Next, provide a brief discussion question that will engage the students and, after that provide an overview to the section they are going about to read. Name the selection, introduce the characters, and describe the plot.

Last, direct the students to read the story and look for particular information .

Furthermore, pre-reading strategies may also deal with:

_ Accessing prior knowledge.

- _ Writing about the experience related to the topic.
- _ Asking questions focusing on the topic.
- _ Semantic mapping.
- _ Making predictions.
- _ Reading introduction and conclusion.
- _ Summarizing

Adapted from Aeurbach and Paxton (1997: 259)

Based on what have been said below, there are some proposed pre-reading suggestions:

Activating the students' prior knowledge

The teacher can provide students with a text and then ask them to write a short paragraph on what they have already known about the topic.

Making predictions

The teacher can provide students with the title of a text and ask them to predict what the text will be about.

3.4.2. While-reading Activities

In this phase, the teacher must apply some useful activities according to the students' level. Greenwood (1998), in this respect, states that students have to learn how to read and respond to books. This phase is the most important one because it is the most active one among the three stages. Therefore, Shahidullah (1995; 1996) suggests the following while-reading activities :

1. Guessing meaning from context,
2. Analyzing sentences,
3. Surveying text structure,

4. Extracting specific information,
5. Getting detailed information,
6. Answering pre-set questions,
7. Matching text with pictures diagrams etc.,

The aims behind the while-reading activities are explained below:

- Students understanding the writers' purpose.
- Helping reading comprehension of the text.
- Helping students to use their inferring and judging abilities.
- Remembering the students of the vocabulary importance.
- Developing the student's linguistic and socio-linguistic knowledge.
- Learning generalization.
- Reading conciously.
- Skimming.
- Scanning.

(Adapted from Saricoban 2002 :04)

Activity One: *Using skimming*

Skim through the text below and do tasks A and B.

A. Choose the sentence that best summarizes the content of the text. Justify your answer.

- a. Companies are unconcerned about social auditing and ethics in business.
- b. Social auditing is both a social obligation and a necessity in doing business today.
- c. Social auditing is just a way of exploiting the concerns of public opinion over environmental and social issues.
- d. Social auditing is not necessary at all for doing business.

B. Give a title to the text. Then, compare your answers with those of your partner.

Activity Two: *Using scanning*

Now scan the text and answer the following questions.

- A. Why are some companies commissioning social audits?
- B. Giovanni Preston works as a corporate social responsibility executive. What does he really do?
- C. What are the labour standards that he mentions in the text? Do you know of any other labour standards? Name them.
- D. What conclusions does he draw about ethics and business? Do you share his point of view? Justify your answer.

TEXT

Businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of social and environmental issues for **their** reputation. That's why some of **them** are commissioning social audits relating to **their** social performance; **these** are social reports **that** evaluate the effect of **their** behaviour in relation to **their** employees and to society as a whole. (§1)

Supporters of social audits say that social reporting is as important as financial reporting. **They** say that **it** provides important information about whether the activities of companies in areas such as employment and community, the environment, and the way of winning new business

/ˈbɪznɪsɪz/

/ɪˈjuːz/

/kəˈmɪʃənɪŋ/

/pəˈfɔːmæns/

/bɪˈheɪvɪə/

/səˈpɔːtəz/

/faɪˈnæŋʃl/

/ɪmˈplɔɪmənt/

/ɪnˈvaɪərənmənt/

are morally right or wrong. Social auditing has emerged as a result of pressure groups concerned about problems of pollution, corruption, consumption and employment, but now **it** is considered by some company executives as one of the best ways of promoting products and services. **They** say that ethically responsible companies are more likely to prosper than **those** which behave unethically. (§2)

Critics say that a social audit may just be a public relations exercise, with no real benefits. However, in spite of **this criticism** many companies now are designating executives to oversee the whole area of corporate social responsibility. Giovanni Preston is one of **them**, he works for a Canadian multinational. **This** is what he says about his job: 'A lot of our manufacturing is done by suppliers in developing countries. Companies in the clothing industries are particularly open to criticism about sweatshop labour – the use of underpaid people with terrible working conditions, which amounts to labour abuse or labour exploitation. (§3)

My job is to travel to these countries and to check labour standards. I go **there** to check, for example, that our suppliers are paying **their** workers fairly, and that they work in good health and safety conditions with low levels of illness and accidents. We also ensure that workers are above the legal minimum age to work. Our suppliers must not use child labour. (§4)

