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Students' Perceptions towards the Effects of Reading Strategies on Comprehension.

The Case of First Year Master Students at the University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Anglophone Language, Literature,

and Civilization.

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DEDICATIONS

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

I dedicate this modest work to:

My beloved mother and father who helped me make my dreams a reality

My sweet sisters: Ines, Lamis, and Noor Elhouda.

Also special dedication to my friends and colleagues, I wish them all best of luck.

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language students tend to use any possible means through their reading process to gain more information and easily understand the reading material at hand.

The present study then aims at investigating Master I students' perceptions towards the effects of using reading strategies on their text- reading comprehension. It takes the case of master one students of the English Department at Guelma University; to check the validity of the research hypotheses, which state that students' use of reading strategies may positively affect their reading comprehension. In addition, their reading comprehension ability will be facilitated.

Therefore, two questionnaires were administered to both teachers and case study sample students; as data collection tools to determine the effects of using reading strategies on students' reading comprehension; as well as students' perceptions towards using these strategies. The collected data were described, analyzed, and discussed using the Descriptive Statistical Method. The results then revealed that the sample students show a significant awareness towards the crucial effects reading strategies have on improving their text-reading comprehension abilities as well as on other language skills. Thus, the results confirmed the research hypotheses. As a result, the most important field investigation results were transformed into useful pedagogical implications for an effective EFL reading skill comprehension teaching and learning. In addition to some recommendations to be considered in future researches.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DSM: Descriptive Statistical Method

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FL: Foreign language

M I: Master One

MCQ: Multiple Choice Questions

NRP: National Reading Panel

SQRRR: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

%: Percentage

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Reading is a productive skill that enables students to acquire knowledge and comprehend information from the text being read. Thus, comprehension is the essence of reading, it is very important because not every one reading a text can comprehend and understand what he is reading or the gist of the written material.

Whereas; reading strategies are some techniques, methods and tips used by the reader (learner) in order to facilitate the reading process and enhance understanding of the written material. They are of many classifications and type according to many scholars such as cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies.

1. Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is very vital for the reading process as it helps students to understand, criticize and interact with the text. It also enhances their critical thinking and self-monitoring while reading. Consequently, it helps them to get involved in the reading process more actively and effectively. However, reading comprehension can be achieved only when students are able to utilize adequate reading strategies and knowing when and how to use them.

Accordingly, EFL students usually fail to reach successful and appropriate reading comprehension of different text types. As a result, they spend a lot of time and effort without achieving the intended text meaning or understanding; due to their lack of reading strategies, application, instruction and training. This problem results in students' poor reading proficiency and low EFL learning outcomes.

2. Aims of the Study

Comprehension is the essence of any reading process whatever the reading material is. Moreover, reading strategies are amongst the most important factors that can help EFL learners enhance their reading abilities and achieve good comprehension.

Consequently; this study aims at investigating the importance and effectiveness of reading strategies on EFL students' text- reading comprehension abilities; as well as, to investigate students' perceptions and attitudes toward using text-reading comprehension strategies.

3. Research Questions

The current study focuses mainly on four important questions stated as follows:

- What reading strategies Master I students need to apply when reading an EFL text?

- Does ignorance of these reading strategies result in a lack of text comprehension?

- Does awareness of the appropriate use of reading comprehension strategies make students proficient readers?

- What are Master I students' perceptions towards reading comprehension strategies?

4. Research Hypotheses

The current study is directed with one hypothesis related to reading strategies as means for improving Master I students' reading comprehension abilities.

Thus we hypothesize that:

- Master I students, at the English department, University of Guelma, may have positive perceptions towards the role of reading strategies in developing their text-reading

comprehension strategies then they will be able to read easily and achieve successful text-comprehension quickly.

5. Research Tools

In order to test the research hypotheses and answer the above questions; two questionnaires have been administered; the first one was devoted to master one students, which focuses on reading strategies, their types and their effects on text comprehension. The second one was given to teachers of linguistics; to examine reading comprehension and reading strategies correlation, students' reading difficulties and possible means for helping them implement appropriate reading strategies.

6. Structure of The Dissertation

The present study consists of three main chapters: the first two chapters synthesized the theoretical background of the research topic, while the last chapter referred to data collection and analysis.

Chapter one, entitled 'reading comprehension', discussed some definitions devoted to reading skill in general, and reading comprehension as the heart of reading process. In addition to that, it focuses also on the components of reading comprehension, its types, purposes and the schemata theory applied in reading comprehension. Furthermore; approaches to reading skill, reading activities, reading comprehension measurements and concludes by highlighting the importance of reading comprehension in improving the whole reading proficiency.

The second chapter, entitled 'reading strategies and students' perceptions towards them', devoted to defining reading strategies, their types and uses, students' purposes behind using them; in addition to reading strategies instructions and their effects on text comprehension, and finally, students' perceptions towards the effects of reading comprehension strategies.

The third chapter represents the practical side of the dissertation; and thus, discussed the methodology used and data analysis. This chapter describes the selected research method, population, samples and tools used for data collection. It also deals with results discussions and presentations. This chapter also provides a summary of the obtained results, from both questionnaires, to find out whether the research findings approve or disapprove the research stated hypotheses.

The study concludes with some pedagogical implications for developing EFL students' reading comprehension strategies and understanding of the text in hand. Some recommendations also are discussed for future studies to improve EFL reading skill teaching and learning in the Algerian educational context.

CHAPTER ONE

READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

This first chapter will encounter the diverse definitions attributed to the reading skill, reading comprehension, purposes and types. Finally, some requirements for effective reading will be stated to help learners facilitate their reading process.

This chapter will try then to answer the following questions: Is reading comprehension a mere understanding of any written print? Is it as simple as getting information from a text? What are the reasons and purposes of an EFL/ESL learner behind his/her reading comprehension? What are the types of this reading comprehension?

1.1 Reading Skill

1.1.1   Definition of Reading Skill

Reading is a productive skill which is considered as the cornerstone to improve all the other skills: listening, speaking and writing. Reading is a mental process that entails the use of vision to any written material for the sake of collecting information and understanding the general meaning of these written materials. It is also a cognitive process of decoding symbols and depends on the interaction between the reader and the writer in order to derive meaning from text.

Smith (1973: p.2) proved this idea when he said that "reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver". That is to say the reader's ability to infer information and ideas or what the writer intends to mean from the written text.

In addition to these definitions, many scholars have defined and analyzed the reading skill according to their perspectives. Widdowson (1979) stated that "reading is a process of getting linguistic information via print" .This is the simplest definition of reading which means; reading for the sake of conducting information from the text in hand. However, Shaw (1959:8) said that "reading is the communication of thoughts, moods and emotions through which one receives from others their ideas and feelings". In other words, he considers reading as a matter of communication with the transmitter's ideas and feelings in order to infer meaning.

However, reading is not just interpretation and analysis of any written paper, it also involves reactions and attitudes towards the text that the reader may have or do such as predicting or asking questions….

Briefly said, reading skill is a mental process that depends on the performance of the reader, his interaction with the text, his ability to decode symbols, get information and ideas and understand meaning.

1.1.2 Reading Comprehension

Before defining Reading Comprehension as a whole, comprehension has to be defined first. Comprehension as a word comes from the Latin term 'comprehensionem' which means 'a seizing'; therefore, when you have comprehension it means that you have seized information. Comprehension then is a mental act or fact of grasping meaning and understanding the written material.

Durkin (1993) defined it as "comprehension is the essence of reading and the active process of constructing meaning from text". We can say that, without comprehension of a written passage, reading will be meaningless.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is an ongoing cognitive and constructive process that depends on making meaning from a text in hand to gain an overall understanding of it.

Snow **(2002:11)** described reading comprehension as the "process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language"; i.e. to conduct meaning from any piece of writing via interaction with the text written in any language. This citation confirms that reading comprehension entails these basic elements:

-The reader; who is doing the comprehension and focusing his abilities, his knowledge and experiences within his reading process.

-The text; which is any written material to be read and comprehended.

- And the activity where the reader can practice his reading; which involves the purposes, goals and consequences of the act of reading.

-The environment or context; this includes the classroom environment, especially the native language, culture, and ethnicity of the reader, the teacher, and the other students. **(Snow 2002: 11)**

Reading comprehension relies heavily on the amount of vocabulary knowledge and the meta-linguistic awareness. It is a key element to increase reading scores, solving comprehension problems and illiteracy which are credible reasons for the improvement of reading comprehension skills. In order to comprehend written materials, the reader needs to have some basic knowledge, strategies and awareness which include:

- Ability to decode print papers fluently.

- Knowledge about language (vocabulary, syntax and strategies for applying that knowledge)

- Knowledge and experiences of life experiences, content knowledge, background and knowledge about texts.

- An awareness of their own processes and strategies as they approach reading. **(Snow 2002: 11)**

To conclude, reading comprehension is the understanding of the given written material. It is a two way process that relates information from texts with information from previous knowledge and experiences; i.e., make connections of what you already have in your mind from knowledge and experiences to what you are reading now.

1.2 Components of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a multi-component process that involves interactions between the reader and what he brings to the text. Among these components we mention:

Background knowledge: it is all the knowledge of the world that includes learning knowledge, personal knowledge, experiences knowledge, and declarative and procedural knowledge (facts and how to) which are brought by the reader to the act of reading.

There is a clear relationship between reading comprehension and the background knowledge; in that, the more abundant the knowledge the learner acquires from outside world through experiences, the richer his schematic knowledge tends to be, and the more successful will be his processing of text when he reads. The ability to activate prior knowledge is a cognitive strategy needed for effective reading comprehension.

Inference: Baumann et al, (2003) state that "readers use inference processes to figure out the meaning of an unknown vocabulary". Inference then is the combination of information within sentences in a text, between sentences in a text or between prior knowledge and text. A reader constructs meaning by making inferences and interpretations.

Strategies: Alexander and Judy (1988:376) define strategies as "goals-directed procedures that are plan fully or intentionally evoked …that aid in the regulation, execution, or evaluation of a task". Strategies like cognitive and meta-cognitive can help proficient readers understand better what they read; readers may use these strategies either consciously or unconsciously. Strategies can be taught to learners who struggle with comprehension and can improve their understanding of texts.

Vocabulary: it is the knowledge of word's meaning, meaning of affixes and relationships between words.

Nagy and Scott (2000) point out that "knowledge about any single word is multidimensional, incremental, polysemous, interrelated and heterogeneous"**.**

Word reading: unlike vocabulary knowledge, in word reading, the reader may be able to read a word but cannot know its meaning, or may know the meaning of the word but cannot be able to pronounce it in its written form.

1.3 Schemata Theory in Reading Comprehension

Schema (plural; schemata) is an abstract mental structure of knowledge that is originated from prior knowledge and experiences stored in the memory. It is a system for understanding this knowledge, how it is represented and how it is used in a given context.

Medin and Russ (1992, p.346) defined schema as: "general knowledge structure used for understanding". Schemata theory then believes that comprehending a text is a matter of

interaction between reader's background knowledge and the text. In other words, reader's ability to relate his previous experiences with what he is learning now as well as the teacher's role in teaching his students how to make this relation.

Meaning, from the schemata theory point of view, is created through the reader's background knowledge and his interaction with the text during the reading process. Schemata theory is very important to reading comprehension because it guides readers to comprehend new experiences and knowledge and enables them to make assumptions and predictions of what they might experience in another given context.

1.4 Approaches of Reading

Researchers suggested three main approaches for effective reading, which (these approaches) should be appropriate depending on the reader's purposes and the text size.

1.4.1 Bottom-Up Approach

It is an approach that was developed by Gough in 1972 who said that reading is a process of decoding letter by letter. I.e. readers' primary goal is to read texts and focus on linguistic forms at the level of words and sentences. It primarily linked to the units of the text. On this approach comprehension is produced when readers decode words and letters and then construct meaning from the text, as well as it depends on phonetic awareness. Bottom-up approach is often contrasted with top-down approach which is thought to be more efficient.

