

Teachers ' Awareness and Application of the techniques used in teaching EFL Reading, at English Department OMU (Al-Bayda Branch)

Fatma Mahmud Swaileh, Wafa Jomaa Abdallah & Asma Faraj

English Language Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Omar Al-Mokhtar University, Al-Bayda, Libya

Abstract

This research aims to explore the expanse of teacher's knowledge and use of the techniques regarding EFL reading. 40 students from English Department at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Omar Al-Mokhtar University, Al Bayda Branch participated in the study. In this research, a descriptive analysis through mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires and interviews were applied to collect data. The study involved 40 EFL students, and quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. Research revealed that EFL teachers need extensive courses and training programs concentrating on how to apply strategies and techniques to teach Reading properly.

ملخص البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف مدى معرفة المعلمين واستخدامهم للتقنيات المتعلقة بالقراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. شارك في الدراسة 40 طالبًا من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية اللغات الأجنبية، جامعة عمر المختار، فرع البيضاء. في هذا البحث، تم تطبيق التحليل الوصفي من خلال نهج الأساليب المختلطة، باستخدام الاستبيانات والمقابلات لجمع البيانات. شملت الدراسة 60 طالبًا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وأجريت تحليلات كمية ونوعية. كشف البحث أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يحتاجون إلى دورات وبرامج تدريبية مكثفة تركز على كيفية تطبيق الاستراتيجيات والتقنيات لتدريس القراءة بشكل صحيح.

Keywords: EFL Reading, strategies, techniques, skills, approaches.

1. Introduction

Reading one of the known four skills in English (reading, writing, Speaking, listening) and it is considered to be a demanding skill. Reading is a significant skill as people would know how to succeed (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Reading is important for learners because they meet reading tasks in school subjects, which means they gain knowledge and information.

A lot of knowledge is also stored in written forms, so many students read the textbook if they wish to increase their knowledge. Students find it difficult to complete this task, though, if the reading material is in a language they are unfamiliar with, like English. In order to read, learn, and comprehend what they will be reading, students must be familiar with a few English words and their definitions.

Furthermore, reading comprehension requires students to comprehend and draw conclusions from written material, not just read it and know what it means. The researcher's intended message appears to require strategies for readers or students to comprehend. In Libya, reading in a foreign language, such as English, is known to be more challenging. The vocabulary, grammar, writing style, spelling, and other structural elements of English texts differ from those of Libyan texts, which usually makes comprehension challenging. This is why techniques are so important.

-Literature review:2

This section exhibits prior studies and researches about the method by which reading is taught. The differences between skills and strategies, and the phases of teaching reading, namely pre-reading, in while reading, and post-reading strategies and how they are dealt with and answer the research questions.

2-1 Reading and Reading Comprehension

Reading as it known as a cognitive process in which symbols are decoded in order to know the meaning. Text translation into sounds or uttered words. Word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation processes are involved in Reading. **Reading comprehension** is on the other hand, the capability of processing a text and its meaning then associate it to what already a reader knows. (Koolminds Team, 2022)

2-2 Skill OR Strategy?

"What is a skill and what is a strategy? A skill is something you do automatically without thinking about it. You do it the same way every time. Tying your shoes is an example of a skill. An example of a reading skill is instantly recognizing and saying a word such as the. You do these things without thinking about them. They are automatized. A strategy, in contrast, is a plan. You reason when you do it, and you often adjust the plan as you go along. When you plan a trip by car, you are thoughtful, making decisions about what high ways to take, where to spend the night, and so on. And if you run into unanticipated problems along the way (such as extensive road construction), you adjust your strategy—you change your route. In reading, making predictions is a strategy because readers are thoughtful in using text clues and prior knowledge to make an initial prediction, but they remain ready to change or adjust a prediction when subsequent text clues provide more information." (Gerard G. Duffy 2009 p.p 13:14)

Explaining skills and strategies is not the target. The point is that learners get inspired to be readers and motivate them to read and read.

2-3 A Review of the Approaches to teaching Reading from the 1980s to 1990s

2-3-1 Reading comprehension-based Approaches

William and Moran (1989: 225) state that "despite the recent emphasis on the reader's personal interpretation, and the attention to tasks designed to develop reading skills, comprehension questions still feature prominently in the most published materials." Wallace (2001: 26) characterizes traditional reading pedagogy as an approach that emphasizes "comprehension in the form of the presentation of text followed by post-reading questions on the text."