We are aware that big companies such as **ours** are likely to be subject to scrutiny – seen and judged by consumer and environment associations from outside. We know that if we are seen to be socially responsible, the company will benefit. Today, we can no longer separate ethics from business. (§5)

/i'mə:dʒd/

/pə'lu:ʃn/

/ɪg'zekjʊtɪvz/

/prə'məʊtɪŋ/

/rɪ'spɒnsəbl/

/'pʌblɪk/

/'benɪfɪts/

/'deɪzɪneɪtɪŋ/

/'kɔ:pəreɪt/

/mʌltɪ'næʃnəl/

/'kləʊðɪŋ/

/kən'dɪʃnz/

/'leɪbə/

/sə'plɑɪəz/

/'wɜ:kəz/

/'seɪftɪ/

/'li:gl/

/ə'weə/

/'skru:tɪni/

/ə,səʊsi'eɪʃnz/

/'sepəreɪt/

Adopted from secondary school textbook (2008-2009:66-67)

3.3.3. Post-reading Activities

This evaluative phase takes place just after the while-reading activity. It is very important, since it provides the students with the opportunity to summarize,

question, reflect, discuss and respond to text. When students finish reading the text, there must be alternative activities to help them analyze concepts for deeper understanding of ideas and organize information for later retrieval.

In addition to that, post-reading phase helps the teacher to assess the students' reading comprehension.

What has been observed previously is that most of learners do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge which prevents them from comprehending the text, so that the following activities are suggested:

Activity Three: *Sentence completion*

Complete the sentences below using the positive, negative or interrogative forms of semi-modal '**used to**'. An example is given to you.

- A. Samira doesn't like reading now, but she **used to read** a lot.
- B. I know that Nassima is living in a small village now, but
- C. Now there are four libraries in our town, but
.....only one.
- D. When I was a child Ia burnous, but now I wear one.
- E. I know that she doesn't work in a bank now, but

Adopted from secondary textbook (2013-2014: 18)

Activity Four: *Filling the gaps*

Students are provided with a passage with missing words. From a list of words, they have to choose and fill in the missing word.

- a) Reorder the letters to form words, all of them end in 'ic'.

brAa gMa tAorcba nPa Ptolli oLg

- b) Use the words you have found to fill in the blank.

1. The flute was composed by Mozart.

2. The Prime Minister knows a lot about
3. Keep cool, don't
4. It is notal to put ice-cream in the oven.
5. The most common language spoken in Jordan is
6. Anperson can put his feet on his shoulders.

Adopted from Shemesk and Waller (2000: 47-48)

Activity Five:

Read the notice below and fill in the gaps with the verbs in the box. Use the appropriate tense.

Notice Board

A lot of thingsat school this week.
 Students in class 1 over 641 bottles. We..... these to the town recycling centre.
 Students in class 2A the lawn. Students in class 3D a choir the whole week. So please come and encourage them on Saturday evening.
 Class 4F wall sheets for each classroom. Class 5B the librarian to cover a lot of old books.
 We are holding another meeting on March 21. Please come with more ideas.

clean
collect
design
happen
mow
help
take

Adopted from middle school textbook (2005-2006:112)

True /false questions

The teacher provides students with a passage and then, asks them some true/false questions to see if they understand specific, detailed information from the text.

Matching activities

Students might be provided with different people and are asked to match them to a thing or situation that is best for them.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter tried to propose some practical implications to the teaching of the reading skill in the EFL classes in order to improve Secondary School learners' reading comprehension achievement, in particular third-year students by providing some suggested activities. It also strives to help teachers in teaching such language skill, for the sake of improving the learners' vocabulary knowledge, and better reading comprehension achievements.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Language acquisition /learning require the desire to learn the language first, then the mastery of the language skills. Among them, there is the reading skill. Reading is an important element in the learning process of any language. The main concern of this research is about reading difficulties in EFL classrooms at Secondary School level.

This research work was divided into three chapters; this chapter strives to identify the reading comprehension task with reference to its different types, models, it also presented the reading strategies and dealt with the impact of text selection on reading comprehension achievement, it also stated the reading comprehension difficulties, as well as the teaching of reading comprehension whereas, the second chapter is the practical part of the present research methodology. It explains the research methodology and the sample population that the study is concerned with, as well as the research instruments, data analysis and the main results. The third chapter states some suggested activities for the of teaching / learning reading comprehension skill, they aim at enhancing the students' capacities and at enriching their vocabulary knowledge for the sake of facilitating the task for better understanding.

The main results reveal that secondary school EFL learners have problems in reading comprehension performance at the level of pronunciation, and coming-across ambiguous words which prevent them from understanding the passage. It has been also noticed that the reading materials and text selection have an impact on the learners' reading achievement.