Some teachers teach reading by introducing new vocabulary and new structures first and then going over the text sentence by sentence, this way of teaching reading reflects the belief that reading comprehension is based on the understanding and mastery and decoding of all the new words, new phrases, and new structures as well as a lot of reading aloud practice

1.4.2 Top-Down Approach

Top-down approach focuses on what the reader brings to the reading process, where readers make conscious use of it to achieve the overall purpose of the text in which they rely more on the existing knowledge (background knowledge) and make little use of the written information. This approach is used to make assumptions, predictions, expectations and reasonable guesses to the text.

Top-down approach is suggested by most researchers because it is related to the reader's schemata.

1.4.3 Interactive Approach

This approach is a combination of the previous two approaches and employs both of them (bottom-up and top-down) for an effective reading. I.e. readers combine their ability to decode and recognize words with using their background knowledge to predict and confirm meaning. This approach suggests that reading process is initiated by formulating hypotheses about meaning and decoding symbols.

Interactive approach involves three factors: conceptual abilities, background knowledge and process strategies.

1.5 Purposes of Reading and Reading Comprehension

Reasons and purposes of reading and reading comprehension differ from one person to another because of their different opinions, backgrounds and experiences. Reading serves multifaceted purposes; students read to comprehend a text and answer comprehending questions, solve language problems, improve their language ability, and to be familiar with a particular country or place, get ideas and decode messages from texts and achieve pleasure and information. Reasons and purposes of reading can be summarized in the following points:

- Improve focus and concentration: being engaged in a book will strengthen individual's attention and concentration.

- Reduce stress: many studies showed that reading reduces stress.

- Develop ones vocabulary: the more one reads, the more he will learn more words.

- Improve memory: reading helps the individual to train his mind on understanding, storing, and recalling whenever needed.

- Entertainment: all the most important benefit of reading is its entertainment value.

- Provide information and knowledge

- Improve writing and speaking skills; because when someone reads he will learn not only new words but also their spelling and pronunciation forms; and hence, improves his writing and becomes a fluent speaker.

Doff (1997:170) states: "we usually have a purpose in reading: there is something we want to find out, some information we want to check or clarify, some opinion we want to match against our own …etc." According to Doff's words, everyone has his own purpose or reason to read either to gain information or to achieve a personal aim.

Without good reading comprehension, learners may be able to pronounce the words in a text but not able to grasp which parts are important or to determine the main idea of a passage/text.

1.5.1. Reading for Pleasure

Reading for pleasure also known as reading for enjoyment, it is so much more than just a form of play or escapism. Reading for pleasure is also a way of connecting with a text; readers should read only what they like, to get a range of pleasure. People tend to read books of poems, novels and magazines…etc because they find them pleasurable. It has different benefits; such as text comprehension grammar, breadth of vocabulary, general comprehension

and a better understanding of others' cultures. Reading for pleasure is no longer restricted to the printed word but increasingly includes online reading, whether on a website, or via an e-reader. Reading for pleasure also had a positive impact on: Text comprehension and grammar, positive reading attitudes, self-confidence as a reader, pleasure in reading in later life, general knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

For EFL/ESL learners, if the book ceases to provide the pleasure s/he seeks, s/he will stop reading. For this reason, a reading program should be according to Nuttall (1996:31) "to enable students to enjoy (or at least feel comfortable with) reading in the foreign language".

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) defines reading for pleasure as "reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading".(Clark and Rumbold National Literacy 2006, p:6)

 In both citations reading for pleasure is to feel free in choosing what to read, to get rid of stress and to enjoy the reading material more and more.

1.5.2. Reading for Information

Finding information is a very important skill in all subjects. Many learners prefer reading to collect information because they believe that written texts are the primary source of information. When learners read for information, they should ask themselves questions before, after and while reading to check that they have found what they wanted.

Grellet (1996:4) states that "people read books in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information [they] get".

EFL/ESL learners read books for information because they want answers of certain questions of certain issues. Doff has the same opinion that "questions and guesses … make us want to read (because we want to know answers)" (1997:171).

That is to say, the goal behind the reading process is to find out useful information or to highlight some answers to questions.

1.5.3. Reading for meaning

It is a research-based strategy that helps all readers/learners to build the skills that proficient readers use to make sense of the challenging texts. This means, the readers' ability to grasp and understand the meaning of the text/passage they are reading and not just pronouncing the word correctly.

Nuttall's (1996:30) opinion is that "students … need to learn how to read for meaning". I.e. reading for meaning is very important in the learning process. She added "language improvement is a natural by-product of reading". **Ibid.** A text is a physical manifestation and the reader's purpose is to construct meaning with the data the text supplies.

Nuttall has mentioned four categories of meaning: conceptual meaning, propositional meaning, contextual meaning and pragmatic meaning.

- Conceptual meaning: is the meaning which a word can have on its own, every lexical item embodies a concept, this concept with other concepts form a proposition.
- Propositional meaning: also called signification or plain sense. It is the meaning of a sentence or a clause on its own. A single word cannot inherit this type of meaning because "we cannot affirm it, deny it, question it" (op.cit). For example, the word 'studying' is a simple isolated word has a conceptual meaning but not a propositional one; only if it is used in proposition like: students are studying for the sake of getting information.

- Contextual meaning: known as functional value which is the meaning a sentence has when it is used in a given context or situation. For an effective reading, it is crucial to interpret contextual meanings.

- Pragmatic meaning: it is the meaning that "a sentence has only as a part of the interaction between writer and reader" (op.cit).

This kind of meaning reflects the writer's attitudes, beliefs, values and purposes that have an effect on the reader.

Grellet (1996:9) states that each reader "brings his own meaning to what he reads based on what he expects from the text and his previous knowledge"; i.e., the reader makes use of his prior knowledge in order to infer meaning from what he is reading now.

1.6. Levels of Understanding

Reading comprehension is the ability to easily and efficiently read a text for meaning. It is the last step of the reading process taught to learners, after they have learned phonetics, fluency and vocabulary.

Five levels of reading comprehension can be taught to learners; where each type is important in helping readers to understand the meaning of the text:

. Literal comprehension is seen as the first level of comprehension. It is the simplest form of locating information in texts. It seeks to answer the questions who, what, when, and the where of the story.

. Interpretive comprehension is about the understanding that requires readers to reflect on literal information, make links between information, identify or draw inferences from information given in a text. It prompts the reader to wonder 'what if' or 'why'.

. Lexical comprehension centers on the understanding of key vocabulary words found in the reading material.

. Applied comprehension is when the reader uses background information to form opinions, to understand and to interpret ideas in texts.

. Affective comprehension is when readers understand the emotional and social aspects of a story they are utilizing (reading).

1.7. Reading Comprehension Activities

An "activity" according to Richard and Lack Heart (1994) "is a task that has been selected to achieve a particular teaching/ learning goal". For Clark and Yinger (1979:237) "an activity is the basic structural unit of planning and action in the classroom".

Therefore, reading as a collaborative activity is very beneficial to EFL/ESL learners and teachers can organize reading activities in a number of ways:

- Read aloud to learners.
- Read in pairs in the classroom.
- Paired reading with an older learner.
- Read aloud in small groups.
- Read in small groups while listening to an audio book.

There are also many other activities to enhance the reading process such as:

- Identify vocabulary words that might be difficult for learners to understand when they read the text.
- Model think-aloud: verbalize confusing points; example: 'I better read this sentence again'.
- Ask each learner to take a turn in reading and thinking aloud with short strategies.
- Ask learners to practice independently by using a checklist.

- Ask learners to reread the text and develop their own questions or write a short summary of what they just read.

- Use mind mapping to record the main idea and details.

1.8. Teaching Reading Comprehension

It is very important to know how to teach reading to students in general and to ESL/EFL ones in particular. Teachers should adopt the appropriate techniques to the level of the student, his performance and his ability to receive a new item or vocabulary. As learners learn how to read simple texts/ books, they need to learn how to understand their contents. Teachers then need to:

- show their learners how to tackle meaning from the text in hand. According to Dechant (1982: 37) "Proficient readers are those who…have an adequate knowledge base that allows them to bring meaning to the printed page." That is to say, the reader brings his own meaning with him because everyone interprets meaning according to his understanding

- show their learners 'text to self' connections by encouraging them to take notes about what they are reading in order to use these notes later on to enhance their comprehension.

- teach their learners how to comprehend what they are reading: to show them how to make a connection between previous experiences and knowledge to what they are reading and teach them how to decode text.

- ask their learners questions about the reading material: keep tracking what learners are grasping easily and what they are having troubles in understanding or comprehending.

- Correct their learners when they make mistakes by asking them to reread the incorrect words or spell them.

Teachers have to assess their learners' reading comprehension; however, it might be not so easy to achieve it. According to Kamhi (2005, 205):

"Understanding is clearly not something that simply occurs or does not occur, like turning a light switch on or off. Comprehension is more like continuum with literal, shallow understandings at one end and creative, deeper understanding at the other [...] because it has many different levels ranging from literal interpretation to analytic, creative and comparative ones [...] it is this aspect of comprehension that makes it difficult to assess.

This citation means that understanding is not an easy task to achieve, and it is not something that occurs simply because understanding and comprehension have many different levels according to the learner's brain and ability to grasp meaning.

1.9. **Reading Comprehension Measurement**

Reading comprehension measurement is made by teachers to see and assess how well their students comprehend and understand written materials. Reading comprehension measurement has a major importance for two reasons: 1- to determine whether a student understands what is read. 2- To know how to teach reading so that comprehension may be improved. Teachers can use to measure learners' reading via multiple choice questions MCQ, short- answer questions, sentence completion, completing summaries and tables, identifying writers' views and attitudes by 'yes' or 'no' questions, matching lists, and matching phrases. MCQ is a well known procedure for assessing readers' text processing abilities; they require learners to select from among various options that are presented to them which are fixed. Matching techniques: learners are asked to match a number of items that are combined well with some others. Example, link titles with their relevant paragraphs.

Summary text: after the reading process learners are asked to sum up the main ideas in the passage/text. This test reflects learners' level of text understanding.

1.10. Reading Materials

The majority of people, when they think of reading, they immediately think of books and stories. However, there are many other reading materials that can be used such as; magazines, manuals and journals … etc.

*Magazines: they keep the readers updated with the recent news about business, fashion, politics…

*Journals: they are a complete reference resource for future study/research and accompanied with integrated facts.

*Online libraries: internet is the core of reading materials; it includes websites, blogs, forums and wikis to get the most valuable information. These sites prove to be genuinely helpful for learners to learn in any form they wish to (videos, presentations and manuscripts)

*Comics: they are very helpful especially for kids to teach them about the back and forth of dialogs.

*Dictionaries: they help learners to read and learn more words/vocabulary.

* Applied linguistics journals: like journal of memory and language, linguistic inquiry, journal of pragmatics and journal of phonetics.

1.11. Requirements for Effective Reading

Before beginning your reading process, you have to consider how much details are required and the time that you will consume.

Make sure that you have identified the purpose of doing the reading and what you need to achieve at the end of your reading. You might use some specific reading strategies.

Be selective about what you read: you must make decisions about essentials, identify key words to help you search for information. Focus on the questions/tasks; you need to identify questions you want to answer.

Before you read, you need to plan for the following points:

- Establish what you already know: linking prior knowledge with new material will help you read more effectively.

- Keep track of what you read; i.e., the source of information, ideas and record page number with the notes that have been taken before.

- Read critically; you need sometimes to analyze, question and evaluate what you are reading. These questions can be asked for critical reading:

• Who is the author / source, are they credible?

• What is the main argument?

• Do you agree with the author?

• How can you use this information?

- Taking notes can help you remember key points.

- Take regular breaks: reading for short periods of time with taking break help you focus on the text and take in as much as possible.

- Read in positive environment can help you improve your concentration.

- Use effective reading strategies such as SQRRR (survey, question, read, recall and review). It is a useful technique for reading purposefully.

1.12. Importance of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a very important skill that is responsible for the improvement of the other skills (speaking, listening and writing) because without comprehension, reading process will be pointless and meaningless, it is important for understanding the content that is actually being read. It is very helpful to EFL learners because it develops their knowledge,

skills and experiences. Also it helps them to gain new information, explore new things that might help them in their real life, as well as it help them in improving themselves and build their self confident. It is a good exercise for the brain and keeps it strong and active and reduces risks of Alzheimer disease.

Reading comprehension increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading, it is important also for EFL students because it develops their language skills, improve spelling and pronunciation and help them memorize things better. In addition to all this benefits, reading comprehension builds vocabulary that's to say, as much as the reader reads as much he will know new words and sentences. Reading comprehension also improves creativity. I.e. reading helps readers to expose themselves to new ideas and information that help them improve their creativity. It is also has a major importance in building reader's concentration and attention skills.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have highlighted the importance of reading skill in both acquiring the language and in obtaining knowledge; through reading comprehension process which has come to be the essence of the reading process as a whole and for understanding meaning of any piece of writing.

However; in order to improve our skill of reading and reading comprehension we must use some basic techniques and procedures that help us to be fluent and effective readers as well as to enjoy the task of reading.   These techniques and methods are known as reading comprehension strategies which will be discussed in the second chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

READING STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THEM

Introduction

EFL learners generally face different reading problems that create major obstacles during their reading comprehension of different written materials. One of the most important reasons behind these problems is that learners are unable to employ strategies and techniques that facilitate reading comprehension tasks.

This chapter then begins by offering definitions and clarifications of what does it mean a reading comprehension strategy, how they can be used by students to solve comprehension problems, and then how they can decide which one is the appropriate for a given task. In addition, it will present types and categories of these strategies; with the effects and purposes behind their use; and finally, students' perceptions towards them.

2.1.   Definition of Reading Strategies

It has been claimed that students, especially ESL/ EFL learners, confront a variety of difficulties while reading a given material. These difficulties can be related to lack of vocabulary, lexical inefficiency, structural complexity, poor reading skills, and lack of schemata. In fact, students can solve such difficulties by using some reading techniques known as reading strategies. However, before dealing with the definition of reading strategies, we have first to give a clear definition to the concept of 'strategy'.

A strategy is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose and goal. Pierson and Fielding (1991. P; 847) defined strategies as "conscious and flexible plans that readers apply to particular texts and tasks"; this can mean that, strategies are applied by students consciously to understand a given text or achieve a given task.

Moreover; the Larousse Chambers English dictionary defines a strategy as "the art of planning or carrying out a plan skillfully"**;** i.e., readers or learners use these strategies as plans to achieve a given goal. It is a matter of fact that successful readers employ strategies to read effectively.

Generally speaking, reading strategies have been defined by many scholars and researchers as procedures and methods that are used by students rather consciously or unconsciously in order to facilitate the reading process and improve comprehension.

For example, McNamara (2007: 6), defines them as "reading strategies refer to the different cognitive and behavioral actions readers use for achieving reading comprehension". That's to say, these strategies are mental actions that readers make use of for the sake of developing their reading comprehension processes. Elsewhere, Wenden (1987 cited in Alderson 2000, p.308) notes that strategies have been labeled differently in the literature and goes on to list the following: techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies and problem-solving procedures. In this definition of reading strategies, we can say that, Wenden has described reading strategies as techniques, mental and conscious plans that can be used by readers to comprehend texts and solve reading difficulties and problems. These reading strategies can guide readers towards being a fluent and proficient reader.

For Pani (2004, p.355), reading strategies are "the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read… Good readers apply more strategies more frequently …and more effectively than poor readers."

According to him, reading strategies are basically connected to the mental capacities which help readers make sense of what is being read and help them become good readers.

Conditionally, reading strategies should be taught in contexts that are relevant and appropriate for their use; i.e., they should be integrated as part of the curriculum because successful learners get the information they need not only from words, but from the context in general.

Consequently, reading strategies can have many advantages for students:

- They can help readers construct meaning easily.

- They save time.

- They can enhance readers' understanding.

- They help readers read more accurately.

- Identify what is important and needed and what is irrelevant.

- Help them master new concepts and vocabularies.

- And they facilitate the reading process.

Therefore, both teachers and learners (mainly in EFL contexts) should be aware of the importance of these reading strategies, as well as their types and classifications. In other words, they should know what is the appropriate strategy that can help students improve their reading of a given text type; since any misuse of them can lead to students' misunderstanding or confusion. In addition to that, teachers should teach their students when and how to use these strategies because strategy training comes from the assumption that success in learning mainly depends on appropriate strategy use; i.e., they can improve their reading by being trained on using effective strategies.

2.2. Classifications of Reading Strategies

There are many different types when categorizing reading strategies. Scholars classified reading strategies using different terms. Anderson (1991) groups the strategies into five

categories: 1) - supervising strategies, 2)- support strategies, 3)- paraphrasing strategies, 4)-strategies for establishing coherence in the text, and 5)- test-taking strategies.

Elsewhere, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) adopted the three-category learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies. There are subcategories under each main category. Another taxonomy of learning strategies that is very popular and has been used in many studies is Oxford's (1990) learning strategy classification. She divided learning strategies into six categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

In this study we will discuss some types of reading strategies that can help readers in their reading process; especially EFL learners and improve their reading comprehension.

2.3. Examples of Textual Processing Strategies

2.3.1. Skimming

Skimming is a reading strategy defined as looking only for the general and main ideas in the text. It involves the movement of the eyes very quickly throughout the text.

Nuttall (1996:49) defines it as:

> "Glancing rapidly through the text to determine its gist, for example in order to decide whether a research paper is relevant to our own work… Or to keep ourselves superficially informed about matters that are not of great importance to us".

This can mean that, when skimming, the reader should read for the gist of the text, to select texts that are worth spending on and to select the most important ideas and information. Skimming then can be seen as a quick process; i.e., to read only the first sentences in the

passage/text to exert meaning faster and easier. Skimming is an easy strategy; however, students should know better how to skim:

-They must focus on graphics and words that are written in bold.

-They must glide their eyes quickly over the text.

-They should not read all the text, only the first and the last sentences in each paragraph.

2.3.2. Summarizing

Summarizing is another important reading strategy that is concerned with the students' use of their own words and styles to shorten any written or spoken material; where they should state the main ideas and leave all the unnecessary details and examples.

According to Diane Hacker (2008, 62) in *A Canadian Writer Reference* "summarizing involves stating a works' thesis and main ideas simply, briefly and accurately". That is to say, the reader/learner should reduce the size of the text and make it clear, brief and in his own words and style.

Summarizing then involves taking large texts and reduces them to the minimum. Readers first have to read the text carefully and understand its general meaning, and then they should focus only on the key words and sentences of the original text. By the end, they should relate these words and sentences in a logical order using their own style.

Summarizing is a very important technique for EFL learners, because it helps them in improving their writing skill, enhancing their reading comprehension and strengthening their vocabulary knowledge.

2.3.3. Scanning

Unlike skimming, scanning is to look for the text general and main ideas. Scanning is a reading technique that is concerned with glancing the eyes over the text to find specific information in a hurry.

According to Nuttall (op. cit). "Scanning is glancing rapidly through the text either to search for specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose." That's to say, scanning involves moving the eyes quickly to find useful and specific information in a given text.

Scanning is a very useful strategy when reader does not want to read the whole text in order to save time. Therefore; the reader should first state specific information to look for. Also; he/she should identify which parts of the text might be helpful by using headings. Finally, he/she should read selectively and skip through the text.

EFL learners, by using this reading strategy, can understand the text's main points easily, and then understand what are the authors' purposes and goals behind writing this text.

2.3.4. Predicting

Prediction is "the faculty of predicting or guessing what is to come next, making use of grammatical, lexical and cultural clues" (Grellet, 1996: 17). That's to say, predicting is thinking ahead while reading and anticipating information and events in the text and hence students can read through the text, revise, and verify their predictions.

Predicting is a strategy that involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text and use it as a way to connect their existing knowledge to new information and get meaning from what they read. The strategy of making predictions actively engages students and connects them to the text by asking them what they think might occur in the story. When predicting,the

reader brings his/her own knowledge and experience to the text; and then, makes it easy and smooth for him/her to make out meaning.

Furthermore, predicting is an important reading strategy. It allows students to use information from the text, such as titles, headings, pictures and diagrams to anticipate what will happen in the story, it encourages readers to use critical thinking and problem solving skills. Readers are given the opportunity to reflect and evaluate the text, for extracting deeper meaning and comprehension skills. When predicting, readers should review the front and back of a book, the table of contents, the chapter names, sub-headings and diagrams prior to reading, then create their own prediction.

2.3.5. Recognizing Text Organization

Recognizing text organization is to know and internalize "how sentences are joined together to make paragraphs, how paragraphs form the passage, and how this organization is signaled" (Greenall et. al., 1986: 3).Greenall in this definition said that, readers should be aware about the organization and structure of the text; i.e., how sentences and paragraphs are organized in a logical way so that a text can be understood.

Text organization then is a reading strategy used by readers and refers to how the information within a written text is organized, and being able to identify the structure of a text can greatly increases students' comprehension of the material being read. This strategy helps students understand that a text might present a main idea and details; a cause and then its effects; and/or different views of a topic. It also enables the students to understand how a writer has selected and used raw materials, how s/he has organized them and arranged them cohesively, and how s/he has been able to suit his/her purpose. In fact, there are many patterns of text organization (text structure) that can help readers monitor their comprehension; for example: -

- Cause/effect pattern which represents the causal relationship between ideas, concepts or events.

- Problem/solution pattern which deals with problems, explains their solutions and then discusses their effects.

-Comparison/contrast pattern which examines the similarities and differences between two or more things.

In order for the readers to recognize text organization, they should practice different exercises stated by Grellet (1996: 21)

- Rejecting irrelevant information.
- Finding the topic sentences and what kind of relation they have to the rest of the text.
- Discriminating between generalizations and specific statements.
- Completing skeleton outlines of the structure of the text.

These exercises along with others can enhance the readers' ability to deduce meaning easily and predict the values of sentences and this in turn helps them to interpret difficult texts and improve their critical thinking and reading.

2.3.6. Activating Prior Knowledge

When readers make connections to the text they are reading, and their ability to make sense out of what they read by recognizing how it fits with what they already know; and then, helps them become mentally engaged in upcoming learning is what is called "prior knowledge activation" strategy. This reading strategy should be taught explicitly and systematically to students to be used as a natural part of their comprehension process.

As students are activating their prior knowledge and making connections, they use graphic organizers, such as a concept map, a flow chart, or a KWL chart (which are graphic organizers that help students organize information before, during, and after a unit or a lesson.), to help map their thinking.

2.3.7. Note-taking

Taking notes is a reading strategy where readers can record the essence of the information. Notes taken during reading or lectures can be one of the strongest tools a student has in his reading process.

The main reason readers take notes for is to aid their reading and to use these notes appropriately later on. Readers might review their notes frequently; which can be extremely useful. The more they use their notes, the more familiar the material will become and the more information they will retain for future use. It is important to understand that effective note-taking means writing notes on what a reader has read in his own words.

There are many different tips that might help a reader while taking notes; they are stated as follows: (http://sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetakingtips.html: Note Taking Tips)

-It is important to keep notes organized and well-structured, so you can easily find them later.

-Use headings or different sheets (or documents) to separate different themes and ideas.

-Use bright colors to highlight important points in notes.

-Always keep a record of the information source.

- Develop a personal form of abbreviations to allow you to take notes more quickly and allow you to include more information effectively.

- Skip lines to allow you to fill in more information later.

- Always date material to know what material each text covers.

- Leave marginal room for notes when reviewing or from reading text.

- Re-write notes right after lecture for better retention.

- Paraphrase

-Underline or star key points.

Note –taking is a very successful reading strategy because it enhances the reading comprehension and helps readers to retrieve information easily when needed.

2.3.8. Visualizing

Visualization is the ability to build mental pictures or images while reading, depending upon prior knowledge and engagement with the topic. Visualizing then is a reading strategy where readers create a mental image or make a drawing in their head about what is being read to help them remember and understand the text. It can also help transform students from passive to active readers while improving their reading comprehension.

Visualizing is one of many skills that make reading comprehension possible, because it allows students the ability to become more engaged in their reading and use their imagery to draw conclusions, create interpretations of the text, and recall details and elements from the text.

The visualizing strategy has many benefits to SL/ EFL learners. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2000), it allows the readers to create mental images from the words in the text, enhances meaning with mental imagery, links past experience to the words and ideas in the text, enables readers to place themselves in the story, strengthens a reader's relationship to the text, stimulates imaginative thinking, and brings joy to reading. Thus, using visualization is very important in increasing the quality of writing, improving vocabulary knowledge,

increasing fluency, improving motivation, self-esteem and enthusiasm in addition to enhancing comprehension and exerting meaning easily.

2.3.9. Mapping

Mapping is a reading strategy that refers to the process of reorganizing the most important ideas and information from reading a text into a diagram with own words; for better understanding and remembering of what is read because mapping makes it easier to organize and remember what is being read. Moreover, mapping has been shown to support struggling readers by building off their prior knowledge and asking them to reflect on their understanding while reading. They are easy to construct and can be used across all content areas.

Readers should use mapping to summarize what they have read, organize their writing on the concept, or to create a study guide for their own studying. There are many different types among which the reader can use the most suitable one that can help him understand the text. They are shown below:
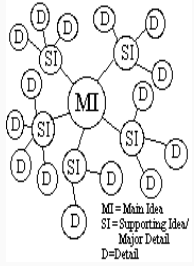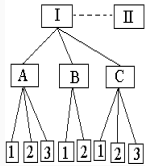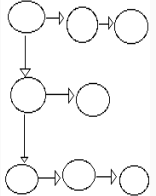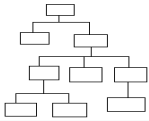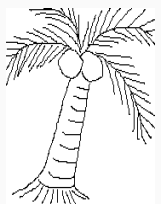
Charts	Spiders
Principle for Comparison	MI = Main Idea SI = Supporting Idea/ Major Detail D = Detail
Trees or Hierarchies	Chains
Venn Diagrams	Sketches

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Figure 1: Types of Mapping

2.3.10. **Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing means putting information into your own words; it acts as a comprehension check. If a reader can paraphrase what he reads, he will understand the material easily and store the information in his long-term memory.

Paraphrasing is somewhat different from retelling and summarizing. It helps students monitor their understanding and incorporate new knowledge with their past knowledge, and makes them realize that comprehension is the goal of reading.

The strategy of paraphrasing has many important advantages:

*It forces the reader to re-think and then better understand the material.

*It tells him when he has not fully understood what he has read.

It is also designed to help students focus on the most important information in a passage and to improve their recall of main ideas and specific facts.

2.4. Purposes behind Using Reading Strategies

As we have mentioned before, reading strategies are important and helpful strategies for improving the process of reading comprehension. Each and every learner has his own purposes when using these strategies during his reading process; however; the most common purpose that all readers has is mainly to facilitate reading and enhance reading comprehension.

It is claimed that there is a close relationship between strategy use and motivation enhancement; in a sense that, the more the learner uses reading strategies, the higher his motivation will be raised.

Other purposes include performance improvement in reading, to gauge how to make sense of what is being read (what the text is about, what is the purpose of the writer, and what he will achieve at the end of reading the text in hand). In addition to that, they may help them to know which textual cues they should focus on.

Learners also may view reading strategies as a problem solving; i.e., when they face problems or difficulties, they should use strategies to overcome them. They can increase their self-reading confidence, motivation and may have faster access to the reading material.

Learners also use these reading strategies for the sake of:

*skimming for the main ideas in the text in hand.

*build higher vocabulary knowledge.

*summarize and paraphrase information in the text.

*distinguish main ideas from specific details.

*discuss and respond to content of the text orally and in writing.

*evaluate their learning and performances and set goals for progress.

*improve their critical reading and thinking.

*develop their speed reading.

* And become proficient and effective readers.

2.5. Effects of Reading Strategies on Text Comprehension

Students from time to time face many problems when reading a text (especially FLL learners, because they read in a foreign language). In this case, they have to make use of reading strategies; in order to overcome their reading troubles. The influence of using reading

strategies on reading comprehension is highly significant; this is why teachers should guide and encourage students to apply reading strategies and teach them how and when to use them, and what is the most appropriate one to use in their different reading tasks; so that, learners will reach higher level of text reading comprehension.

Furthermore; when readers apply reading strategies in their learning process, their self-confidence will be improved and this will result in higher levels of motivation and a reduced use of dictionary. They also encourage learners to think independently and become personally engaged in the text.

In addition to all of that, these reading strategies are applied by learners to clarify misunderstanding, solve reading comprehension problems and extend thinking before; during and after reading (they will be able to identify the author purposes and goals behind writing this text). As well as, they will help them to decode words routinely and with ease to be successful learners. The goal then behind using these reading strategies is to help learners become competent and autonomous readers.

2.6. Reading Strategies Instructions

In order to become a competent and proficient reader; students should apply reading strategies throughout their reading process; so that, understanding can be achieved easily.

However, the teacher should teach his/her students when, where and how to use these strategies carefully and appropriately. Reading strategies instruction should be taught explicitly and directly; as studies show that reading strategy instruction not only improves comprehension but also benefits other areas related to reading; such as self control and self-regulation while reading.

First of all, the teacher should encourage learners to plan a specific goal or purpose before reading, then to monitor their understanding during reading, and to apply repair strategies when breakdowns in understanding occur. Second, the teacher chooses strategies that are closely aligned with the text students are reading then asks them "thinks aloud" about what a given strategy is and why it is important, and gives students opportunities to apply the strategy on their own. As students read, the teacher provides feedback and engages them in discussion. Finally after the students master these reading strategies and know their types and purposes, they can choose independently the appropriate strategy that best suits their aims.

Snow (2002:32) states that "because meaning does not exist in text but must be constructed from the text by the reader, instruction of how to use reading strategies is necessary to improve comprehension". In Snow's point of view, meaning can be constructed and exerted by the reader only when he masters reading strategies use and recognizes their importance in improving comprehension.

By teaching reading strategies, instructors can help their students develop both the ability and the confidence to achieve text comprehension and improve their reading capacity and skill, their general performance and make up for comprehension breakdowns.

2.7. Students' Perceptions towards Reading Strategies

Perception as a concept refers to the use of physical sensation to discover, interpret and understand things. It can also be seen as a capacity for comprehending and understanding written materials.

This study investigates students' perceptions towards these reading strategies, where we have to focus attention on two essential questions:

1- Are students aware of the importance of strategies they implement?

2- What are their perceptions of the reading strategies they use?

Concerning students' perceptions towards reading strategies, they do change from one student to another. However; EFL learners, by implementing these strategies, can overcome their reading difficulties and became fluent readers, as well as enriching their vocabulary knowledge and style to improve their critical reading and thinking.

Learners do have positive perceptions towards these strategies, because they help them to infer, understand and comprehend texts easily, and also can help them identify difficult words, concepts and ideas. Reading strategies facilitate learners' reading process and help them encode the unclear ideas. Thus, readers will read rapidly without hesitations or difficulties because their reading process will be unconscious.

EFL learners also tend to use these strategies and techniques because they save time and improve the speaking abilities. Learners are in fact aware of their reading process and capable of taking actions while reading to overcome difficulties and problems. In addition to that; learners can combine many types of reading strategies in order to facilitate more reading tasks and save time and efforts.

2.8. The Importance of Reading Strategies

The most important goal of reading is comprehension, and in order to achieve this comprehension, learners have to apply a set of reading strategies during their reading process. Thus; the impact of these strategies on reading is highly important for any act of reading.

These strategies are mainly conscious and aimed at improving learners' performance. They are regarded as tactics used to overcome breakdowns and difficulties in comprehension.

Therefore; they do have many advantages and benefits for EFL learners such as:

- Save time and effort.

 -Help them to identify their reading purposes.

-Allow learners to make connections with their previous experiences.

-Help them locate specific and important information in the text and clarify its meaning.

-Enhance learners' speaking abilities and thus improve their reading skill.

-Improve reading and thinking critically.

-And facilitate the reading process and improve comprehension.

Therefore; the use of effective reading comprehension strategies is perhaps the most important means to help readers improve text comprehension.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the present chapter states the literature review of reading comprehension strategies as useful and significant tools or techniques students can rely on during their reading process. In addition to the purposes and effects of these strategies on the development of students' reading comprehension skills in particular and reading skill in general; as well as, students' perceptions towards using these strategies and how they judge the role they have in improving their reading and self-regulation abilities.

CHAPTER THREE

FIELD INVESTIGATION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted in the present study. It describes the research method, research population and sample, research tools and finally data analysis results' presentations and discussions. The chapter aims at giving an overview of the research procedures and how the study was carried out.

3.1. Research Method

The current study follows a Descriptive Method (DM) to identify, analyze and describe factors contributing to reading skill, reading comprehension, reading strategies and students' perceptions towards these strategies.

The Descriptive Method then is designed to describe, explain and validate research findings; as well as, to investigate the gathered data. Gay (1976) defines DM as "involving collection of data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study". This means that; this method is designed for the investigator to gather data, to test the research hypothesis or to answer research questions.

3.1.1. Research Population and Sample

Polit and Hanger (1999:43,232) defined a population as "the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher to whom the research results can be generalized". In other words, population is the complete group of people; that the researcher wants to study from which he can select a sample and work on it where the results can be generalized.

In this study all participants were randomly assigned for both teachers and students.

The case study was 52 Master I students of English department at the University of 08 May 1945 Guelma, because they are more experienced with reading and reading comprehension as well as they do have a reading module in their educational curriculum unlike the license years. In addition to, 13 teachers of linguistics.

3.1.2. Data Collection

The research tools used in the present study were questionnaires assigned for both teachers and students at the English department, Guelma University. The questionnaire method is said to be the most commonly used technique to collect data and the most popular one, as Oppenheim (1992, p: 100) said "a questionnaire is an important instrument of research, a tool for data collection".

Our research questionnaires were used to obtain data relevant to the study objectives and research questions. While designing questions of the questionnaire, students' was considered and the language was very simple; so that, students can understand the questions easily.

3.2. Questionnaires' Description

3.2.1. Students' Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire was given to 52 English language Master One students. It contains a set of questions that vary from close ended (i.e. Yes, / No or multiple choice questions) to open ended questions (free answers and suggestions). The questionnaire consisted of three main sections in addition to further suggestions. Section one includes four factual questions to investigate students' gender and educational background. Section two, entitled reading comprehension, includes eleven questions about reading comprehension process and text comprehension. Whereas, the third section is about reading strategies and

contains nine questions mainly about their definition and the most commonly used ones by EFL students in a reading process. The questionnaire ends with an open question for further suggestions where students can add their comments and/or suggestions about the topic. When administering the questionnaire not all students answer it and few of them did not return it at all. However the conditions were good we did not face any other obstacles.

3.2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire was given to thirteen teachers (13) of linguistics; however, two teachers did not respond. The questionnaire consists of three main sections and ends with further suggestions open request. Section one seeks general information and entails three questions about teachers' teaching experience and qualifications. Section two contains eight questions about reading comprehension, its definition and importance. Section three consists of six questions deal with reading strategies, their types and the appropriate ones to be used by students. The questionnaire gives teachers an opportunity to express their comments and give further suggestions. However, two teachers did not want to answer the questionnaire because they said that they did not teach a reading module throughout their teaching experiences.

3.3. Questionnaires' Analysis and Results' Presentation

3.3.1. Students' Questionnaire Analysis and Results' Presentation

Section One: General Information

1- Sex: male or female

Table 3.1: Students' Gender

	Number of answers	percentages
Male	03	5,77 %
Female	49	94,23%

Total	52	100%

The first question asked about students' gender; the results showed that the overwhelming majority of our sample students are females (94, 23%) and only (05, 77%) are males. We can then claim that; female students dominate Master I English classes; may be because females appreciate foreign languages and are more talented whereas males prefer scientific fields.

2- How many years have you studied English?

Table 3.2: Students' English Learning Background

Question Two	Number of answers	Percentages%
08 years	3	5,77%
09years	1	1,92%
10 years	2	3,85%
11years	37	71,15%
12years	4	7,69%
13 years	3	5,77%
14 years	1	1,92%
15 years	1	1,92%
Total	52	100%

Students' English study background differed from one another. The majority of the informants (71, 15%) have studied English for 11 years, (5, 77%) have studied it for 8 and 13 years for each.(3, 85%) have studied it for 10 years and finally,(1,92%) for 9, 14, and 15 years for each. The results showed that our sample students are familiar with the English

language and then can be said to master it to a certain degree. Their study average can be said to be 10 years

3- Was it your first choice to study English? If no, what was your choice?

Table 3.3: Students' Choice to Study English

	Number of answers	Percentages%
Yes	50	96,15%
No	2	3,85%
Total	52	100%

The overwhelming majority of M I students (96.15%) have chosen English to be their field of study. For (3, 85%) of them, English was not their chosen field of study. In correlation with these results, we can assume that students were intrinsically motivated to study language; and expected to be highly motivated and autonomous.

Section Two: Reading Comprehension

4- Do you read in English?

Table 3.4: Students' Reading in English

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	46	88,46%
No	06	11,54%
Total	52	100%

The majority of our informants (88, 46%) answered with yes and then they were used to read in English; whereas, only (11, 54%) said that they do not read in English.

5- How often do you read?

Table 3.5: Students' Reading Frequency

	Number of answers	Percentages%
Never	0	0%
Rarely	10	19,23%
Sometimes	24	46,15%
Usually	15	28,85%
Always	3	5,77%
Total	52	100%

According to the answers of this question, we can notice a contradiction between the previous question results and this one; since in (Q4) six students said that they do not read; however, in this question (0%) answered never. This may mean that students do not read from their own or for free time but just when they are obliged or have some classroom tasks; as preparing presentations. (19, 23%) said that they rarely read, (46, 15%) said that they only read sometimes, (28, 85%) usually read and finally (5, 77%) always read English books and magazines. As we can notice that students' reading frequency ranged from those who always or usually read to those who only sometimes or rarely read. Thus, for those who prove to read they are interested and may be reading is one of their preferable hobbies; whereas for those who do not read may think that reading is boring and not useful.

6- According to you, what is reading comprehension?

Students' definitions of reading comprehension can be summed up as followed:

- Reading comprehension is the ability to understand any written text easily.

- It is to read books, articles and magazines and understand what they are talking about.

- Reading comprehension is to read for the sake of getting information and understand its meaning.

- It is to read and understand almost all key words and general ideas in a given passage; in order to be able to answer related questions.

- Reading comprehension is the ability to read beyond lines, decode words and phrases in order to comprehend the general text.

From these definitions we can say that reading comprehension concept differs from each student' perceptions; however, they share nearly the same basic definition of reading comprehension; which is "the ability to understand any given text easily".

7- Do you have difficulties in understanding texts?

Table 3.6: Students' Reading Comprehension Difficulties

	Number of answers	Percentages%
Yes	24	46,15%
No	27	51,93%
Unanswered	01	1,92%
Total	52	100%

According to the above table, most of the students (51.93%) claimed that they do not face any difficulty in understanding texts; whereas, (46, 15%) answered 'yes' and ensured that they encounter difficulties in understanding the text under reading. However, (1, 92%) did not

answer this question. Thus, the results implement that a considerable number of our sample students face comprehension problems when reading a given type of texts; the fact that raises our students' serious need for reading comprehension strategies instruction and training.

8- What difficulties do you mainly encounter in reading English texts? (you can choose more than one option)

Table 3.7: Types of Difficulties Students Face

	Number of answers	Percentages%
Coherence: understanding meaning	29	55,77%
Cohesion: understanding text structure	06	11,54%
Understanding the main idea	08	15,38%
Encountering no problem	14	26,92%
Others, please add them	00	00%

In this question students were allowed to tick more than one option. The most stressed difficulty was coherence: understanding meaning (55, 77%). It seems that students suffer from problems of understanding or at least guessing general meaning of the text at hand. While (11, 54%) selected cohesion as the major difficulty that hinders their understanding of text structure and ideas organization. For (15, 38%) understanding the main idea is their major constraint in text reading comprehension. Whereas (26, 92%) said that they do not encounter any difficulty. No student opted for 'others' which implies that students did not encounter other significant difficulties.

9- What do you do when you recognize that you have not got what you seek from the text? (choose more than option)

Table 3.8: Students' Text Misunderstanding

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Stop reading	05	9,62%
Seek help from your teacher	06	11,54%
Re-read again	44	84,61%
Try to find the cause of the problem	02	3,85%
Check your dictionary	16	30,77%
Others, specify	00	00%

Concerning what students do if they do not understand a text, the majority of them (84,61%) re-read the text again, they believed that it is the best solution to grasp meaning because the more you read the text again and again the more you can understand it and read it attentively. (11, 54%) sought help from their teacher; many students believe that the teacher is the source of information and he/she had all the answers can help them overcome their reading difficulties. (30,77%) of them checked their dictionaries (in available situations) in order to understand the text because the dictionary can be helpful in defining or even translating words to facilitate comprehension. However, (9,62%) said that whenever they face reading problems they stop reading, this category of students give up reading rapidly so they will not enhance their reading skill, while just (3,85%) try to find the cause of the problem; where they prefer to rely on themselves in order to improve their reading process. No student opted for 'others' which implies that they do not think for any other solutions.

10- When you do not understand a long sentence or a passage in the text, do you?

Table 3.9: Students' Solutions for Understanding Text Passages

Question ten	Number of answers	Percentage%
Skip it	03	5,77%
Seek help from your teacher or peer	10	19,23%
Skim and/or just infer the general idea	39	75%
Others, specify	00	00%
Total	52	100%

The majority of students (75%) have chosen skim and / or just infer the general idea because they can get the meaning of the general text even if they do not understand a long sentence or a passage in the text; however, (19, 23%) claimed to seek help from their teacher or peer; while just, (5, 77%) said that they simply skip it, and give up reading easily. However, no student had added other solutions.

11- During reading a text, can you guess/infer the unfamiliar words?

Table 3.10: Students' Inference Ability

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	48	92,31%
No	04	7,69%
Total	52	100%

Concerning whether or not students can guess the unfamiliar words, the overwhelming majority (92, 31%) answered 'yes'; which means being able to guess new meanings, most of students do have more vocabulary knowledge than others; this might be because they do read a lot. However, just (7,69%) answered' no' and declared that they are unable to grasp or guess the meaning of difficult and unfamiliar words.

12- A teacher should divide the reading lesson into: pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities?

Table 3.11: Reading Lesson's Division

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Strongly disagree	04	07,69
Disagree	03	05,77%
Neither agree nor disagree	08	15,38%
Partially agree	06	11,54%
Agree	27	51,92%
Strongly agree	04	07,69%
Total	52	100%

From the analysis of this question, we can notice that more than half of the sample (51, 92%) agreed that the teacher should divide the reading session into pre-reading, while reading and post- reading activities, to facilitate learners' understanding and memorizing of the lesson items. (15, 38%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this question, (11, 54%) of the population partially agreed, (07,69%) of the sample strongly agreed and the same percentage goes for those who strongly disagreed, and just (5, 77%) disagreed about this division.

13- How the student can be an effective reader? (choose more than one option)

Table 3.12: How to Become an Effective Reader

	Number of answers	percentage%
Developing skimming and scanning strategies	28	53,85%
Enriching his vocabulary knowledge	25	48,08%
Developing his reading fluency	15	28,85%
Developing critical reading and thinking strategies	34	65,38%
Developing his grammar	08	15,83%
Others, specify	00	00%

Students were allowed to opt for more than one answer. Thus, most of them (65.38%) said that one can be an effective reader through developing his critical reading and thinking strategies; i.e., to become a careful, active, reflective, and analytic reader; as well as, to monitor his understanding as reads. In addition to that, they should develop their scanning and skimming strategies, which were chosen by (53, 85%) of the sample to be the second most useful strategies for being effective readers; that is, some students look only for text main ideas while others prefer to look for details in addition to main ideas. (48,08%) ensured that students have to enrich their vocabulary knowledge; the more vocabulary they had, the more reading process becomes easier and faster. (28, 85%) of them opted for developing reading fluency to be an effective reader because they do not have to concentrate on decoding the vocabulary items; hence, they can focus their attention only on what the text means. (15,

38%) said that effective reading requires developing the target grammar; i.e., knowing the structure of the text (or what we refer to as text linguistics) and organization of the ideas help them to read effectively and easily.

14- Does your teacher point out your problems regarding reading and reading comprehension?

Table 3.13: Teachers' Remedy of Reading Problems

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Always	01	01,92%
Usually	06	11,54%
Sometimes	36	69,23%
Never	09	17,31
Total	52	100%

Concerning whether or not the teacher points out his students' problems, (69, 23%) of students opted for 'sometimes', this implies that teachers are aware of their students' needs and lacks and take into consideration how to help them overcome such problems and difficulties. (17, 31%) claimed that their teacher never pointed out their problems, this could be due to time constraints. (11, 54%) opted for 'usually'. However; just (1, 92%) said that their teacher always points out their problems. According to students' answers, we can say that teachers do help their students in a way or another to overcome their reading problems.

Section Three: Reading Strategies

15- Do you know what reading strategies are?

Table 3.14: Reading Strategies

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	47	90,38%
No	05	09,62%
Total	52	100%

The overwhelming majority of the participants (90, 38%) were able to define what reading strategies are; which indicates that students are aware of the ways and techniques to enhance their reading skill and reading comprehension. However, just few of them (9, 62%) does not know what are they.

16- If yes, can you define them in few words?

Students' definitions of reading strategies can be summed up as follows:

- Techniques and strategies used by students whether consciously or unconsciously in order to facilitate the reading process.
- Strategies and methods that allow the reader to read appropriately with a specific aim.
- Reading strategies are mental processed techniques used by the reader to approach a text or to make sense of what is being read.
- Pre-planned techniques used in order to understand a given text easily.
- Reading strategies are effective and specific strategies used to facilitate the reading process.

According to these definitions, one can say that each definition differs from the other one according to students' perceptions, (used consciously or unconsciously, mental strategies, effective and specific and can facilitate reading process). However; they do focus on one

common point; which is reading strategies effectiveness in facilitating students' reading process and helping them comprehend text meaning easily.

17- How important do you consider reading strategies in EFL learning?

Table 3.15: Importance of Reading Strategies

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Not important at all	00	00%
Very little important	02	03,85%
A little important	03	5,77%
Important	17	32,69%
Very important	30	57,69%
Total	52	100%

Concerning the importance of reading strategies, (57. 69%) believed that they are very important. This importance lies in improving their reading skill and comprehension. (32, 69%) of students claimed that these strategies are important. (5, 77%) declared that reading strategies are of little importance, whereas (03, 85%) chosen very little important.

18- To overcome your reading difficulties, do you make use of some reading strategies?

Table 3.16: Students' Reading Strategies Use

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	48	94,23%
No	03	5,77%
Total	52	100%

This results indicated that the almost majority of students do make use of these reading strategies (94, 23%) and they are aware of the advantages they can gain in order to improve their reading process and exert meaning easily; while just (5, 77%) said that they do not use these strategies.

19- What type of reading strategies do you often use? Choose more than one option

Table 3.17: Types of Strategies Used In Reading

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Skimming	33	63,46%
Scanning	27	51,92%
Summarizing	30	57,69%
Metacognitive strategies	13	25%
Visualizing	03	15,38%
Others, specify	00	00%

Concerning the types of reading strategies used by the students, (63, 46%) have chosen skimming as the most used type, they prefer looking only for the main ideas of the text for faster reading . (57, 69%) opted for summarizing because it helps them generate their own ideas to better understand. (51. 92%) selected scanning because they prefer to look only for a specific fact or piece of information without reading everything. (15, 38%) chose visualizing as their preferable reading strategy. Consequently, skimming, summarizing and scanning are the most commonly used strategies by M I students.

20- How often do you use such reading strategies to understand what you read?

Table 3.18: Frequency of Reading Strategies Use

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Always	13	25%
Usually	19	36,54%
Sometimes	18	34,54%
Rarely	02	3,85%
Never	00	00%
Total	52	100%

(36.54%) of students ensured that they usually use reading strategies, either consciously or unconsciously. Whereas; (34.54%) of students answered by 'sometimes'. (25%) chose 'always' and just (3, 85%) said that they 'rarely' use these reading strategies. No student opted for 'never'; which implies that students do make use of reading strategies.

21- Do you make use of previous experiences or background knowledge to understand a current reading text?

Table 3.19: Students' Background Knowledge Use

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	52	100%
No	00	00%
Total	52	100%

All students (100%) confirmed their use of previous background knowledge to understand a present reading text; which means that students are aware of the importance of background knowledge in understanding and comprehending the meaning of any given text. Therefore, we can say that students refer to their cognitive capacities; mainly memory to understand the text at hand.

22- Asking comprehension questions after a classroom reading task (a text, a paragraph, etc.), by the teacher, is very helpful for students' general comprehension.

Table 3.20: Teacher Asking Comprehension Questions

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Strongly disagree	00	00%
Disagree	02	3,85%
Neither agree nor disagree	03	5,77%
Partially agree	06	11,54%
Agree	23	44,23%
Strongly agree	18	34,61%
Total	52	100%

This question seeks whether students agree or disagree with the importance of asking comprehension questions after a classroom reading text. Relatively, (44.23%) 'agreed' with this importance and believed that it can help them understand the required written materials easily. (34. 61%) 'strongly agreed' on asking these comprehension questions to ensure their understanding and receive immediate teacher feedback. (11.54%) of them 'partially agreed', and (5.77%) neither agreed nor disagreed; whereas, (3. 85%) 'disagreed' about asking comprehension questions usefulness for students' general comprehension.

23- Do you think that the use of these strategies along with other ones can enhance your reading comprehension abilty?

Table 3.21: Reading Strategies Role in Reading Comprehension

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	45	86,54%
No	06	11,54%
No answer	01	1,92%
Total	52	100%

According to the table above, the almost majority of students (86.54%) answered 'yes'; i.e., reading strategies can enhance their reading comprehension ability. Whereas (11.54%) chose 'no' indicating that reading strategies do not enhance reading ability. (1.92%) do not answer this question.

- If yes, say how?

Students' suggestions are summed up as follows:

- They are helpful in overcoming reading difficulties and become a fluent reader.
- Reading strategies help in enriching readers' vocabulary, enhancing their style, and improving their critical reading and thinking.
- They can help readers to infer, understand and comprehend the text easily and rapidly.
- They facilitate the reading process; help encode the unclear ideas, as well as comprehend the general message of the text in hand.

- These strategies save time and the reading process becomes unconscious; i.e., the reader will read rapidly and easily without any difficulty and they enhance comprehension.

24- Further suggestions

Only 06 students (44, 23%) added suggestions and comments which can be summed up as follows:

- The over use of prior knowledge will lead to confusion and misunderstanding of the text.
- It is important to read extensively in order to develop our knowledge and our reading skill.
- Developing reading strategies is a very important task in order to know how to process the information, it should be taught in earlier stages especially for EFL learners for the sake of analyzing and understanding different texts' types easily.
- Students must make use of these strategies to improve all their other skills not just the reading skill.
- Reading strategies have huge importance on developing the reading skill especially for EFL students.
- Teachers must focus on teaching reading strategies and help students practice them in order to develop their reading skill and reading comprehension.

It seems from the above suggestions that students are aware of the importance of reading comprehension and reading strategies and the role they can play in improving their reading abilities and language skills.

3.3.1.2. Summary of Students' Questionnaire Results

To sum up students' questionnaire results, we can say that students are aware of what reading comprehension is; as they do share the same definition "the ability to analyze and interpret any written material and conduct its meaning easily".

They are also aware of reading difficulties such as coherence, cohesion and understanding of the main idea of the text in hand and how to overcome these difficulties easily.

Students in this questionnaire do share the same perspective of how to become an effective reader assuming that it can be either achieved by developing scanning and skimming strategies, enriching vocabulary knowledge, or by developing grammar, and critical reading and thinking strategies.

In relation to reading strategies, almost all students have had the same definition, which can be stated as: "reading strategies are techniques, tools and methods used by students whether consciously or unconsciously in order to facilitate the reading process and help them understand the meaning better and faster" (adapted from students' questionnaire).

Students confirmed their use of different types of reading strategies and mainly skimming, scanning and summarizing. In addition, they are aware of reading strategies' crucial role in enriching their vocabulary knowledge, improving their critical thinking and increasing their reading comprehension and proficiency.

3.3.2. Analysis and Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

   1- How many years have you been a teacher?

Table 3.22: Teachers' Teaching Experience

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Four years	01	7,70%
Five years	02	15,38%
Six years	02	15,38%
Seven years	01	7,70%
Eight years	02	15,38%
Nine yeas	02	15,38%
Eleven years	01	7,70%
unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

Teachers' teaching experience, as we can notice from the above table, varies from one teacher to another. (15, 38%) said that they have been teachers for five years, the same percentage goes for those who have six years, eight years and nine years of teaching experience. (7, 70%) of teachers had four years and the same percentage showed those who have had seven years and eleven years. However; two teachers did not answer this question at all.

2- By the end of the university year, how many years in total you will have been teaching M1 level?

Table 3.23: Teachers Teaching Experience

	Number of answers	Percentage%
One year	01	7,70%
Two years	02	15,38%
Three years	05	38,46%

Never	03	23,08%
Unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

The results in the table above revealed that (38,46%) of teachers would have been teaching MI level for three years, (23, 08%) of them had never taught Master I level, while (15, 38%) would have been teaching this level for two years. Unfortunately, (15, 38%) did not answer this question, and (7, 70%) said that it is would be their first experience.

3- What qualifications do you have?

Table 3.24: Teachers' Qualifications

	Number of answer	Percentage%
Master II	00	00%
MA	11	84,62%
PHD	00	00%
Unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

All teachers have a Magister degree (MA degree) (84,62%);however, (15, 38%) did not answer.

Section two: Reading Comprehension

4- According to your teaching experience, how would you describe the reading level of M1 students?

Table 3.25: Master I Students' Reading Level

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Most are above average	02	15,38%
Most are average	06	46,15%
Most are below average	00	00%
Reading level varies greatly	03	23,08%
Unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

Most of the teachers (46, 15%) judged Master I reading level as being average, (23. 08%) of teachers confirmed that students' reading level varies greatly. While (15, 38%) of teachers level is above average. Of course (15, 38%) did not answer the question at all. Therefore, teachers agreed that Master I reading level is generally average.

5- What is your primary focus in teaching reading? (Choose more than one option)

Table 3.26: Teachers' Primary teaching Reading Focus

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Reading fluency	02	15,38%
Reading comprehension	09	69,23%
Grammar	01	7,70%
Spelling (pronunciation)	01	7,70%
Unanswered	02	15,38%

The majority of teachers (69, 23%) declared that their primary focus in teaching reading is reading comprehension; i.e., they greatly focus on students' understanding; in order to enhance their reading ability. While (15, 38%) have chosen reading fluency; students have to be fluent readers. (7, 70%) of teachers said that their primary focus is grammar; which implies that they do prefer to make their students understand text structure and general organization of the ideas expressed throughout the text. (7, 70%) of them claimed that they focus on spelling (pronunciation) because reading entails good speaking abilities and high fluency; since the pronunciation of a word can change the whole meaning of a sentence or a passage. However; (15, 38%) did not answer.

   6- Do your students experience difficulties in understanding texts or any written materials?

Table 3.27: Students' Reading Difficulties

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	09	69,23%
No	02	15,38%
Unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

The majority of teachers (69,23%) answered with 'yes', and ensured that their students do experience difficulties in understanding texts. Each student has his own difficulties this is why teachers should be count for students' mental, cognitive and even psychological individual factors to provide them with necessary help to overcome such difficulties. (15,38%) of teachers answered with 'no' , and confirmed that their students do not face reading difficulties. However; (15, 38%) did not answer this question.

7- Can you give definition of reading comprehension?

Teachers' definitions of reading comprehension are summed up as follows:

- Reading comprehension is to understand the gist of a text, so that students will have the ability to analyze and evaluate it.

- It is the understanding any written documents through defining key words, analyzing main and supporting ideas and maintaining new vocabularies.

- The ability to understand the elements that make up the whole text and how they are combined to convey a specific meaning for a particular purpose.

- Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that involves a direct contact between the reader and the text for the sake of constructing meaning.

- It is the ability of understanding a particular text in terms of primary subject and the way it is developed (ideas, structures and context).

- Reading comprehension is the process of the decoding of language using their phonological awareness, grammatical awareness and then processing information.

- Reading comprehension is to understand the main meaning of written texts and not necessarily understanding all words used.

- It is the ability to understand written texts and to answer activities related to comprehension of these texts.

It seems from the above definitions that teachers have almost common key notions in their definitions of reading comprehension; as being the ability to understand, analyze and process any text in hand.

8- How do you guide your students to overcome their reading difficulties? (choose more than one option)

Table 3.28: Teachers' Techniques for Guiding Students' Reading Difficulties

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Ask them to read text aloud	04	30,77%
Try to find out the cause of the problem	05	38,46%
try to explain the general idea of the text	03	23,08%
Unanswered	02	15,38%

(38, 46%) said that they try to find out the cause of the problem. While (30, 77%) of them confirmed their reliance on reading aloud technique. (23, 08%) of teachers assumed that they try to explain the general idea of the text. And (15, 38%) of them did not answer the question.

Accordingly, (69, 23%) of them added other suggestions that are summed up as follows:

- Ask them to read the text sentence by sentence and try to understand them and then relate their meaning to each other.
- Ask them to read the text at home.
- Ask them to read the text silently.
- Allow them to use a dictionary or a thesaurus.
- Help them to enrich their vocabulary.
- Teach reading strategies and how to apply them to a given text.

From these suggestions, it seems that teachers are aware about their students' needs and difficulties, and they try their best to help them overcome these difficulties to become fluent and advanced readers.

9- During the reading session, how often do you design reading instructions and activities to your students?

Table 3.29: Teachers' Reading Instruction and Activities Frequency

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Always	01	7,69 %
Usually	03	23,08%
Sometimes	06	46,15%
Never	00	00%
Unanswered	03	23,08%
Total	13	100%

 (46, 15%) of teachers declared that they only sometimes assign reading instructions and activities for their students. (23, 08%) of them answered 'usually'; which indicates the significant importance they give to developing students' reading skills. (7, 69%) said that they always do these reading activities. Whereas; (23, 08%) of teachers did not answer at all.

10- How do you rate the importance of the following items according to their role in reading comprehension?

Table 3.30: Importance of Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading Aloud and Translation in Reading Comprehension

Question ten	Number on answers	Percentage%	total
Highly important	10	76,92%	

Vocabulary	Somewhat important	01	7,70%	
	not important	00	00%	100%
	Unanswered	02	15,38%	
Grammar	Highly important	08	61,54%	
	Somewhat important	03	23,08%	
	not important	00	00%	100%
	Unanswered	02	15,38%	
Reading aloud the text	Highly important	02	15,38%	
	Somewhat important	06	46,15%	100%
	not important	03	23,08%	
	Unanswered	02	15,38%	
Translating the text into Arabic	Highly important	01	7,70%	
	Somewhat important	03	23,08%	
	not important	07	53,84%	100%
	Unanswered	02	15,38%	

As we can notice from the above table, teachers' rates of every item differs according to its importance. Vocabulary was selected as the most important item in reading comprehension by the majority of teachers (76, 92%), because as much as learners have more vocabulary

knowledge as much as they improve their comprehension. While just (7, 70%) said it is somewhat important. (15, 38%) of them did not answer.

Concerning grammar, the majority of them (62, 54%) said it is very important, because grammar provides students with the structure they need in order to organize their ideas and to understand the text easily and rapidly. While (23, 08%) of them said that it is somewhat important. As it is mentioned throughout teachers' questionnaire, (15, 38%) of teachers did not answer.

Concerning text reading aloud, (15, 38%) considered it as highly important. While the majority of teachers (46, 15%) said reading aloud is somewhat important, it is important for a specific category of students who prefer to read aloud in order to understand better. Whereas; (23, 08%) of them claimed that it is not important. However; (15, 38%) did not answer at all.

For text translating into Arabic, most of teachers (53, 84%) said that translation is not important. Translation into Arabic might confuse students and mislead them to the appropriate meaning of a given sentence or a text. (23, 08%) of them answered somewhat important. While, just (7, 70%) of teachers said that translating into Arabic is highly important. (15, 38%) did not answer at all.

As we can deduce from the above answers, the most important items in reading comprehension according to teachers are both vocabulary and grammar.

11- What do you usually do if a student falls behind in reading? (Choose more than one option)

Table 3.31: Teachers' Reactions towards Students' Reading Difficulties

	Number of answers	Percentage%

Wait and give him time to improve his performance	05	23,08%
spend more time working on reading individually with that student	02	15,38%
Assign homework to help the student catches up	04	30,77%
Urge him to use reading strategies to enhance his comprehension	07	53,85%
Unanswered	03	23,08%
Others please specify	00	00%

The aim of this question is to know how teachers act if a student falls behind in reading; i.e., encounters difficulties, and how they help him to catch up. The majority of teachers (53, 85%) declared that they do so through urging him to use reading strategies to enhance his comprehension. (38, 46%) of them said they wait and give him time to improve his performance, while (30, 77%) of teachers confirmed that they help him through assigning homework to catch up. Whereas; (15, 38%) of them prefer to spend more time working on reading individually with that student. (23, 08%) of teachers did not answer this question. Concerning 'others' no teacher opted for any other suggestions, this implies that these are the commonly used techniques to help students improve their reading ability.

Section Three: Reading Strategies

12- According to you, are reading strategies important in enhancing students' reading comprehension?

Table 3.32: Reading Strategies Importance

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Yes	11	84,62%
No	00	00%
Unanswered	02	15,38%
Total	13	100%

The majority of teachers (84,62%) responded 'yes'; and then, ensured that reading strategies are important in enhancing students' reading comprehension. However; (15, 38%) of them did not answer. Teachers do agree that reading strategies are very important in enhancing their students' reading comprehension and suggest that they need to be taught and reinforced in the EFL classes and to be considered in curriculum development and course design.

13- If yes, say how?

Teachers' suggestions about the importance of reading strategies can be stated as follows:

- Reading strategies help learners and facilitate their reading comprehension tasks, and of course they are strategies so the result will be proficiency if students are aware about their importance.
- They help students to read with a purpose in their mind.
- They help learners to develop/raise their reading proficiency.
- If the teacher lacks the skill of careful use of reading strategies, students will not be able to improve their reading abilities.
- The aim of reading strategies is to help students become expert readers and capable to construct meaning.
- Reading strategies help students to exert meaning from the text and even go beyond its literal meaning to derive deep meaning.

- When students read carefully and attentively with certain reading strategies, they for sure will develop their comprehension skill.

It seems from the above teachers' suggestions that they are aware of the importance of reading strategies in enhancing and developing students' reading comprehension. Almost all teachers' suggestions turn around the same thing which is the role of using effective and appropriate reading strategies in developing students' skills and reading abilities.

14- Can you briefly define reading strategies?

Teachers' definitions of reading strategies can be stated as follows:

- Reading strategies are certain parameters that should be applied by students including two main ones: skimming and scanning.
- Techniques used by students to help them understand any text.
- They are varied linguistic tools used by teachers in order to enhance the reading and speaking skills for FLLs.
- Reading strategies are tips and methods that students use to make reading comprehension successful. I.e. fast, fluent and understanding are taking place.
- They are techniques and tips that help one read effectively.
- Reading strategies are what the learners do to understand the text.
- They are conscious actions undertaken by the readers in order to overcome problems they may face during the reading process.

Almost the same definition is discussed by all teachers, they do focus on the importance of reading strategies and how they can be used by students in order to help them understand meaning and enhance their reading comprehension skills, in addition to teacher's role in helping students achieve text comprehension.

15- What type of reading strategies do you prefer your students to use in their reading tasks? (Choose more than one option)

Table 3.33: Teachers' Preferred Types of Reading Strategies

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Cognitive strategies	09	69,23%
Metacognitive strategies	09	69,23%
Socio-affective strategies	07	53,85%
Unanswered	02	15,38%

(69, 23%) of teachers ensured that they prefer their students to use cognitive strategies, the same percentage (69, 23%) represents those who prefer metacognitive strategies. While; (53, 85%) of teachers preferred their students to use socio-cognitive strategies. Whereas; (15, 38%) did not answer this question at all. From the above results, we can assume that the three types of reading strategies are highly considered by teachers and are preferred to be used by students to develop their reading skill and language learning abilities.

16- In your reading course, do you ask your students to? Choose more than one option

Table 3.34: Teachers' Reading Course Assignments

	Number of answers	Percentage%
Answer reading comprehension questions	08	61,54%
Write something in response to their reading	05	38,46%
Answer oral questions	05	38,46%

summarize what they have understood in their own words	06	46,15%
Unanswered	02	15,38%

This question asked teachers to know what they aim their students be able to do at the end of the reading session. The majority of them (61, 54%) mentioned that they ask students to answer reading comprehension questions in order to check their comprehension. While, (46, 15%) of teachers preferred to end a classroom session by asking students to summarize what they have understood in their own words, because their own summaries could help them self-assess their reading comprehension process before receiving teacher's feedbacks. (38, 46%) claimed that they prefer to ask students to write something in their own words and styles in response to what they have read; aiming at motivating them to make use of new learned vocabularies and language structures. The same percentage (38, 46%) of teachers confirmed that they ask them to answer some oral questions related to the reading tasks or texts. Whereas; (15, 38%) of them did not answer this question.

As a conclusion, teachers are interested in their students' reading comprehension more than any other reading task or skill. Consequently, (15, 23%) of teachers added the following suggestions:

- Ask them questions depending on the objectives of the lesson.
- Ask them to write the gist of the text being read.

17- Do you ask your students while reading to? Choose more than one answer

Table 3.35: Teachers' Reading Questions

	Number of answers	Percentage%

Activate their prior knowledge	08	61,54%
Make predictions, preview or survey a text	08	61,54%
Generate their own questions	02	15,38%
Summarize	07	53,85%
Use concept maps, or text structure frames	02	15,38%
Unanswered	02	15,38%

The majority of teachers (61, 54%) confirmed that they try to activate their prior knowledge. also (61, 54%) of them focused on leading students to make predictions, preview or survey a text. Whereas; (53, 85%) of teachers ensured that they ask their students to summarize the text. (15, 38%) of teachers declared that they motivate students to generate their own questions. In addition (15, 38%) of teachers asked their students to use concept maps, or text structure frames. However; (15, 38%) of teachers did not answer this question.

We can assume that the majority of teachers focused on asking students to activate their prior knowledge, because they consider it as a core factor in enhancing EFL students' reading skill; as well as, requiring them to make predictions, preview or survey a text while reading to develop their critical reading abilities. They did also focus a little bit on letting students generate their own questions and summaries.

18- Further suggestions :

Only 03 teachers (23, 08%) added the following suggestions:

- What we need is the insertion of a reading module in the English license curriculum; apply the different strategies appropriately, and give more reading tasks to students in the different modules.

- As teachers, we should make them do a lot of reading at home more than in classroom. In the class, we show the techniques and then they make it a part of their life style.

- Reading strategies are important skills that students should develop in order to succeed in other skills especially writing and speaking.

It seems from the above suggestions that teachers are highly conscious of the importance of reading strategies and then reading skill for EFL students, they also wish to insert a reading module in order to enhance students' comprehension.

3.3.2.1. Summary of the Results

To sum up teachers' questionnaire results, we can say that the majority of teachers were cooperative.

- They said that in order to help their students become effective readers they highly focus on their reading comprehension.

- Their main concern is how to make students understand easily what the text is about.

- Teachers do share almost the same definition of reading comprehension as "the ability and capacity to read a given text, decode it, process it and understand its meaning".

- Every teacher has his own way in guiding his students to overcome their reading difficulties; however, they do share some strategies and tips including; asking them to read the text aloud, try to find out the cause of the problem and teach them how to use and effectively apply reading strategies to a given text.

- Moreover, teachers agree that reading strategies can be defined "varied linguistic tools used by teachers to help students enhance their reading skill", as well as by students in order to help them read and understand any text effectively.

- Hence, teachers are aware of the significant importance reading strategies have in facilitating students' reading comprehension, helping them exert meaning from texts, and developing their whole reading proficiency.
- Teachers give equal importance to different types of reading strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies) and advise students to make use of all of them to facilitate their text comprehension.

Conclusion

This study follows a descriptive method and aimed at investigating and attempting to answer four major important research questions:

-What is reading comprehension, and what is its importance for EFL learners?

-What reading strategies?

-What are the types of reading strategies that are commonly used by learners and usually recommended by teachers?

- What are the benefits and advantages of these strategies for EFL Master I students?

To conclude, we can say that the results revealed from teachers' and students' questionnaire analyses confirmed our hypotheses, that reading strategies have a significant effect on students' reading comprehension and reading skill development. In addition, both teachers and learners are conscious and aware about this significant role of reading strategies in developing students' reading proficiency and other language skills.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

4. Pedagogical Implications

It is important to say that students can improve their reading comprehension better if teachers concentrate on teaching them reading strategies, when, where and how to use them in their reading process.

In fact; teaching students to use reading strategies is very important for their educational achievements. Reading comprehension is also one of these achievements that are in real need for teaching reading skills. Thus, one possible implication points out the need to develop reading skills that lead to develop reading comprehension and reading strategies.

Another implication is that, it is important to point out the fact that to read more proficiently; students must be taught practical problem-solving strategies and critical thinking skills. It is important also for students to be engaged in reading activities as much as possible in order to improve their reading skills. Therefore; it is the teachers' job to guide and help them understand what the text implies.

Both teachers and students should be explicitly aware about the importance, benefits and purposes of using reading strategies in the reading process. Therefore, teaching instruction should spend more time on teaching different types of reading strategies and help students choose the most appropriate strategy to overcome or solve a reading difficulty and /or problem.

Additionally, more time should be spend to develop reading strategies training tasks and instruction, develop specific reading skills and encourage content reading to prepare students for independent reading, since most of students had a teacher-centered learning background. They should become independent target language readers and have to be given the opportunity to experience and practice different reading techniques and strategies.

5. Recommendations

On the light of the present study, which highlights the concept of reading comprehension and reading strategies, some recommendations are presented aiming at improving students' reading comprehension abilities via raising their awareness towards the importance of using appropriate and effective text- comprehension reading strategies.

Different instruments in gathering data should be included in such study: such as using check lists and face to face interviews with the students; in order to know about reading comprehension problems and difficulties and help them know how to overcome them to be efficient readers. Students should be actively engaged in the reading process because the more they read, the more they will comprehend the material to be read; and then, the more they will enhance their general learning ability.

Another recommendation is to establish a motivating context (help students discover the benefits of reading, give them the opportunity to choose any type of texts to read) in order to teach them reading comprehension. Teach them text- comprehension reading strategies individually or in combination and by using a gradual release of responsibility is very useful and reinforces many other skills; mainly speaking and critical thinking ones.

Potential ideas for future research include researching other techniques or strategies focused on enhancing students' reading skills. Being able to incorporate strategies with technological resources such as iPods and tablets will help increase students' comprehension

and vocabulary skills more and more. In other words, the more **apps** (such as iPods, tablets and laptops) students have available for them, the more strategies they can acquire to achieve better reading skills.

6. Limitations of The Study

In fact, we have encountered some problems throughout the realization of this research work, as any research has constraints, which limited our research findings and prevent us from having a deep investigation of the present topic.

1. Time limitation was the major constraint that leads us to rely only on questionnaires as data collection tool which is not really enough and reliable for measuring the effects of reading strategies on students' text-comprehension.

2. Thus, the research can be investigated through a quasi-experimental design that can pre-test, test, and post test students' reading comprehension.

3. Lack of spaces or settings where we can realize a teaching of reading strategies training.

4. The absence of teaching reading skills or techniques module at the license level which leads us to investigate Master I level (where students are advanced ones and can at least familiar with reading strategies) since it the level at which such module is included.

In fact, we have had the intention to investigate second or third year students who can really reflect a fruitful sample.

5. in addition to some difficulties in collecting back data and mainly teachers' questionnaires.

7. Concluding Remarks

Our study has been concerned with investigating the effect of reading strategies used by Master One students of English language learning on their reading comprehension. The

findings within the framework of this dissertation demonstrated the significant advantages of reading strategies in improving and facilitating students' text comprehension. Furthermore, it has allowed us to examine the nature and types of reading strategies and reading comprehension process. The study departs from these research questions:

- Does ignorance of reading strategies result in a lack of text comprehension?

- What reading strategies students need to apply when reading a text?

- Do students in the English classroom use reading strategies?

- Does awareness about the appropriate use of reading strategies make students proficient readers?

It ends with answering them by confirming, according to data analysis results, that the act of reading comprehension strategy use is a cognitive action; that is enacted under particular contextual conditions with the goal of improving students' general reading skill. The use of effective reading comprehension strategies are perhaps the most important means to help readers improve comprehension and learning from text.

Therefore, the results, obtained from the analysis of students' questionnaire, allowed us to provide some conclusive interpretations in relation to our research hypothesis and research questions set up above. The students' questionnaire showed that M I students are really aware of what are reading strategies, their types and the most appropriate one to use while reading any written material; as well as, their benefits and importance in overcoming reading difficulties and in enhancing text comprehension. Thus, they claimed that reading strategies have a strong impact on their text-comprehension; the fact that confirms our research hypothesis.

The implications of the findings of this study discussed earlier in this general conclusion should be taken into careful considerations, because if implemented correctly, reading skills teaching and learning will be improved significantly.

Eventually, this study has shed light on using reading strategies as a major factor in facilitating EFL text reading comprehension. It is important to grant it more considerations and attentions, in the EFL pedagogy because they facilitate reading, save time and effort and enhance not only reading comprehension skills but many other ones crucial for EFL mastery and success; mainly speaking, critical thinking and vocabulary development.

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APPENDIX ONE

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Master I students, the following questionnaire is aimed at investigating your usage of the reading text-comprehension strategies. The information gathered will be conducted and analyzed in our research work.

Please, you are kindly asked to read the questions and choose carefully the answers; by putting a tick (√) or a cross (x) in front of the chosen answer.

Thank you in advance.

I. General Information

1- Sex :   Male   ☐   Female   ☐

2- How many years have you studied English?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

3- Was it your choice to study English?

          Yes   ☐   No   ☐

     If no, what was your first choice?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

II.   Section Two : Reading Comprehension

4- Do you read in English (books, texts, magazines, etc)?

Yes ☐   No ☐

5- How often do you read?

- Never   ☐

- Rarely   ☐

- Sometimes   ☐

- Usually   ☐

- Always   ☐

6- According to you, what is reading comprehension?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………

7- Do you have difficulties in understanding texts?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8- What difficulties do you mainly encounter in reading your English texts? (you can choose more than one option)

- Coherence: understanding meaning (word meaning, passage meaning, etc)   ☐

- Cohesion : understanding text structure (sentence organization, structure, grammar, etc)   ☐

☐

- Understanding the main idea   ☐

- Encountering no problem   ☐

- Others, please add them

………………………………………………………………………………………

9- What do you do when you recognize that you have not got what you seek from the text?

- Stop reading ☐

- Seek help from your teacher ☐

- Re-read again ☐

- Try to find out the cause of the problem ☐

- Check your dictionary ☐

- Others, specify

…………………………………………………………………………....

10- When you do not understand a long sentence or a passage in the text, do you?

- Skip it ☐

- Seek help from your teacher or peer ☐

- Skim and /or just infer the general idea ☐

- Others, specify

………………………………………………………………………….

11- During reading a text, can you guess/ infer the meaning of the unfamiliar   words?

       Yes ☐   No ☐

12- A teacher should divide the reading lesson into: pre-reading, while reading and post reading activities.

- Strongly disagree ☐

- Disagree ☐

- Neither agree nor disagree ☐

- Partially agree ☐

- Agree ☐

- Strongly agree ☐

13- How the student can be an effective reader? Through:

- Developing scanning and skimming strategies ☐

- Enriching his vocabulary knowledge ☐

- Developing his reading fluency ☐

- Developing reading critical thinking strategies ☐

- Developing his grammar ☐

Others, specify

…………………………………………………………………………......

14- Does your teacher point out your problems regarding reading and reading ☐

comprehension?

- Always

- Usually ☐

- Sometimes ☐

- Never ☐

III.   Section Three : Reading Strategies

15- Do you know what reading strategies are?

Yes ☐   No ☐

16- If yes, can you define them in few words?

……………………………………………………………………………….…………

……………………………………………………………………..

17- How important do you consider reading strategies in EFL learning?

- Not important at all ☐

- Very little important ☐

- A little important ☐

- Important ☐

- Very important ☐

18- To overcome your reading difficulties, do you make use of some reading strategies?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

19- What type of reading strategies do you often use?

- Skimming ☐

- Scanning ☐

- Summarizing ☐

- Metacognitive strategies ☐

- Visualizing ☐

- Others, please specify …………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

20- How often do you use such reading strategies to understand what you read?

- Always ☐

- Usually ☐

- Sometimes ☐

- Rarely ☐

- Never ☐

21- Do you use your previous experience or background knowledge to understand a reading text?

☐

Yes ☐   No

22- Asking comprehension questions after a classroom reading task (a text, a paragraph, etc), by the teacher, is very helpful for students' general comprehension.

- Strongly disagree   ☐

- Disagree   ☐

- Neither agree nor disagree   ☐

- Partially agree   ☐

- Agree   ☐

- Strongly agree   ☐

23- Do you think that the use of these strategies along with other ones can enhance your reading comprehension ability?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, say how

…………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………

24- Further Suggestions

If you have any other suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………….. …………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………..

....

Thank you

APPENDIX TWO

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is addressed to teachers of reading and writing courses at the English department, University of 08 Mai 1945 -Guelma. It aimed at investigating the professional background, materials and activities used to teach reading and writing promote the development of students' reading comprehension and the related strategies.

The information gathered will be analyzed and processed in our research practical part, we politely urge you to complete this questionnaire as accurately as possible.

Please, answer the questions putting a tick (√) or a cross (x) in front of the chosen answer.

HIMOUD Khadidja

Master II

English Department

Faculty of Literatures and Foreign Languages

University 08 Mai 1945 –Guelma

Thank you in advance

Section One: General information

1. How many years have you been a teacher?

    ………………………………………………………………………………….

2. By the end of the university year, how many years in total you will have been teaching

    Master I level?

    ………………………………………………………………………………….

3. What qualification do you have?

    Master II ☐   MA ☐   PHD ☐

Section Two: Reading Comprehension

4. According to your teaching experience, how would you describe the reading level of

    M1 students?   ☐

    - Most are above average

    - Most are average   ☐

    - Most are below average   ☐

    - Reading level varies greatly   ☐

5. What is your primary focus in teaching reading?

                                      ☐

    - Reading fluency

    - Reading comprehension   ☐

    - Grammar   ☐

- Spelling ☐

6. Do your students experience difficulties in understanding texts or any written materials?

☐   ☐

    Yes   No

7. Can you give a brief definition of reading comprehension?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

8. How do you guide your students to overcome their reading difficulties?

☐

- Ask them to read the text aloud

- Try to find out the cause of the problem ☐

- Try to explain the general idea of the text ☐

- Others,   please   specify

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………. ………
……………………………………………………………………..

9. During the reading session, how often do you have reading instructions and activities with your students?

☐

- Always

- Usually ☐

- Sometimes ☐

- Never ☐

10. How do you rate the importance of the following items according to their role in reading comprehension?

The items	Highly important	Some what important	Not important
Vocabulary			
Grammar			
Reading aloud the text			
Traslating the text into Arabic			

11. What do you usually do if a student falls behind in reading?

- Wait and give him time to improve his performance

- Spend more time working on reading individually with that student

- Assign home works to help the student catches up

- Urge him to use reading strategies to enhance his comprehension

- Others, please specify

    ………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Reading Strategies

12. According to you, are reading strategies important in enhancing students' reading

comprehension?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

13. If   yes,   please   mention   why?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………..

14. Can you briefly define "reading strategies"?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………….

15. What type of reading strategies do you prefer your students to use in their

reading tasks?

☐

Cognitive strategies

☐

Metacognitive strategies

☐

Socio-affective strategies

16. In your reading course, do you ask your students to?

☐

- Answer reading comprehension questions

☐

- Write something in response to their reading

☐

- Answer oral questions

☐

- Summarize what they have understood in their own words

- Others,   please

  specify   …………………………………………………………………………………

  …………………………………………………………………………………

17. Do you ask your students while reading to?

- Activate their prior knowledge

- Make predictions, preview or survey a text

- Generate their own questions

- Summarize

- Use concept maps, or text structure frames

Other suggestions

If you have any other suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate and add them below.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………

Thank you

ملخص

يميل طلاب اللغة الأجنبية إلى استخدام أي وسيلة ممكنة خلال عملية القراءة للحصول على مزيد من المعلومات والسهولة في فهم مواد القراءة المتوفرة.

وتهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على تصورات طلاب الأولى ماستر تجاه تأثيرات استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة على فهمهم لقراءة النصوص. وتناولت الدراسة طلبة الاولى ماستر من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قالمة للتحقق من صحة فرضيات البحث التي تنص على أن استخدام الطلاب لاستراتيجيات القراءة قد تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على فهمهم للقراءة. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، إذا تم تعليمهم كيف ومتى لاستخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات القراءة بشكل فعال، فإنها سوف تيسر بعد ذلك قدرات القراءة والفهم والتغلب بسهولة على صعوبات القراءة.

لذلك، تم إعطاء استبيانين لكل من المعلمين والطلاب كأدوات لجمع البيانات لتحديد آثار استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة على الفهم لدى الطلاب؛ بالإضافة إلى تصورات الطلاب نحو استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات تم وصف وتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها، ومناقشتها باستخدام المنهج الإحصائي الوصفي.

وكشفت النتائج بعد ذلك أن عينة من الطلاب تظهر وعي كبير تجاه الآثار الحاسمة لاستراتيجيات القراءة على تحسين قدراتهم على قراءة و فهم النص وكذلك على تحسين المهارات اللغوية الأخرى و بهذا فان النتائج اكدت فرضيات البحث. وقد تحولت نتائج التحقيق الميداني إلى آثار تربوية مفيدة لتدريس مهارة القراءة الفعالة بالإضافة إلى بعض التوصيات التي سيتم النظر فيها في الأبحاث المستقبلية.