In the debate over whether a text has one meaning or several interpretations depending on the reader, reading comprehension techniques take a firm stand. For instance, Williams (1983) contends that the

author's intended meaning is the actual meaning. Even though the reader's understanding never "matches" in every detail the writer intends, he asserts that "the necessity to retain connection between the writer and the readers needs such an "ideal."

The Language-Based Approach 2-3-2

Numerous instances of how language processing, particularly vocabulary processing, impedes comprehension are provided by verbal protocol studies of language learners' reading difficulties. In order to support successful reading, Paran (1996: 25–34) highlights the need for teachers to "hold in the bottom" in their reading pedagogy and to foster students' automatic language processing skills. Examining contemporary coursebooks (Tomlison et al., 2001) shows how vocabulary and grammar drills are heavily featured in both the reading and general language sections.

A reading portion containing content and activities is found in many coursebooks (e.g., Lifelines; Headway; Culling Edge). Pre-reading vocabulary exercises appear to be common, reading sections frequently begin with text-related vocabulary exercises, and many reading units include brief texts that are primarily meant to teach grammar.

The Skill/Strategy based approach 2-3-3

According to Alderson (2000: 110), "despite the lack of clear imperial justification, the nation of skills and subskills in reading is enormously pervasive and influential." In the 1970s, proponents of the Communitive Approach frequently used the term "skill learning" in contrast to knowledge or conceptual learning. For instance, in knowledge learning, students consciously and orally acquire words in the target language. Conversely, in skills learning, students gain the sensor, motor, and cognitive skills required to use a language correctly, fluently, and appropriately. The terms "skill" and "strategy" exhibit significant terminological inconsistency in both research literature and instructional materials, according to Williams and Moran (1989: 223). They list a few variations and explain the difference between "skill" and "strategy." In theory, the terms can be distinguished by stating that a strategy is a deliberate process used to address an issue, while a skill is an acquired ability that has been automated and functions primarily subconsciously (cf. Olshavsky, 1977).

The schema-based Approach 2-3-4

Researchers in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence focused a lot of their attention on the structure and nature of the reader's knowledge between the late 1970s and the early 1980s (e.g., Minsky, 1975; Rumelhart, 1980; Shank, 1982). They became interested after learning that a computer needs a great deal of world knowledge to comprehend natural language. In summary, schema theory is a theory about knowledge in the mind that postulates how knowledge is structured in the mind and how it is used to process new information, though there are some differences in the terms, definitions, and functions used in the pertinent literature.

Schematists contend that comprehension occurs when a novel experience—whether linguistic or sensory—is compared to a stereotyped representation of a related experience stored in memory. The reading process cannot be explained without recognizing the critical role that the knowledge system plays in readers' minds, regardless of whether we agree with the schema theory (summaries of critiques of the schema theories can be found in Alba and Hashier, 1983; Alderson, 2000).

Phases in teaching and learning Reading 2-4

Three primary phases are distinguished by various scholars in the teaching and learning of reading. Pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading are the three types. The following steps could be included in a quality reading lesson: three stages: before, during, and after reading (Atkins et al., 1996).

Pre-reading phase 2-4-1

The pre-phase of reading, according to Williams (1984), aims to motivate students by providing a reason for reading, introduce and spark interest in the subject, and offer some language preparation for the text. Accordingly, Hedge (2000) explains that the pre-reading stage has been the focus of current reading methodology as one of the main reactions to growing insights regarding the role of schematic knowledge in reading.

According to Williams (1984), teachers can ask themselves the following helpful questions to help them get ready for pre-reading assignments:

- a) What prior knowledge, concepts, or viewpoints the students may possess regarding the subject matter of the text, and how can this knowledge be extracted and applied?
- b) Why should anyone read this text, and can students come up with the same comparable justifications?

The pre-reading stage only takes a few minutes, according to Atkins et al. (1996), who also provide instructions on how to use it. Ask students to list some words they anticipate encountering in the passage, for instance. On the blackboard, write what they have to say. Add additional words if students don't suggest them. As students read the passage, ask them to guess the differences between the words or pre-teach them in context. These academics state that the pre-reading phase's objectives are to spark students' interest in the subject and the reading's theme, as well as to activate their prior knowledge.