Some limitations were raised during the accomplishment of this research work, in which teachers were on strike, and this made data collection difficult. Another factor was the students low proficiency level that obliged the researcher to write the questionnaire in dialectal Arabic for the sake of obtaining valid data.

The four language skills are interrelated, so learning a language needs the proficiency in these important language elements. Finally, it is important to make a deeper investigation on the impact of the learners' level and background knowledge on reading comprehension.

Bibliography

Bibliography

- Abraham, P. (2002). *Skilled Reading: top-down-bottom-up*. Field Notes, 10(2), Retrieved on Nov,1, 2004 from [http://www.sabes.org/resources/field note/v 110/fn.101pdf](http://www.sabes.org/resources/field%20note/v%20110/fn.101pdf).
- Anderson, N.j.(1991). *Individual Differences in Strategy Use in Second Language Reading and Testing*. In Modern Language Journal.
- Auerbach, E. R. and Paxton, d. (1997). *It's Not the English Thing*. Bringing Reading Research into the ESL Classroom TESOL Quarterly.
- Carrell, P.L. (1983). *Background knowledge in second language comprehension*. In Language Learning and Communication.
- Carrell, P.L. and Eisterhold.(1983). *Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy*. TESOL Quarterly.
- Chastian, K.(1988). *Developing Second Language Skills, Theory and Practice*.3rd ed. Hartcourt brace Javanovich, Inc.
- Clarcke, M.A, Sibestein, S.(1977).*Towards a Realization of Psycholinguistic Principles in the ESL Reading*. Pinguin Group.
- Cook, G. (1990). *Meta-cognitive Behaviour of Good and Poor Readers :Strategic Learning in the Content Areas*. Madison : Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Day, R. and Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading of second language classroom*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Drucker, M.J. (2003). *What reading teachers know about ESL learners*. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol 57(1) p.22-29 ; retrieved on Nov 6, 2004 from www.questia.com.
- Dubin, F. (1982). *Whatever EFL teacher should know about reading*. In English teaching forum 20/3 (14-16-23).

- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, K. (1973). *Analysis of Reading Miscues*. In Smith, F. Psychologist and Reading. New York : Rinhas and Winson.
- Greenwood, J. (1998). *Class Readers*. Hong Kong : Oxford University Press.
- Hafiz, F.M. and Tudor, I. (1989). *Extensive Reading and the Development of the language skills*. ELT Journal. Vol.44 p.1-13.
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York. Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2001) . *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (3rd Edition). Pearson Education Limited.
- MC Donough, J., and Mc Donough, S. (1997). *Research Methods for English language Teacher*. London : Arnold.
- Nagy, W. (1998). On the Role of Content in First and second Language Learning. In SHEMITT, N and Mc CARTHY, M. (Eds) *Vocabulary Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodologies*. Wiltshire, Prentice Hall International.
- Nuttal, C. (1982). *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language*. London : Heinemann Educational.
- Ogle, D.M. (1986). KWL. *A Teaching Method that Develops Active Reading of Expository Text*. Reading teacher.
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies*. : What every teacher should know. New York. New Bury.
- Palmer, H. F. (1964). *The principles of language* Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Papaefthymiou-Lytra, S. (1993). *Language, language awareness and foreign language learning*. Athen : the university Athens Press.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative research of methods*. (2nd) New Bury Park, CA : Saze Publication. ENC.
- Penny, Ur. (1996). *A course in language teaching : Practice and Theory*. Great Britain. University Press, Cambridge.

- Phan, N. (2006). *Effective Reading*. Teachers Article.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. (2nd ed). N
- Richards, J. C. (1990). *The Language Teaching Matrix*. Cambridge: CLTL.
- Rivers, W. (1981). *Teaching Foreign Language skills*. Chicago :University of Chicago Press.
- Rivers, W.M. 1964. *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Saricoban, A. (2002). *Reading strategies of successful readers through the three-phase approach*. The Reading Matrix
- Sasson. D, (2008). Use K-W-L Technique in Reading Lessons: Strategic Through Process for Engaging Students before The Read. Retrived on july 30 2009 From [http: a newteachersupport a suite 101.com/article. cfm](http://a.newteachersupportsuite101.com/article.cfm) .
- Shahidullah, M. (1995-96). *Product and process view of heading and their pedagogical implication*. Rajshahi University Studies. Part-A. Vol 23.24.P209-230.
- Shayee, S. (2000). *The effectiveness of meta-cognitive strategy on reading comprehension and comprehension strategies of eleventh grade students in Kuwait High School*. Retrieved April21, 2007, from <http://www.libuni.com/dissertations/html>.
- Shemesh, R. and walls, S. (2000). *Teaching English spelling*. UK.
- Urquahart, S. and Weir, C. (1998). *Reading in a second language :Process, Product and Practice*. London. Longman.
- Williams, E. (1996). *Reading in the language classroom*. Malaysia : Modern English Publications.