To sum up, the pre-reading phase helps to activate prior knowledge while acquainting the reader with the text's fundamental structure and content. It is a crucial stage that gets pupils ready for the reading material. As a result, it ought to be appropriately applied to each and every reading lesson taught in the classroom.

2-4-2 While-reading phase

This stage is all about the text. It enables students to combine new information in the text with what they already know and understand. Students attempt to comprehend the main ideas while reading aloud. They also respond to a series of questions meant to help them comprehend the concepts in the text. It is not necessary to comprehend every word; instead, they infer the meaning of unfamiliar terms from the context (Williams, 1984, p. (38). This indicates that students should engage with the text and attempt to connect it to their existing knowledge in order to gain an understanding.

Reading assignments should typically start with a broad or global comprehension of the text before moving on to related units like words, sentences, and paragraphs. A paragraph or sentence, for instance, may aid the reader in understanding a word. Williams (1984) explains that this is because the larger units offer a context for comprehending the smaller units.

Hedge (2000) describes the activities of the students at this point. Read and complete, read and label, read and match, and read and draw are some examples of these as well. Students engage in these activities in an attempt to comprehend the text and complete the teacher-provided comprehension questions to determine their level of understanding. Atkins et.al. (1996), for example, lists the following exercises that the instructor conducted during the while-reading phase. These include instructing students to read the passage silently in order to determine the answer after reading the questions. Inform them that they can respond to the question without fully understanding every word. They should confer in their group after they have determined the solution until they have reached a consensus. Last but not least, ask students to respond and provide justification for their decisions.

For in-depth text processing, the while-reading phase is usually important. Students employ the strategies they learned during the while-reading stage in an effort to understand the text. Along with what they are reading, they must also incorporate what they already know.

2-4-3 post-reading phase

Students are able to critically evaluate the text's validity and express and process their understanding of what they have read thanks to this stage. In line with Atkins et al. According to (1996), the post-reading phase consists of the following tasks:

- 1) to assess students' overall understanding of the text;
- 2) questions to help them connect the passage to their own experiences; and
- 3) related writing and speaking exercises.

Asking broad questions about the passage will help the teacher accomplish the following goals:

- To assess pupils' overall reading comprehension of the text.
- To motivate them to assess the passage (Is it interesting? Do you agree? Is it true?)
- To encourage them to connect the passage to a similar experience of their own.
- To help students put themselves in the text's scenario.

Post-reading assignments are intended to: a) help students synthesize or reflect on what has been said; b) connect the text to their own knowledge, interests, or opinions (Williams, 1984); and c) incorporate additional skills (Atkins et al. (1996).

In conclusion, it's critical to assign a relevant task during this phase that may require additional skills, like writing a paragraph-long synopsis of the text, solving a word puzzle based on the passage, discussing the primary idea, or dramatizing the passage.

2-5 The Role of teacher in teaching the Skill of Reading

Atkins & Co. (1996) clarify that improving reading instruction in schools is unquestionably crucial for the benefit of the next generation. The teacher's proficiency in teaching reading has a significant impact on students' language proficiency and, eventually, their academic achievement. Among the major causes of students' poor reading skills are insufficient textbooks with tasks that are not appropriate for fostering students' reading development and ineffective

reading instruction. According to these academics, the teacher is crucial in helping students read and comprehend a text by employing various reading techniques.

Great reading teachers have the following essential knowledge and skills in common:

- They are aware of how learners develop their writing and reading skills.
- They are able to evaluate each student's progress individually and connect reading instruction to prior knowledge.
- They have a wide range of methods for teaching reading.
- They can provide students with a wide range of reading materials and texts.
- They are able to customize instruction for each student.
- According to the International Reading Association, they can strategically assist students.

Teachers should, in general, help students actively participate in the process of creating meaning and knowledge. Teachers should therefore use the methods and approaches of teaching reading lessons. Below, we will talk about the roles that teachers play in both extensive and intensive reading.

Research Questions

- 1. How do teachers handle the teaching of EFL Reading in the classroom?**
- 2. Do teachers use variety of materials and passages?**

3- Methods

3-1 Descriptive case study

This study used a descriptive case study design. Based on Gall et al. (2007) states that the goal of descriptive research is to characterize an event and its attributes. It is more concerned with "what" happened than "why.". Consequently, data is frequently gathered through questionnaires and interviews. Kothari (2004), however, asserts that a "case study is basically an in-depth examination of a specific unit under consideration" (p. 113). The definition demonstrates that a case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular, actual circumstance. Thus, the researcher in this study focused on a specific unit that examined the practice of teaching reading skills and addressed it in great detail.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the data analysis process. A qualitative analysis was conducted on the information obtained from the interviews. Conversely, the questionnaire's data was subjected to a quantitative analysis. To put it briefly, the methods of teaching reading skills were thoroughly examined using a descriptive case study research design and qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques.

3-2 Participants

The sample of the study of this research was chosen in purpose. 40 EFL students who study at the University of Omar Al-Mokhtar, Al-Bayda Branch. The students have been learning Reading in schools, preparatory, secondary till the time of the study. They assured that they chose their answers according to their experience in learning EFL Reading. Most students share quite similar answers as a result of living in the same circumstances, on the other hand, very little students have studied in the UK but their answers to the questionnaire were chosen according to what they have already experienced in their learning in Libya.

3.3. Data gathering tools

3-3-1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire sheet and the interview protocol are the first and second research instruments used in this study, respectively. Seven items that were modified from Mulatu and Regassa (2022) were included in the questionnaire sheet in the study.

A questionnaire, as defined by Rani (2012), is a set of inquiries made to people in order to gather statistically significant data on a particular subject. This tool is useful for gathering a variety of data from a large number of respondents.

In order to gather information about teaching practices from the viewpoint of the students, the questionnaire was used in this study. The responses were then triangulated with information from the interviews.

The scales that are employed in the survey are A = Always, Vo = Very Often, S = Sometimes, R = Seldom, and N = Never. Forty students who participated were given the questionnaires, and the results were subjected to quantitative analysis.

3-3-2 Interview

An instrument for gathering data was a semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview, according to Tegan (2022), is a technique for gathering data that depends on posing queries within a pre-established thematic framework. The order and wording of the questions are not predetermined, though. The semi-structured interview comprised six general questions that focused on the methods of teaching reading skills. As a result, this kind of interview was utilized to thoroughly collect data regarding the learners' perceptions of learning FFL reading. The purpose of the clarification questions was to delve deeper into the answers.

A mobile phone was used to record interviews after gaining the participants' utter agreement. A qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview data was conducted.

4. Results

4.1 Results on the self-assessment questionnaire

4.1.1 the pre-reading phase

As has been previously mentioned in the methodology section, Questionnaires and interviews are effective tools for gathering data. Therefore, here are the results conducted from these instruments presented as follows.

Table 1 exhibits students' answers for frequency and percentage for their teachers' activities of the pre-reading phase. The results show dramatically rare use of the strategies in the pre-reading phase. Interviewed students expressed this very clearly. One the interviewed students assured: " My teacher did not really prepare us for the reading passage. They'd just hand it to us and expects us to dive right in."

A second student expressed: " we are only asked to read a passage and then answer the question. No preparation at all."

Table 1. Student responses regarding the pre-reading phase.

No	Questions	N	R	S	VO	A
1	Our teacher asks us various questions related to a particular text in order to prepare us to read the text or to make us curious about it.	27 (67%)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
2	Our teacher teaches us how to predict the content of a text.	30 (75%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3	Our teacher explains the background of the text before we start reading lesson.	9 (22%)	16 (40%)	13 (32%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (2.5%)

4.1.2. The while-reading and post-reading phases

It is numerously obvious that most teachers follow same (routine) in the reading class. Percentage and frequencies were showing (None) or very rare use for strategies and techniques like skimming or scanning. Teachers seem not to check inferences nor predictions. 70% of the students agree that they only answer comprehension questions after the passage. One of the interviewed students clarified: " We are usually asked to read the passage quickly then answer the given questions. We know what skimming and scanning mean, but never been trained on how to practice them during reading." . Most students show agreement on a basic activity which is answering the questions which follow the passage. In fact, teachers literally let students read a passage silently first, then ask the students to answer the questions. Another point to add, there is no variety of passage like graphs or maps. Only regular passages are used in the material of the course. Some students declared: " We have not study various types of passage like maps or graphs, even if we come across those types of passage, teachers tend to avoid them."

Table 2. students' responses for the while and post- reading phases.

4	Our teacher checks our inference and interpretation skills.	28 (70%)	10 (25%)	3 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5	Our teacher teaches us how to distinguish between facts and opinions.	3 (7.5%)	3 (7.5%)	29 (72.5%)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
6	Our teacher asks us comprehension questions after each reading.	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	3 (7.5%)	28 (70%)
7	Our teacher asks us to interpret graphics, charts, maps and tables.	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

5. Discussions and conclusions

5.1 Discussion

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were utilised in this study to encounter the goals of the research. Therefore, questionnaire and interview were employed.

The first research question was about how teachers handle reading skill teaching in the classroom. It was dramatically obvious that teachers do not use the suggested techniques which are use for teaching

reading comprehension, whether pre-reading, while- reading or post-reading. Pressley (2002) assures that good text comprehension arises when readers can predict the content of text, associate the information in the reading text to their background knowledge, ask questions while reading, observe the understanding of the text, then summarise what was understood from the text.

The second research question concerns about the use of various reading materials and passage in the classroom and the extance of the teachers' use for them during the teaching process. As the results show, the absence of the variety of passages and materials was evident. Teachers tend to follow the same routine for the reading class, they literally ask the students to read the passage then ask them to answer the questions. Moreover, there was no signs to the use of graph, map or chart texts.

Riasati and Zare (2010) suggest that employing supplementary materials is essential because learners vary in their learning needs and manners, textbook cannot be suitable or interesting to all. Therefore, to achieve good teaching objectives, a teacher should select variant materials for the reading class.

5.2 Conclusion

This research study was achieved to measure the extance of using the strategies of teaching EFL reading at the department of English at Omar Al-Mokhtar university, Al-Bayda Branch. According to the findings, it is easily concluded that the strategies of teaching reading are used very poorly, and are not implemented appropriately. Teachers tend not to know much about the strategies of teaching reading. It is like a regular system that all teachers follow, giving a passage and ask students to answer the questions. It is not to say that only teachers are to be responsible for such classes. Peng (2019) suggests that EFL has its disadvantages, learners are not positive and the depend on their teachers too much. Students do not use any metacognitive strategies even taking notes while reading, writing down, underline or highlight new vocabulary.

6. Recommendations

It's critical to provide solutions in order to address some of the issues with reading skills instruction. Therefore, based on the conclusions above, the following suggestions have been made. The teachers' methods of instruction, particularly how they impart reading skills in relation to the three stages have to be enhanced. To assist students in developing their reading abilities, teachers should make use of additional reading resources. Furthermore, not enough attention was placed on teaching vocabulary, which is one of the most important aspects of teaching reading. Therefore, improving teachers' abilities, expertise, and practices should receive more attention from the relevant stakeholders, such as the government and non-governmental organizations. To improve teachers' performance, the government ought to design professional development plans. Education specialists and supervisors should offer need-based coaching systems, training, seminars, and a rethinking of mentoring that help to improve the teaching-learning process and solve the issue.

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APPENDIX A**Interview**

1* Does your Reading comprehension teacher prepare you for the reading passage?

2* Does your teacher ask you to skim and scan a reading passage? Did he train you how to skim and scan?

3* As for predicting the answers, did you get any training for predicting or inferences?

4* Does you teacher ask you about your opinion about the subject of the reading passage? Are there any activities (before, during or after) the reading passage?

5* Does you teacher ask you to read a passage out loud?

APPENDIX B**Questionnaire**

No	Questions	N	R	S	VO	A
1	Our teacher asks us various questions related to a particular text in order to prepare us to read the text or to make us curious about it.					
2	Our teacher teaches us how to predict the content of a text.					
3	Our teacher explains the background of the text before we start reading lesson.					
4	Our teacher checks our inference and interpretation skills.					
5	Our teacher teaches us how to distinguish between facts and opinions.					
6	Our teacher asks us comprehension questions after each reading.					
7	Our teacher asks us to interpret graphics, charts, maps and tables.					

Note:—The scales used here are: **N** = (Never) **R** = (Rarely) , **S** = (Sometimes), **Vo** = (Very often) **A** = (Always)