Appendices

استبيان للطلبة

معلومات خاصة بالمتعلم

السن الجنس

1. البرونش لي راك تقراه في الثانوية.....

2. ما هي المهارة لي تفضلها

 الاصغاء و الاستماع التعبير القراءة الكتابة

3. باي لغة تحبو تقراو

 العربية الفرنسية الانجليزية

و علاش.....

4. ما نوع النصوص لي تحب تقراها

 جرائد كتب قصص

..... اذا كان وحدخريين من فضلك تكتبهم.....

.....

4. ماهو هدفك من القراءة

باش تكون عندك ثقافة عامة

باش ترفع من مستواك اللغوي

تقرا من اجل الترفيه

باش تجاوب على بعض الاسئلة في ميدانك الدراسي

اذا كاين وحدخريين

..... حددهم.....

.....

5. كي تقرا نص و متفهمش واش راك تقرا

ترجم للعربية

تستعمل القاموس

تكمل القراءة بلا ما تفهم

تحبس القراءة

اذا كاين خيارات اخرى

..... اذكرها.....

.....

6. ما هي الصعوبات التي توجد لها كي تكون تقرا نص? و اذكر بعض الحلول لاختيارك

صعوبات في النطق

كلمات مبهمه

كلمات جديدة عليك و ما تعرفهاش

كي تقرا في القسم بصوت عالي امام الجميع

صعوبات في معاني الكلمات / يتخلطوا لك بعض المرات

اذا كاين وحدخريين اذكرهم

.....

.....

.....

7. ما هي الاسباب لي تؤدي لهاذ الصعوبات اثناء القراءة

- ما كانش الوقت

- ما راك متعود على مهارة القراءة ما تقراش دايم

- صعوبة نوع النص لي راك تقرا فيه

- صعوبة القراءة في حد ذاتها

- اذا كاين وحدخريين

..... كتبهم

.....

.....

8. اسك الوقت المخصص لحصة القراءة فلقسم كاف و لا لا

لا

نعم

و علاش

.....

.....

.....

و شكرا

The Translated Version**Dear Students,**

The following questionnaire aims to collect data about the teaching of the reading skill and its difficulties. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire either by putting a cross(x) in the appropriate box, or by answering the questions given.

Information about the students

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Branch of your study in Secondary School education

The students preferences

1. What is your favorite skill(s)? (You can choose more than one answer)

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

2. In which language do you prefer to read?

Arabic French English Why.....
.....

- 3-What Kind(s) of materials you prefer to read?

Journals Books Stories

4-What is your purpose from reading

To get general knowledge

To read for pleasure

To enrich your vocabulary knowledge

To answer some academic research needs

Others, please specify.....

.....

Why?

.....

The students' reading difficulties

1-When you read a text and you do not understand you:

Translate to Arabic

Use a dictionary

Carry on your reading without understanding

Stop reading

Others, please specify.....

.....

.....

2-What are the difficulties that you often face when reading ?

Difficulties of pronunciation

Ambiguous words

New words

Reading aloud

The meaning of words

Others, specify

.....

3-What are the causes behind these difficulties?

Lack of time

Lack of reading habit

The difficulty of the reading skill itself

The difficulty of the kind of texts

Others, specify
.....

4-Is the time devoted for the reading session sufficient?

Yes

No

Why?
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

Teachers' Interview

1-How many years have you been teaching English ?

.....

2-Which of the following skills your pupils best prefer ?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

According to you, why?.....

.....

.....

.....

3. What kind(s) of teaching materials do you use in teaching reading comprehension? and what do you think about it ?

.....

.....

.....

4. Do you think that text selection can have an effect on reading comprehension achievement?

Yes

No

How ?.....

.....

.....

.....
.....

5. How can you help your students when they do not understand while reading a text?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What are the difficulties that your students face when reading?

- Reading aloud
- Difficulties of pronunciation
- Ambiguous words

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

7. According to you as a language teacher, what are the causes behind these problems?

- Lack of time
- Lack of reading habit
- The difficulty of the text

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

8. Is the time devoted for the reading session sufficient?

Yes

No

Why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

What can you suggest to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration