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Investigating Reading Comprehension Difficulties

The Case of Fourth-year EFL Learners at Belaarbi Baabouche Middle School

Dissertation submitted to the department of English Language and Literature in
Partial Fulfilment for Master Degree in Didactics

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Academic Year : 2021/2022

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work:

To my beloved mother who has been a constant source of support and motivation during the challenges of graduate school and life. She has encouraged me attentively with her fullest and truest attention to accomplish my work with truthful self-confidence.

To my beloved father who has been the most powerful guide, who strengthen my personality and taught me life priorities.

To my faithful brother, Khalil, who has never left my side.

To my sweet sister, Soundes, who encouraged me to pursue my dreams and finish this dissertation.

To my close friends, Hanan and Chaima, who have been my best cheerleaders.

To my little cousin, Anas, who inspired me all the time.

To my grandparents, and grandmothers

To all who helped me to accomplish this work.

Kaouther Bouta

Dedication

! dedicate this work:

To my beloved parents who loved me unconditionally, and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

To my lovely sisters and brothers who have supported me throughout the process; particularly my dearest brother, **Ramzi**, who stands by me when things look bleak,

To my grandparents, and grandmothers.

To all my friends without exception

Hayat Amour

Acknowledgements

First, we would like to thank Allah the Almighty for giving us the strength and ability to accomplish this dissertation.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor **Mr. HABITOUCHE Mostapha** for his guidance, advice, and encouragement in achieving this research.

We gratefully wish to thank teacher **Mr. GAARICHE Ahmed** for allowing us to attend his classes, helping us to conduct our research, and providing any assistance requested.

Special thanks go to **Mr. YAHIAOUI Abdelhak** for helping us develop our technical skills and for his continued support.

We would also like to thank all fourth-year pupils and **BELAARBI Baabouche** middle school EFL teachers. Their enthusiasm and readiness to provide answers made conducting this research a pleasurable experience.

Finally, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dear parents for their support and prayers throughout our lives.

Abstract

Reading is a vital skill that must be learned in order to effectively acquire a foreign language. However, it is a difficult skill to master because the number of learners struggle with understanding the meaning of the texts. The aim of the research is to investigate the reading issues that fourth-year middle school EFL students face, and to identify their poor reading comprehension skills and the main causes of their failures to complete the reading activity. As study instruments, a questionnaire and classroom observations on two separate topics were used. The questionnaire was distributed to various fourth-year middle school EFL teachers in Bordj Bou-Argeridj city, and the classroom observation was done with fourth-year middle school EFL learners at Belarbi Baabouche Middle School. The findings demonstrate that the number of the students struggle with reading comprehension due to a lack of vocabulary, a lack of prior knowledge in their mother tongue (Arabic), confusing words, and the complexity of the texts.

Key words: *Reading skill, Reading comprehension difficulties, Fourth-year middle school EFL learners, EFL teachers, Lack of vocabulary.*

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1 : First Language

L2 : Second Language

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Introduction

English is a worldwide language spoken by people from all over the world. Although English is not commonly spoken in Algeria, it is used in a limited number of interactions and is taught as a topic in schools and at universities. The communicative qualities of language have gotten a lot of attention in the realm of ELT. At this level, the teaching and learning process should include all four key skills: speaking, listening, writing, and, most importantly, reading.

As one of the language's core skills, reading is a vital component of our educational, working, recreational, and social lives. Reading is highly valued and important for social and economic development. Reading is the most important of the four language skills, as it can help you improve your overall language ability (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Krashen & Brown, 2007). "... We may argue that reading is the most crucial foreign skill, especially in cases when students must read English literature for their own specialty subject but may never have to speak the language; these are known as "English as a library language" situations". (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, p. 89).

Even though teaching reading skills in an EFL context are consensually regarded as a crucial issue, it is still an insufficiently covered aspect of language teaching in. Actually, middle school learners encounter difficulties in reading comprehension which can be directly attributed to deficiencies in the teaching and learning environment itself.

This study aims to investigate the primary factors that contribute to the low reading comprehension achievement of 4th AM year students, as well as to provide remedial tools and tactics to help them overcome their challenges. As a result, the researcher's primary goal is to provide satisfactory answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the main difficulties encountered by 4th AM learners in reading comprehension?

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2. What might be the suggestions to improve our pupils' reading comprehension achievement?

As a result, the following hypotheses have been devised:

1. When reading in the English language, EFL learners may experience challenges with vocabulary, unclear words, sentence coherence and cohesiveness, and pronunciation issues, among other things.
2. More reading outside of the classroom, encouraging pleasure reading, and picking more relevant materials based on the learners' level, changing the teaching method of reading skill, and imposing EFL learners to improve their vocabulary are some of the suggestions.

This case study focuses on the reading difficulties of EFL pupils. To collect data, we adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods (questionnaire and classroom observation) of 4th AM learners at Belarbi Baabouche Middle School. Due to our humble experience as EFL teachers for almost 4 years in private schools, in which we noticed that 4th AM pupils were struggling with the reading comprehension questions section in their English tests and exams, we decided to conduct this research. In this dissertation, there are three chapters. The theoretical foundations of reading comprehension, as well as reading skill definition, reading types, models, purposes, strategies and skills, the difference between L1 and L2 reading, the definition of reading comprehension, goals and stages of teaching reading, assessment and reading comprehension challenges, are covered in the first chapter. In the second chapter, which covers research design and data analysis, the exploratory study employs two research techniques to collect data. 12 fourth middle school experienced teachers and twenty-five Fourth-year middle school pupils were handed a questionnaire. Also, the same sample of the twenty-five pupils was observed in a reading session. The third and final chapter includes some proposed practical learning exercises and pedagogical ideas for improving and enhancing fourth year middle school pupils' reading comprehension performance, as well as making the skill easier to acquire and teach.

Chapter 1

Reading

1.1. Introduction:

English language skills are required for effective language learning. These skills can be either receptive or productive. Reading and listening are receptive skills, while writing and speaking are productive abilities. EFL Learners develop receptive skills by obtaining language from either oral or written sources. Learners interpret the content to understand the receptive information in this context (Hamza Al-Jarrah and Nur Salina Binti Ismail, 2018). Reading, which is the focus of this study, is an essential language skill that should never be overlooked. It is one of the most important ways to receive knowledge, particularly for academic purposes. In this respect, according to Mundhe (2015), reading is one of the most regularly used language competency skills globally. Moreover, in our daily life, reading allows us to experience more sensations, experience history as it happens, be transported to magical places, and learn new things.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first one explores many definitions of reading from various perspectives. The second section delves into the reasons why people read. There's also a list of different types of reading. Fourth, it discusses the reading models. Reading strategies and reading skills are discussed in the fifth section. The sixth section provides models of reading process in L1 and L2. In the seventh section, it presents L1 and L2 reading differences. In the eighth section, it involves the nature of reading comprehension; also it discusses goals of teaching reading, then the three main stages of teaching reading. Additionally, in the ninth section, it presents the nature of assessment in reading and goals for reading comprehension assessment. The tenth section includes some of the previous conducted studies on the difficulties that EFL learners have when it comes to reading comprehension. Finally, there is a conclusion.

1.2. Reading:

Reading is one of the four abilities taught in English language acquisition, along with listening, speaking, and writing. Reading is a crucial ability for language development because it helps with vocabulary, spelling, and writing. According to Brenda Thompson (1979), reading is the first and most crucial skill taught in school. The rest of a child's education will suffer if they do not learn to read effectively.

Scholars describe reading in a variety of ways. Reading is viewed as a dynamic process in which the reader's prior knowledge and textual information interact to allow him to generate meaning before, during, and after reading. According to Goodman¹ (1973), the learner interacts with a message encoded by the author. He focusses on his or her complete

¹ Goodman published a book in 1973 includes a series of essays on the subject of miscue analysis, a diagnostic procedure rooted in the psycholinguistic view of reading.

prior experience Dubin (1982) and concepts, as well as the language proficiency he or she has earned.) Also assumes that reading is a complicated skill involving a variety of psychological, physical, and social factors.

Similarly, Nunan² (1991) describes reading as the process of obtaining, comprehending, and retaining information from a text. Reading is the process of obtaining the necessary information from a written text as quickly as possible in order to construct meaning.

Reading is an active rather than a passive activity. Reading, in fact, necessitates both mental and empirical inputs from the student who is expected to comprehend the written piece. Reading is divided into two parts: the written form and the message's meaning. In this respect, Ur (1996) defines reading as follows:

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

(p. 138)

Furthermore, According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), reading is a strategic activity since it needs the reader to anticipate text material, organize and cognitively synthesize data, check comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to the reader's goals.

As a result of the previous statements, reading is the process of extracting meaning from a text. It is the most challenging language skill because it requires the interaction of numerous cognitive, metacognitive, linguistic, and sociolinguistic factors.

1.3. Purposes behind reading:

Reading is an activity that may be carried out at any time and from any location. In our daily lives, reading serves a variety of objectives. In this context, William James states, in his book: *The principles of psychology* (1890) that children who learn to read fluently and well: They begin to take flight into whole new worlds as effortlessly as young birds take to the sky.

According to Sadoski in his book *"Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading"* (2004: 46) Greany and Neuman (1990) experimentally researched children's reasons for reading using questionnaires provided to thousands of 10- and 13-year-old students in 15 countries. They discovered three fundamental variables, dubbed "utility," "enjoyment," and "escape," respectively. Reading for utility meant learning in order to be successful in school or in life, reading for pleasure and interest meant reading for pleasure and interest, and reading for escape meant reading to pass the time or avoid boredom.

² Nunan's book (1991) 'Language Teaching Methodology'

1.3.1. Reading for pleasure:

Reading for pleasure means reading that we do on our own initiative in the hopes of enjoying the experience. According to Nell (1988), reading for pleasure is a form of play that enables us to access other worlds and take on other roles in our fantasy. Similarly, according to Benton & Fox (1985, p. 15):

“Stories provide the possibility of educating the feelings and can offer their readers potential growth points for the development of a more subtle awareness of human behaviour.

Furthermore, when Dungworth and colleagues (2004) asked pupils why they liked reading, they discovered that the most common response was emotional, and it had to do with how reading made them feel. Pupils also reported that reading was enjoyable and soothing for them.

Regardless of the fact that reading for enjoyment has not been a study emphasis, evidence of the significance of leisure reading for both academic and personal growth is increasing.

1.3.2. Reading for information:

In academic establishments, Students will gain more knowledge and facts by reading a textbook, a web article, or a story. The knowledge or information they gained from reading can be used for communicating, expressing their ideas with other students through giving opinions, and, most importantly, passing their exams.

In this regard, Grellet (1981) believes that reading for information can be divided into related but distinct domains, such as reading fast to discover relevant information, assessing information, and integrating data from numerous sources.

1.3.3. Reading and Second Language Development:

According to Peter Watkins, in his book “Teaching and Developing Reading Skills “. Learners in L2 may opt to read as a language learning approach rather than for enjoyment or to discover new knowledge. In these circumstances, the primary goal of reading is to improve linguistic understanding (for example, by expanding one's vocabulary range) (such as reading fluency). In terms of language acquisition, this could entail intentionally seeking out and utilizing the learning opportunities provided by a text, or it could simply rely on the advantages of exposure to the target language.

Similarly, Daniel Dong claimed in her web article (The Importance of Reading in Second Language Acquisition), that even if children read slowly, they are exposed to more sentences, grammar, and new vocabulary per minute than they would be exposed to in a typical brief lesson, TV show, or song. This is why, despite having taken the same number of

classes, students who read foreign novels are prepared to communicate more fluently than students who do not.

Daniel backed up her claim by citing studies from 1995 by Moeller & Meyer, who looked into the benefits of using books in early childhood second language acquisition. They discovered that because children's literature contains natural language forms in circumstances that students can relate to, it assisted students in making connections and recalling language structures far more rapidly.

Consequently, Reading expands EFL learners' vocabulary and grammar; it simply supports and nourishes the brain with proper language structure.

1.4. Reading strategies and reading skills:

In the literature on reading, the phrases reading skills and reading strategies are sometimes used equally. A lot of academics and researchers have proposed various definitions that examine the subject from various perspectives.

In this respect, Paris, Wasik, and Turner state that:

“Automatic information-processing techniques, such as distinguishing phoneme-grapheme correlation or summarizing a story, are referred to as skills. For a variety of reasons, including experience, repetitive practice, adherence to directions, luck, and naive use, skills are applied to text unconsciously. Strategies, on the other hand, are purposeful activities taken to achieve specific objectives. When a new skill is purposefully used, it might become a strategy. Similarly, a plan might "disappear"... and become a competence. When tactics are produced and applied automatically as skills, they are more effective and cognitively progressed.”

(Hudson³, 2007, p. 106)

Additionally, according to Grabe:

"Strategies are mental processes that are open to critically reflecting yet may be on their way toward being skills,"

(Grabe, 2009, p 221)

1.4.1. Reading strategies:

Readers utilize a variety of reading strategies in order to gain a good grasp and outcome from a text.

³ Thom Hudson' book (2007). It examines a variety of approaches, methods, and strategies that are used in teaching reading.

1.4.1.1. Intensive Reading:

Intensive reading is the process of improving and enhancing one's reading comprehension skills through the usage of written texts. This is the most common style of reading that is taught and practiced in schools. In this aspect, Palmer (1921) defines intensive reading as "taking a text, studying it line by line, and referring to a dictionary regarding the grammar of the text at any given time.

Additionally, in this regard, Simensen (2007) states that:

"Intensive reading is reading carefully to remember the details and understand all the words and meanings."

(p 109)

1.4.1.2. Extensive Reading:

Extensive reading is read in order to grasp a text's overall meaning. Extensive reading, according to Simensen, "primarily involves silent reading and reading for pleasure and delight. Extensive reading is usually geared towards gaining a broad knowledge of the book, rather than comprehending every detail of it". (Simensen 2007, p. 149). Similarly, In this perspective, Day & Bamford (1998) state that

"Extensive Reading is a method of language instruction that demands students to read lengthy, easy-to-understand written texts for a variety of reasons on their own."

(Maipoka & Soontornwipast, 2021,p 152)

1.4.1.3. Skimming:

Reading fast to get a general sense is known as skimming. Margrethe H. Bakke (2010) claims that skimming does not imply that readers read every word. Alternatively, they can skim by reading (titles, subheadings, bold or highlighted words, graphics, and the abstract, introductory, or conclusion of a report). Skimming an academic text quickly before reading it thoroughly might help readers examine what they already know and construct a reading objective. In this specific instance, Simensen (2007) states that:

"Skimming is to read quickly to acquire a quick overview of the content. The purpose is to acquire a general impression of the text's content"

(p. 149)

1.4.1.4. Scanning:

Scanning is the technique of swiftly reading to obtain the information needed. As it is defined by Simensen (2007):

"Scanning is reading in search for specific information in the text." (p. 149)

In the same aspect, Margrethe H. Bakke (2010) asserts that scanning may allow readers to read up to 1,500 words per minute because they know precisely what they're looking for and are unconcerned about the rest. When an instructor asks a question and the learners look up the right answer in their books, this strategy is commonly used unconsciously in school. Many students, on the other hand, are unaware that this is an excellent reading strategy.

1.4.2. Reading skills:

Reading entails more than just saying words; it also necessitates comprehension. There are a variety of skills that might help readers enhance their reading capacities. Word-attack skills, comprehension skills, fluency skills, and critical reading skills are the four major types which Hudson divides them under (Hudson, 2007). Each of these skills has a variety of subskills.

1.4.2.1. Word-attack skills:

According to Hudson (2007), Word-attack skills, also known as decoding skills, are the abilities required to convert orthographic symbols into language. Hudson (2007) further says that the capacity to distinguish distinct features of the text, such as syllables, word borders, upper and lower case characters, and so on, will be the most important subskill in this type.

Similarly, according to Ralph Bedell of American University and Eloise Schott of the John Quincy Adams School in Washington, D.C. (1945), Word Attack is defined as a set of abilities that enable a person to use any one skill or a set of techniques to identify and grasp the new vocabulary when the situation calls for it.

1.4.2.2. Comprehension skills:

Hudson (2007) defines comprehension skills as "skills in which the reader uses his prior knowledge and context to grasp what is read." Grammatical competence, knowledge of how language is constructed, and the use of metacognitive knowledge are examples of subskills in this area.

1.4.2.3. Fluency skills:

Fluency skills, according to Hudson (2007), refer to the capacity to read longer passages of text without being "disrupted." These "disruptions" frequently occur when a reader must spell obscure words or rereads a passage because he does not comprehend particular words or sections of it. He further claims that these disruptions cause reading to be slow and fragmented. The ability to distinguish words and letter clusters quickly is one of the subskills of a competent reader. Fluent readers read quickly and have a broad vocabulary.

1.4.2.4. Critical reading skills:

Critical reading skills are defined by Hudson (2007) as the competency to "interpret, integrate, and assess what is read." Argument recognition, the capacity to discuss positives and negatives, and seeing consequence are examples of sub skills in this category.

1.5. Models of Reading Process in L1 and L2.

Over the last two decades, scholars have set their sights on foreign or second language reading (Macaro, 2003), and a range of models have been offered to explain this prevalent skill. Throughout this part, we'll discuss four of the; Bottom-up, top-down, interactive, and compensatory-encoding models that have been proposed by Hudson, Grabe, Rumelhart, Stanovich, and other SL reading researchers. Meanwhile, first and foremost, let's give a definition of a model.

1.5.1. Definitions of a model:

"Models summarize theories of reading," Sadoski and Paivio write, "offering means to depict a concept or part of a theory; they illustrate what reading entails and, in more extensive forms, how reading works" (as cited in Grabe, 2009, p. 83).

Indeed, according to Goldman, Golden, and van den Broek (as cited by Grabe, 2009, p. 83), "the term model refers explicitly to a depiction of the mental factors that compose a segment or collection of different components in a given reading process."

1.5.2. Bottom-up model:

The bottom-up model hypothesizes that our central nervous system detects the basic units of a text, the letters, and then arranges them to generate meaning. A bottom-up reading model is one that concentrates on analyzing a text in one direction, from segment to whole. Bottom-up models presume the reader is engaged in a mechanical process in which he or she decodes the continuous text individual letters, individual words, and sentence by sentence (Grabe, 2009).

In other terms, the reader decodes the text that the writer has already encoded. Decoding the text entails a visual focus on letter identification, identifying letter combinations, word recognition, creating sentences using grammatical forms, and finally combining phrases into meaningful discourse until the text's interpretation is eventually concluded. (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Koda, 2005).

1.5.3. Top-down model:

The bottom-up model begins with the smallest units in sentences, whereas the top-down model begins with the largest. According to (Grabe, 2009), a top-down reading model is one that relies on the reader's contributions to the text in order to come at meaning. In top-

down models, the reader is thought to be actively controlling the processing of information rather than being passive.

In this Perspective, Hudson (2007) states in his book (Teaching Second Language Reading) "...With four reading processes: predicting, sampling, confirming, and correcting, the bottom-up paradigm prioritizes the "cognitive mechanics of language processing over semantic and pragmatic information."

(p.37)

1.5.4. Interactive reading model:

Considering information in top-down and bottom-up models is only transmitted in one way and information in advanced levels has no impact on information in novice levels, these models are unable to account for a number of well-known events that occur during reading, such as generating conclusions.

To address this shortcoming, Rumelhart (1977) suggested an interactive reading model. This model, which incorporates both top-down and bottom-up approaches. This model was established by Rumelhart (1977) on the basis of the assumption that meaning is a construction of the author's text and the reader's understanding and interpretations.

Working memory could play an important part in the processes of extracting meaning from text. These procedures entail preserving text information, awakening the reader's relevant knowledge and extracting it from long-term memory, processing information from these two main sources into a comprehensible discourse, and lastly determining the text's meaning (Mohammad Taghi Shahnazari, 2014; Azizollah Dabaghi, 2014). (As cited in: Alderson, 2000; Beach, 1997; Cain and Oakhill, 2006; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Koda, 2005).

1.5.5. The interactive-compensatory model:

Stanovich (1980) interactive-compensatory model was an improvement of Rumelhart (1977) interactive model in addressing skilled and unskilled reading. It's predicated on the idea that a mechanism at any level can compensate weaknesses at other levels. According to Stanovich (1980), lacks of any knowledge leads to a greater rely on other knowledge sources, despite of their position in the cognitive mechanism.

Hence, Stanovich (1988) provided a significant contribution to reading models from a theoretical standpoint by explaining compensatory techniques, which explain why unskilled readers are more sensitive to contextual restrictions in some contexts than skilled readers (Mohammad Taghi Shahnazari, 2014; Azizollah Dabaghi, 2014). (As cited in: Alderson, 2000; Beach, 1997; Cain and Oakhill, 2006; Grabe & Stoller, 2002;Koda, 2005).

1.6. L1 and L2 Reading differences:

Although the principle of decoding a text to determine its symbolism is the same when reading in a second language, there are several differences that make reading in a second language a unique endeavor. In this part, the main differences between L1 and L2 reading are discussed.

Numerous scholars identified the differences of L1 and L2 reading.

First and second language readers, according to Hudson (2007), differ in several ways:

1. The majority of second-language readers are proficient in their native tongue. Mastering the reading comprehension in a second language might be aided or hindered by this ability.
2. In the first language, reading normally begins after a student has mastered the language. Readers of a second language frequently begin reading with too little knowledge of the grammatical structures and the deficient of vocabulary.
3. A preschooler learning to read in his first language and an adult learning to read a second language have vastly different cognitive abilities.

These three features are depicted in a model proposed by Bernhardt (2011) in her book (Understanding Advanced Second language Reading). This model depicts how L1 and L2 interact during learning a new language. She developed a three-dimensional compensating model in which she states:

«knowledge operates synchronically, interactively, and synergistically," rather than being additive"

(p. 140)

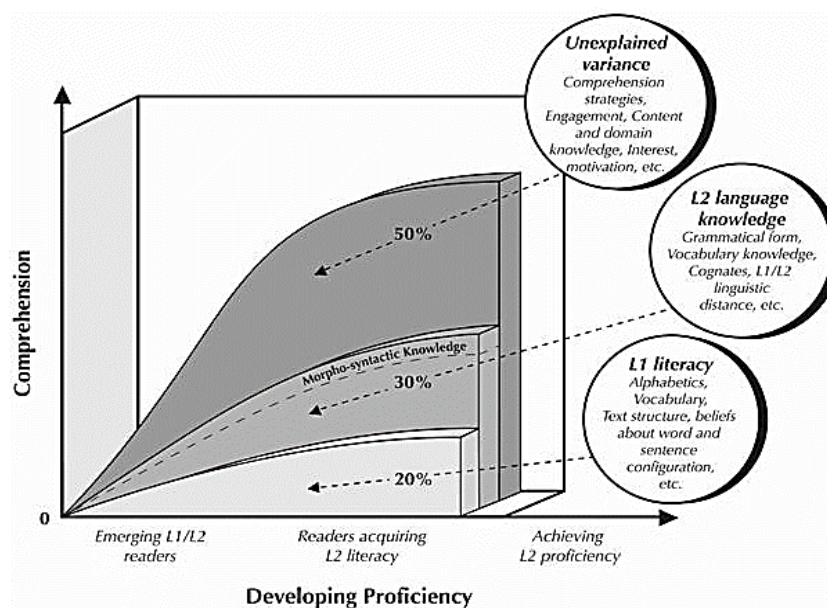


Figure 1.1: Bernhardt's compensatory model of second language reading.

This model shows how readers can employ their L1 literacy and L2 language knowledge together in compensating processing to overcome shortcomings in one or the other. It also shows that the mastery of second language reading skill still encountered some unaccounted for differences.

1.7. Reading Comprehension:

One of the most important aims of reading exercises is comprehension. Steve MCKEE (2012) states that reading alone is insufficient: one must also be able to deconstruct, evaluate, and rearrange thoughts and information. Also, Anderson (2003) claims that readers who are learning English as a second language must be able to comprehend what the writer is intending to convey. It should be explicitly taught by proficient instructors. They should preserve it as one of their reading teaching concepts, because measuring comprehension is crucial to effective reading.

1.7.1. Definition of comprehension:

Simply, the term 'comprehension,' according to Harrison (2004), refers to the act of deciphering the meaning of a communication, such as a personal letter, speech, or gestures, as well as the information gained as a result of that procedure.

1.7.2. Definition of Reading comprehension:

Reading comprehension is defined in a variety of ways. Reading comprehension, according to Snow (2002), is the process of acquiring and generating meaning instantaneously through meaningful interactions with a written language. Similarly, (Grabe and Stoller, 2002) define reading comprehension as the ability to comprehend a text, analyze the content, and ultimately interpret what the author is trying to say. In this perspective, Veeravagu, et al (2010) states that reading comprehension is:

“An intellectual process by which a reader identifies facts, information, or ideas from printed materials; determines the meanings the writer intended to transfer; decides how they make reference to prior knowledge; and judges their suitability and worth for reaching the learner's own purposes," according to the definition.

(p.206)

In a nutshell, in the context of reading, ‘comprehension’ refers to the process of deducing the meaning correctly from any printed material.

1.7.3. Teaching Reading comprehension:

It's all about comprehending and cognition when it comes to reading. Learning to translate letters into words is less important than understanding the author's concepts. From the beginning, teachers assist students in making inferences from texts. As a result, it is the

instructor's obligation to motivate students to read by applying suitable texts, especially for those in a novice level (Hesham Suleiman Alyousef, 2006).

On the other hand, Dolores Durkin, found evidence from her research on reading comprehension instruction as delivered by teachers utilizing corporate reading programs in 1978. (i.e., basal or core reading programs). Durkin determined that teachers spend significantly less time really teaching novice foreign language learners how to comprehend the text after examining in both reading and social studies classrooms. In reality, reading comprehension instruction took up less than 1% of overall reading or social studies instructional time. Regrettably, researchers have decided that the situation in all of elementary, middle, and secondary schools has not considerably enhanced over the last 30 years (Dewitz et al., 2009).

Therefore, due to the previous shortcomings, to clarify things more, we decided to discuss the main goals of teaching reading before we dive deeper into the main strategies of teaching reading.

1.7.4. Goals of teaching reading

The objectives of reading instruction, according to Mark Sadoski, will be balanced between the affective and cognitive domains (Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading, 2004, p 47).

1.7.4.1. Affective goals

1.7.4.1.1. Developing Positive Attitudes toward Reading

Sadoski in his book "Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading" claimed that individuals as children, adults and specifically EFL learners who are learning to read should approach reading acts with optimism and willingness to accomplish them. Novice learners in any complex activity frequently face challenges and discouragement. The reader may recall his or her early attempts to learn to play the piano, hit a baseball, answer math problems, or complete some other activity that required fresh knowledge and skill, and how hopelessly inept he or she felt ("I'll never understand this!"). Early failures might engender pessimism, whereas early wins can boost self-reliance (2004). In this respect, according to Sadoski in his book "Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading" (2004):

“Developing a positive attitude toward reading entails increasing our belief in our own reading ability. Students should ideally achieve success on a regular basis and tackle reading with confidence and a "can do" attitude, rather than avoiding it because it is confusing and challenging.”

(p 48)

1.7.4.1.2. Goal 2: Developing Personal Interests in Reading:

Sadoski added that the development of personal interests is another goal in the affective realm. It's not enough to have a good attitude. Persistent readers choose to seek their life interests through reading, and they develop value judgments about what they read as a consequence. In this context, according to Sadoski in his book "Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading" (2004):

“Having an interest in reading is having the desire to read and respond emotionally, to attempt to expand our self-awareness and self-worth through reading. Although the subject is not essentially spoken, reading about it is consistent with being interested in that subject.”

(p 50)

1.7.4.2. Cognitive goals:

Two aims in the cognitive domain address the practical aspects of reading as well as the development of mental skills that will enable us to continue to grow as readers throughout our lives.

1.7.4.2.1. Developing the Use of Reading as a Tool to Solve Problems:

Reading is an important tool in a modern, technological world. Reading instruction is required by law in public, private, and personal schooling, and textbooks are almost universally used to teach school topics. Learners should be able to apply the widest range of reading methods to the widest range of materials and social settings in which reading duties are found, whether at home or at work, for citizenship or for enjoyment. In this respect, according to Sadoski in his book "Conceptual Foundations of Teaching Reading" (2004):

“Reading is a method of dealing with everyday issues in which printed language is a viable or necessary solution.”

(p 52)

1.7.4.2.2. Developing the Fundamental competencies:

The most basic purpose is to develop the essential competencies that comprise up reading, which necessitates a more in-depth explanation.

This goal serves as a conduit for achieving the other objectives. The reader is prepared to pursue reading as a lifelong effort once the core competences of reading have been taught and learned. These skills are honed to some extent in subsequent phases. Sadoski mentioned in his book the six stages of reading that were postulated by Chall (1996) :

	Stage	Age	Key characteristics
0	Pre-reading and pseudo-reading	Up to 6	Pretend reading, turning pages. Some letter recognition, especially letters in own name. Often predicting stories and words.
1	Initial reading and decoding	6-7	Reading simple texts containing high frequency lexis. Chall estimated about 600 words understood.
2	Confirmation and fluency	7-8	reading more quickly, accurately, paying more attention to meaning of words. How many written words understood? 3,000.
3	Reading for learning	9-14	Reading for knowledge as motivation
4	Multiplicity and complexity	14-17	Responding critically to what they read and analysing texts.
5	Construction and reconstruction	18+	Reading selectively and forming opinions.

Table 1.1: Chall's stages of reading development (1996) (Sadoski 2004: 53).

These stages, according to Sadoski, are a good conceptual description of how reading has traditionally been instructed and learnt, and they indicate a progressive transition from learning to read to reading to learn. These stages include all of the essentials of reading, progressively developing mature readers who can continue to read and study on their own. Readers who are no longer reliant on schooling or instructors, and who can read and answer individually for the rest of their life, are the final result.

Consequently, Mark Sadoski emphasizes that:

“Any reading curriculum that does not meet these four objectives is inevitably deficient. A thorough reading program must address both the affective and cognitive aspects of reading, as well as attitude and ability, interest and skill.”

(p 55)

1.7.5. The Three stages of teaching reading:

A reading lesson consists of activities that engage students' prior knowledge, introduce new words, and provide them a task to complete while reading texts and afterward. Pre-Reading Stage, While-Reading Stage, and Post-Reading Stage are the three main stages that EFL teachers should follow throughout a reading lesson (José Manuel, 2021).

1.7.5.1. Pre-reading stage:

The pre-reading stage consists of activities that encourage pupils to recognize what they already know about a topic and anticipate what they will read or hear. Zhang (1993), states that comprehension and understanding is facilitated by deliberately introducing schemata through pre-reading exercises. As a result, the pre-reading stage aids in the activation of the relevant schema. Most instructors skip the pre-reading step, arguing that they don't have enough time. In reality, before the real reading, pupils are motivated by pre-reading tasks. While reading the text, for instance, teachers can ask students questions that stimulate their attention (Hesham Suleiman Alyousef, 2006)

Similarly, according to Abraham (2002), the pre-reading phase requires teachers to assist students in recognizing the knowledge they already have about a text's topic by discussing titles, subheadings, photos, determining text structure, previewing, and etc.

Additionally, Drucker (2003) claims that before reading a book, teachers can use the following process: "...relate the section pupils will read to something they are already familiar with, After that, give the students a brief discussion question to interest them, and then give them an outline of the portion they are about to read. Name the piece, describe the plot, and introduce the characters. Finally, instruct the pupils to read the text and look for specific details".

As a result, the pre-reading stage has the following goals:

- ✓ Create a reading objective.
- ✓ Students' vocabulary should be improved in order for them to properly complete the reading activity.
- ✓ Make an educated guess on where they'll end up.
- ✓ Determine their knowledge of a subject.

1.7.5.2. While-reading stage:

The while-reading stage is identified as those tasks that assist students in focusing on certain areas of the text and better understanding it.

The purpose of these activities is to help students engage with the text as if it were written in their native tongue (José Manuel, 2021). Furthermore, according to Hesham Suleiman Alyousef (2006), the goal of the while-reading stage is to improve students' abilities to deal with texts by expanding their linguistic and schematic knowledge. Determine the primary idea of the paragraphs and the topic sentences. Separate general and specific ideas, locate linkages, and finally, code the given text.

Furthermore, While-reading tasks are intended to enable learners to be flexible, active, and reflective readers, according to Wallace (2003) and Hedge (2000). While-reading activities are used to help pupils achieve their reading comprehension goals. Activities during the reading process should assist or enhance students' reading comprehension, according to Armbruster and Osborn (2000). Moreover, Hedge (2000), states that several while- reading activities require Learners to do one or more of the following: follow the order of ideas in a text; respond to the views expressed; comprehend the information it holds; ask themselves questions; write notes; verify expectations or background knowledge; or foresee the next part of the text from multiple insights.

1.7.5.3. Post-reading stage:

Post-reading activities allow students to get a deeper understanding of texts by critically assessing what they have read. In this regard, Haller (2000) modeled a variety of school-based post-reading activities that employ matching activities, cloze activities, cut-up phrases, and comprehension questions to improve learning comprehension. The instructor inserts gaps inside the story to replace some of the words, for the cloze task. He mentioned that cut-up sentence activities employ sentences from a particular text to help students acquire confidence by altering the language in different ways. For beginners, the usage of lines in pairing can be bewildering.

Reading Stages	Lecturer Activities	Students' Activities
Pre-reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing topic related picture to the students. • Giving questions to the students about their own experience and background knowledge of the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on their background knowledge or experiences related to the topic of the text. • Giving ideas of their own.
Whilst reading Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher distribute the Graphic Maps to the students • Asking the students to read silently. • Asking the students to Fulfill the maps while reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the texts silently. • Fulfilling the graphic maps while reading.
Post-reading Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the students to work in group. • The teacher gives a set of cue card for each group. • Ask the students to retell the reading based on the card taken by each student. • The teacher leads classroom discussion to clarify students understanding. • Give the recall test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students will work in groups. • The students will retell the reading based on the card taken by each student. • The other students will listen and wait their turn to retell their part. • The students follow classroom discussion to clarify and wrap up their understanding. • Last, the students do the multiple choice recall test to measure their understanding.

Table 1. 2: Stages of Teaching Reading.

1.8. Reading Assessment:

1.8.1. What is assessment?

Among the most important educational techniques for both teaching and learning is assessment. It is a combination of tools and strategies used in classrooms to support teachers in precisely defining the requirements and capabilities of their students. In other words, it's an educational activity that gathers feedbacks about students so that their strengths and flaws can be appropriately identified (Dr Madani Habib, 2016). In this respect, Palomba and Banta (1999) state that assessment is :

“The systematic gathering, evaluation, and integration of information concerning school curricula with the intention of enhancing learning.”

(p. 04)

1.8.2. Assessment in reading:

When it comes to reading testing, there are multiple methods and procedures that are used to determine how well students can read, grasp, interpret, and analyze various sorts of texts. In this regard, particular reading comprehension activities might be added in EFL courses in order to determine how well students can comprehend a sound text. Reading comprehension evaluations should, without a doubt, be based on sensible criteria and meaningful metrics. All teachers, especially reading teachers, need to know the principles and how to assess their students (Dr Madani Habib, 2016).

The purpose of reading assessments is to offer feedback on the skills, procedures, and knowledge resources that reflect reading ability. Researchers, teachers, administrators, and policymakers can all benefit from reading assessments. Assessment procedures can improve the learning environment greatly. Though the evaluations are used for a variety of objectives, it's important to remember that they all start with a grasp of the reading building, recognition of reading abilities, and an attempt to reflect the construct in assessment activities. As a result, educators must be conscious of the effects and uses of reading assessment, as well as the implications. (Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005)

1.8.3. Goals for reading comprehension assessment:

Briefly, according to Dr Sunila Thomas and Lizu Verghis (2018), assessment goals can be defined in a variety of ways. Every assessment framework serves a function. They are frequently classified as (a) norm-reference and (b) criterion-reference testing. b) Formative and summative assessment c) formal and informal evaluation d) proficiency, placement, and diagnostic testing. The following are the five goals of reading assessment:

1. Assessment of reading comprehension
2. Traditional classroom assessment
3. Learning assessments to support students' learning
4. Assessment for educational objectives
5. Assessment for the theoretical framework of a study

Dr Sunila Thomas and Lizu Verghis (2018), explained more the five goals claiming that reading comprehension assessment is vital for understanding students' general reading ability and determining if pupils are suitably equipped for further learning and educational development. Standardized testing is the name for this form of testing. Assessments like these are also utilized for student placement, policy choices, curriculum revisions, and program, teacher, and educational establishment evaluation. Summative or accomplishment testing refers to the measurement of skills and information obtained over duration of time in a classroom context. These assessments use tasks that are based on the subject covered in class and the abilities that have been exercised.

Furthermore, assessment for learning involves students in the learning process and reacts to evidence of non-understanding or poor performance with continuing rehabilitation. The measurement of educational efficacy goes beyond the direct objectives of student evaluation. Additionally, Standardized testing, cumulative records, interviews with instructors, administrators, students, input from institutions that receive program graduates, and unique assessments that highlight school or program goals are among them. Standardized tools are used in research projects to assess student learning results (Dr Sunila Thomas and Lizu Verghis, 2018).

1.9. Reading comprehension difficulties:

Foreign language reading differs from reading in one's native tongue. EFL learners have likely had a lot of reading practices in their mother tongue. EFL learners must focus on a variety of language skills factor during the foreign language reading process. While reading a text in a new language, the readers may come across vocabulary and grammar elements that are unfamiliar to them. The distinctions between the two languages are most likely lexical and syntactical in nature. There are several other non-linguistic reasons that indicate reading in a different tongue more difficult than reading in one's native tongue (Usman Kasim,2017).

According to numerous researches, most EFL students have difficulty understanding English texts. In this sense, Alyousef (2015) explored six areas of reading comprehension difficulties: spontaneous detection skills, lexicon, and structural knowledge, synthesizing and assessment skills, strategies, metacognitive awareness and skills monitoring, and content or

world background knowledge (2015) . The study's findings found that the students suffered owing to a lack of linguistic competence, low mental abilities, and fluency, as well as a failure to grasp and comprehend the context.

Similarly, Iqbal, Noor, Muhabat, and Kazemian (2015) published a study that sought to uncover the causes to poor English reading comprehension among Pakistani pupils. The study's objective was to look into those characteristics and offer ways to improve pupils' English reading comprehension . The study's findings revealed that a variety of factors, including a lack of vocabulary, a propensity of cramming, and a lack of desire to learn how to read creatively, all contributed to poor comprehension. The scholars suggested enhancing classroom activities utilizing debate among students and teachers to motivate pupils to increase comprehension.

Additionally, Alkhaldeh (2012) investigated trouble with reading comprehension in Jordan and came up with a list of obstacles connected to students, instructional techniques, and curriculum. The lack of vocabulary knowledge, the mismatch of some reading materials with the students' lives, and the inefficacy of some instructors' teaching approaches were among the obstacles. Furthermore, Alkhaldeh claimed that a lack of cooperative learning in reading instruction, large classes, linguistic, among other things, hampered students' comprehension of English texts.

Furthermore, Low mental capacities are another aspect that impacts students' reading skills (Alloway et al., 2009; Swanson et al., 2009). Readers can use working memory to store information in short-term memory while doing cognitive tasks. As a response, while recalling what has been read, a learner can read and activate past information about a subject or discern the meaning of a word from context. Working memory problems are common among disabled students, and this can affect their reading comprehension. Swanson et al. (2009) claimed that struggling readers are unable to retain ordered information that is directly related to phonological retention processes. Learning requires the storage of phonological knowledge. There is also a direct link between learning, working memory, and academic success (Alloway, 2009).

In the same context, Laing & Kamhi, (2002) and Anmarkrud & Brten, (2009) believe that comprehension problems are caused by language or intellectual process weaknesses. Motivation and attention are further characteristics that may impact reading comprehension, since some readers may be able to understand basic words or phrases but struggle with lengthy paragraphs and sentences.

Another issue that EFL students have is their ability to comprehend complex sentences in reading comprehension. Complicated sentences are composed of multiple phrases and may

include conjunctions, (Scott, 2009). Coordinating conjunctions, prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and nominalizations are other common sources of reading comprehension problems among EFL students. They make texts more complex and difficult to interpret, which makes reading understanding more confusing (Nuttall, 2000).

In some earlier studies, scholars asserted that prior knowledge is a key role in obtaining reading comprehension skill. It is essential for text understanding, and its removal can have a negative effect on reading comprehension (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Hudson, 2007; Vacca & Vacca, 2008). Furthermore, according to Nguyen (2007), learners with background experience quickly absorb reading information. Learners who are not engaged in a variety of unusual reading materials, on the other hand, have a struggle to understand them and must read the text multiple times to properly comprehend it.

Essentially, it is clear from the preceding review that vocabulary, cognitive capacity, text complexity, previous knowledge of second language readers all influence their reading comprehension skills. It is also thought that when learner EFL readers have an adequate vocabulary, their language competency will be enhanced (Hamza Al-Jarrah and Nur Salina Binti Ismail, 2018).

1.10. Conclusion:

This theoretical chapter seeks to define reading using diverse scholars' perspectives, shedding light on its types, models, purposes, strategies, and skills, then moving on to the distinction between L1 and L2 reading and the concept of reading comprehension. It also aims to concentrate on the goals and stages of reading instruction. We have completed this chapter by outlining the goals of reading comprehension assessment and mentioned some previous significant studies on reading comprehension difficulties.

As previously stated, reading is a crucial skill in any language acquisition. However, identifying consonants and vowels separately in a given text, is insufficient for successful reading comprehension. For that, the following chapter will give a case study that will address some of the problems and obstacles that EFL learners faced while executing the reading activity.

Chapter 2

Data Analysis And Interpretations

2.1. Introduction:

Mastering reading skill requires interaction between the reader and the text. The EFL reader has to decode the meaning of the written words to be able to understand the writer's point of view accurately. For that purpose, this study is about discovering teachers' and learners' perspectives on the difficulties of reading comprehension since the teachers and the learners are the main variables of this study. Their views and opinions are crucial to test the stated hypotheses, and the most appropriate tool to investigate that is through addressing a questionnaire to teachers and reading classroom observations of two different topics. The observational classroom makes our research more valid and reliable; it aims at finding out whether the Fourth EFL learners are motivated during the reading comprehension session, to figure out whether famous and familiar topics make them motivated to participate during the reading session, and to pick up the obstacles they encounter in reading comprehension. The teachers' questionnaire is intended to investigate the teachers' opinions about the difficulties that face learners in reading comprehension, the reasons behind those difficulties, and the main strategies to overcome these difficulties.

2.2. Research Design:

This study aims to uncover the key causes and elements that contributed to EFL students' poor reading comprehension achievement. This problem arose from the fact that, despite spending over three years learning English, our Algerian middle school EFL pupils frequently demonstrate a complete lack of reading skills to comprehend even the most basic sentences. To get more concrete answers to our problem statement, we adopted a case study in this research of a particular context to assist us gather data about the sources and causes of students' poor reading comprehension accomplishment despite the amount of time they spend learning English in middle school.

In this respect, Zaidah Zainal (2004) states that the case study method allows a researcher to evaluate data in depth within a particular context. For most cases, a case study method involves selecting a particular region or a small number of persons as the study participants. In their purest form, case studies study and investigate current real-life phenomena through extensive contextual analysis of a small number of occurrences or conditions, as well as their linkages. Similarly, Yin (1984) defines case study research as:

"An empirical enquiry into a specific phenomenon in its real-life setting; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly visible; and when numerous sources of data are utilized".

(p.23)

The reason behind the acknowledgment of case studies as research methods was that researchers were becoming increasingly worried about the limitations of quantitative approaches in giving complete and in-depth interpretations of the problematic behaviors in question (Zaidah Zainal, 2004). In this sense, Tellis (1997) asserts that case study approaches allow a researcher to see beyond quantitative statistical results and grasp behavioral conditions from the standpoint of the performer. Case studies help explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon by combining quantitative and qualitative data.

In brief, case studies are beneficial in data analysis because they allow researchers to examine data at a micro level. They provide data from real-life scenarios and provide more thorough insights into the behavior of the individuals of interest (Zaidah Zainal, 2004).

2.2.1. The Research Sample Population:

The subjects of the study were EFL teachers from different Middle schools in Bordj Bou-Argeridj city and the pupils of Fourth year middle school from Belarbi Baabouche middle school in the same city.

2.2.1.1. Teachers' Profile:

Twelve EFL middle school teachers were required to participate in this investigation to obtain information regarding their thoughts on their pupils' interactions in the classroom. That is why we chose our informants at random, regardless of their age, gender, or duration of teaching experience. The rationale for enrolling them in this study was important for two reasons: first, to obtain more relevant and in-depth data because they are direct observers of their pupils, and second, to obtain further direction to guarantee that the research was handled properly.

2.2.1.2. Pupils' Profile:

The participants of the classroom observation were (50) fourth-year pupils from Belarbi Baabouche middle school in Bordj-Bou Argeridj.

2.2.2. The Research Instruments :

In this study, two separate instruments were utilized to collect qualitative and quantitative data. First, fourth middle school teachers were given a questionnaire, and EFL middle school pupils were observed during reading sessions.

2.2.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a written document containing a series of questions relevant to the problem under investigation, to which the investigator seeks the responses (Krishan Kumar, 1992). However, a questionnaire should attempt to obtain the most detailed and correct information in a logical order. In all cases, a questionnaire design is a multi-step procedure

that enables the gathering of both subjective and objective data from a wide sample of the study population in order to achieve statistically valid results (Wai-Ching Leung, 2007).

Therefore, because of the importance of the questionnaire in conducting research, a questionnaire was provided to fourth-year EFL teachers in various middle schools to meet the study's goals and objectives. Open-ended questions were developed from the research hypothesis. The purpose of this questionnaire is to figure out the issues that their pupils have with reading comprehension. It included twenty-two questions, each with its own set of goals.

2.2.2.2 Classroom Observati:

Classroom observation, according to Reed & Bergemann (2001), is the link between the theoretical and practical domains. In other words, through classroom observation, researchers will have the opportunity to obtain concrete observations from teachers who have a better understanding of the theoretical knowledge as well as practical possibilities for what, how, and to what degree they might transfer that knowledge in their classroom.

Thus, observing another teacher's classroom has several educational purposes, including giving you accurate observations, and the ability to describe instructional practices. However, observers are not evaluators or intruders who come to assess how well a teacher teaches, but are investigators or future teachers who come to learn from classroom events, acquire the teaching methods and techniques, and construct a background of how to deal with their students (Reed & Bergemann, 2001).

Hence, due to the significance of classroom observations in conducting research, classroom observations of two different reading topics in two different classes were made. The reason behind observing the teaching of two different reading topics is to pick up the most concrete problems that Fourth-year middle school EFL learners encountered in the reading comprehension task.

School's Name	Belaarbi Baabouche	
Teacher's Name	Mr. Gaariche Ahmed	
Level	4 th year	
Learners' number	50	
Time	4 hours	
Date of observations	Topic 02	Topic 01
	10 th / 05/2022	26 th / 04/2022

Table 2.1: Classroom Observation Sampling.

2.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

This section will present a qualitative and quantitative analysis of both teachers' questionnaire and pupils' classroom observation. To achieve this aim we used tables, bar graphs, and pie-charts. The goal of using tables is to provide numbers in percentage form and to make comparisons easier. Also, a bar graph is a type of graph that employs a sequence of bars across two axes to show data. A bar chart's versatility allows you to depict percentages, totals, counts, and a variety of other data. Pie charts, on the other hand, are circular graphs that show percentages of a whole as slices of a pie (Lee Johnson, 2018).

2.3.1 Teachers' Questionnaire:

1. How long have you been teaching English?

The purpose of this question is to gather information about the experience of the participants in teaching English, which we found to be between 17 and 3 years.

2. Do you think that the English curriculum is appropriate for fourth year middle school pupils?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	33.33%
No	8	66.66%
Total	12	100%

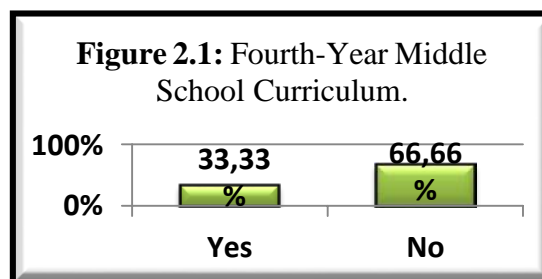


Table 2.2: Fourth Year Middle School English curriculum.

We see that 33% of teachers think that the English curriculum is appropriate since it is reasonable and they know how to apply it. On the other hand, the remaining 66% believe that some of the curriculum elements are beyond the pupils' abilities, long, and complicated.

3. Are your pupils interested in learning English?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	75%
No	3	25%
Total	12	100%

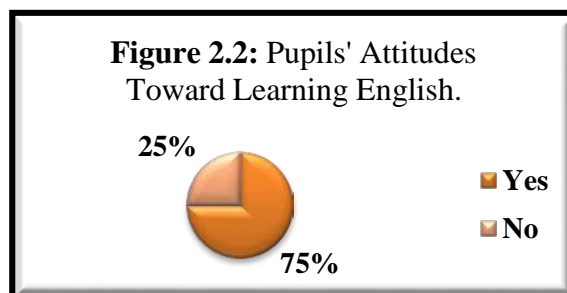


Table 2.3: Pupils' Attitudes Toward Learning English.

According to the data, 75% of teachers say that their students are interested in learning English. This can be seen in their enthusiastic engagement in class, their attempts to speak English, and their dedication to learning the language. While the remaining 25% claim their students dislike English since they do not show any interest in the English class, which can

be related to both teaching methods and techniques, the performance of the teacher, as well as students' poor attitudes toward learning English.

4. Which of the following skills your pupil's best prefer?

	Frequency	Percentage
Listening	4	33.33%
Speaking	1	8.33%
Reading	5	41.66%
Writing	2	16.66%
Total	12	100%

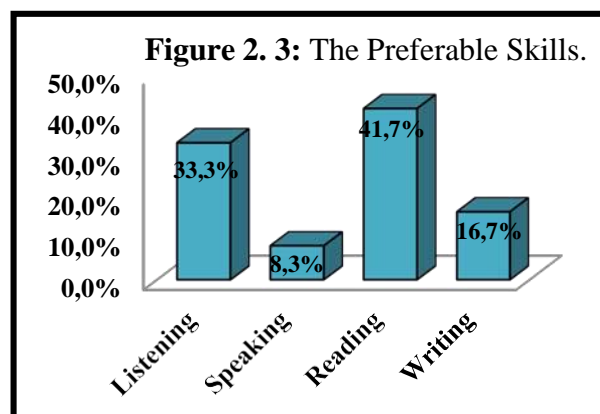


Table 2.4: The Preferable Skills.

The purpose behind asking this question to teachers is to know if the fourth-year middle school pupils prefer the reading skill because their teachers are more aware of this point. The bar graph shows that 41.66% put reading in the first place and 33.33% see that the listening skill is the most preferred skill by their pupils, perhaps because these two skills are receptive skills; they do not require interactive, judgmental communicative tasks or their pupils are silent learners. While 8.33% claim that speaking is the preferable skill, the rest (16.66%) chose writing, which can be related to the good linguistic competence their pupils have.

5. In which area of language you think your learners need to learn more?

	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	2	16.66%
Reading	4	33.33%
Listening	1	8.33%
Vocabulary	3	25%
Speaking	1	8.33%
Writing	1	8.33%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.5: Learners' Needs.

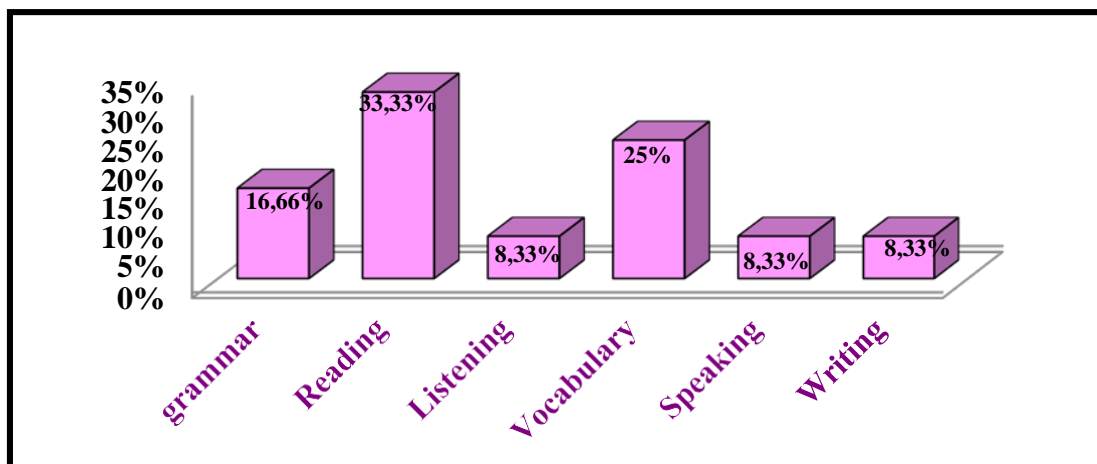


Figure 2.4: Learners' Needs.

According to the bar graph, 33.33 percent of participants believe that reading is more important to their students than the other skills. This is understandable because their students would only be assessed on their reading comprehension and writing skills during the exams. 25% believe that their students need to enhance their vocabulary, which is essential for reading comprehension success. whereas 16.66 percent say that their students should spend more time learning and practicing grammar because it is the foundation of successful foreign language learning. The other areas of language, on the other hand, receive the same percentage (8.33%) from the respondents. Perhaps they assume that in order to improve English fluency, their students should strengthen their listening, speaking, and writing skills.

6. According to your experience, how would you describe the reading level of the fourth-year pupils?

	Frequency	Percentage
Average	2	16.33%
Above Average	3	25%
Below Average	7	58.33%
Total	12	100%

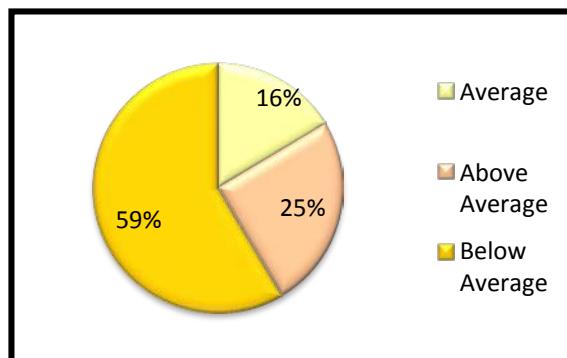


Table 2.6: Learners' Reading Level.

Figure 2.5: Learners' Reading Level.

According to the data above, 58.33% of the informants think that the level of reading of their fourth-year pupils is below average. Perhaps they struggle with decoding problems; they cannot grasp and interpret the meaning of complex sentences or even the basic ones. While 25% think that their pupils' level is above average. Their pupils master a certain level of critical thinking; they can recognize the accurate meaning of the texts, provide synonyms for

the key vocabulary, and summarize texts successfully. However, 16.66% of participants think that the level of their pupils is average. They have a medium level of interaction during the reading sessions; they participate and can understand the general idea of the text.

7. What is the main difficulty that your pupils face when reading?

	Frequency	Percentage
Reading Aloud	2	16.33%
Difficulties of pronunciation	4	33.33%
Ambiguous words	6	50%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.7: Learners' Reading Difficulties.

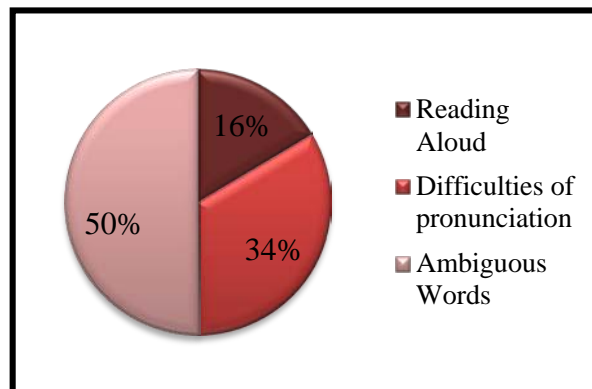


Figure 2.6: Learners' Reading Difficulties.

According to the pie chart above, it appears that 50% of teachers declare that their pupils face problems in understanding the ambiguous words included in the given text. We can relate this difficulty to the lack of reading habits in English. 33.33% declare that their pupils have difficulties with pronunciation. This difficulty is logical because English is not the mother language of Algerian pupils; it doesn't have specific phonological rules; that's why they need to know the pronunciation beforehand by practicing listening skills, which are not available in their daily lives. While 16.33% see that their pupils cannot read aloud. Perhaps their pupils have low self-confidence and are afraid to make mistakes, be under pressure, and be embarrassed in front of their classmates.

8. According to you as a language teacher, what is the main cause behind this problem?

	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Time	3	25%
Lack of Reading habit	1	8.33%
Lack of vocabulary	6	50%
The difficulty of the Text	2	16.66%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.8: Causes Behind The Learners' Reading Difficulties.

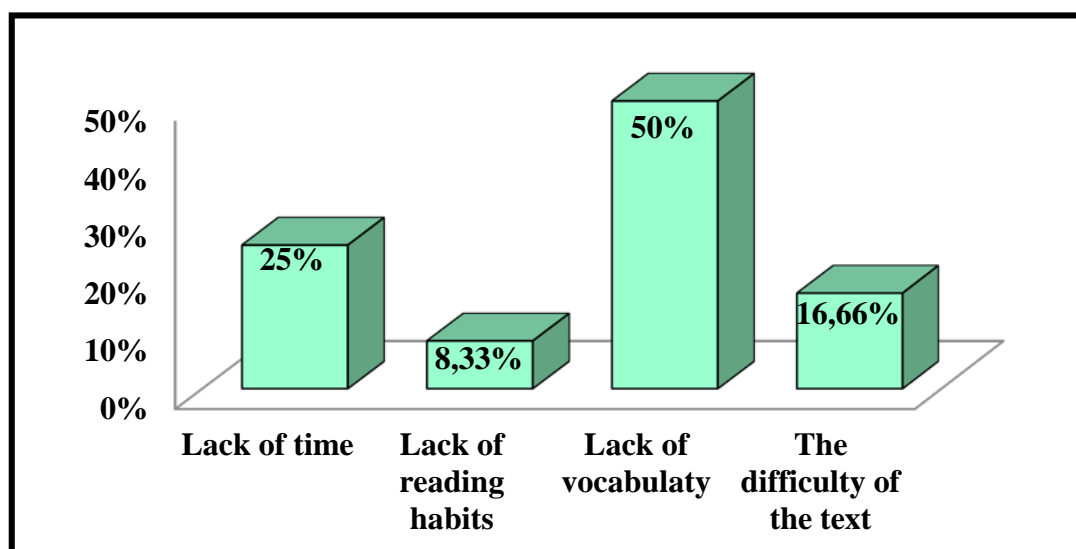


Figure 2.7: Causes behind The Learners' Reading Difficulties.

According to the bar graph above, 50% of fourth-year middle school teachers see that their pupils cannot do the reading comprehension task appropriately because they lack English vocabulary. This problem may arise due to the shortcomings of the English-Algerian educational program in middle schools during the past three years. While 25% declare that the lack of time is the main cause behind their pupils' reading difficulties. Perhaps they did not feel that their pupils did not grasp the reading session as it was meant to be, or they did not have sufficient time to explain and discuss the texts. As it is shown in the bar graph, 16.33% of teachers claim that the difficulty of the text is the main cause. This can be related to the fact that the educational responsible in Algeria did not select suitable texts to be included in the pupils' text books. However, 8.33% see that the lack of reading habits is the main cause. Perhaps this teacher encourages reading for pleasure to learn a foreign language.

9. In English tests and exams, you find that your pupils struggling:

	Frequency	Percentage
In answering the reading comprehension questions	6	50%
In answering the mastery of the language questions	2	16.33%
In answering the situation of integration.	4	33.33%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.9: Learners' English Exams Difficulties.

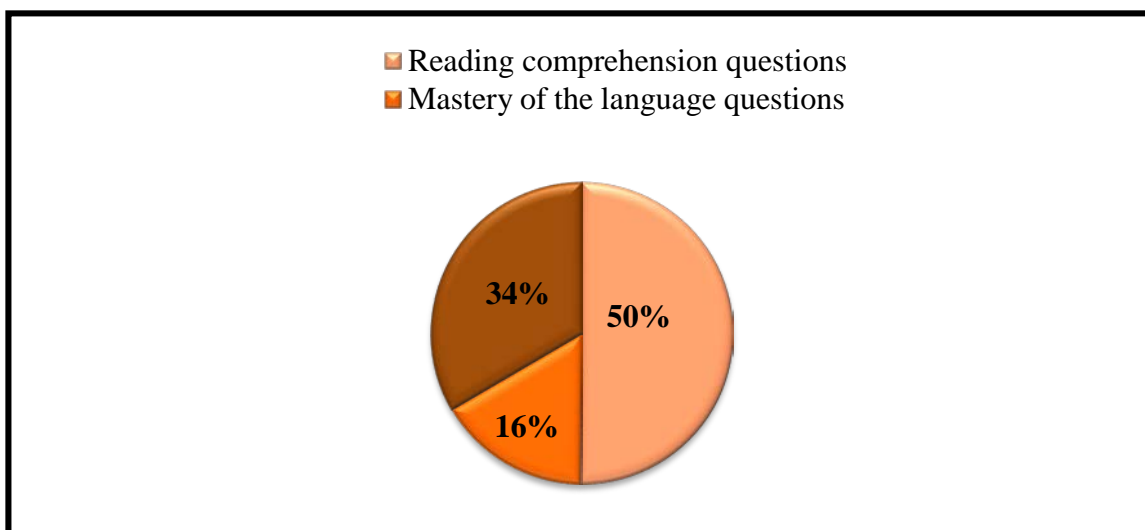


Figure 2.8: Learners' English Exams Difficulties.

As it is shown in the pie chart above, 50% of teachers claim that their pupils struggle with answering the reading comprehension questions during the English exams. This may be related to the difficulty of the text, which includes unfamiliar vocabulary, or that their pupils do not read the text carefully because they have exam anxiety, which leads to a loss of concentration. While 16.33% of teachers see that their pupils are not able to answer the questions of the language mastery section (applying grammar rules). The reason behind this problem can be a shortcoming during the lesson explanation; the pupils do not grasp the real function of the grammar rules. However, 33.33% of the informants claim that their pupils struggle with answering the third section of the text (situation of integration). Perhaps their pupils cannot write even simple meaningful sentences and they cannot express their ideas due to both the lack of vocabulary and the misuse of grammar structures.

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

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	25%
No	9	75%
Total	12	100%

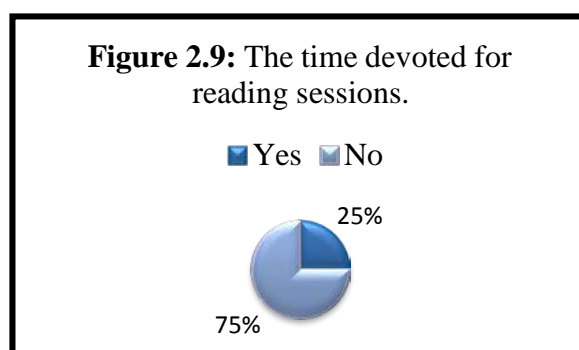


Table 2.10: Time devoted for reading.

According to the data, 75% of teachers feel that the time devoted to the reading sessions is not sufficient. Perhaps their pupils cannot accomplish all the reading tasks related to the text, such as reading aloud, explaining the whole text, answering the reading comprehension questions, and

discussing the ideas and key vocabulary of the text. Whereas the remaining 25% declare that the time devoted to the reading sessions is sufficient. This can be related either to the high level of their pupils, or these teachers skip some teaching reading strategies to make the time sufficient.

11. Do you give a sufficient time to the pre-reading stage?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	41.66%
No	7	58.33%
Total	12	100%

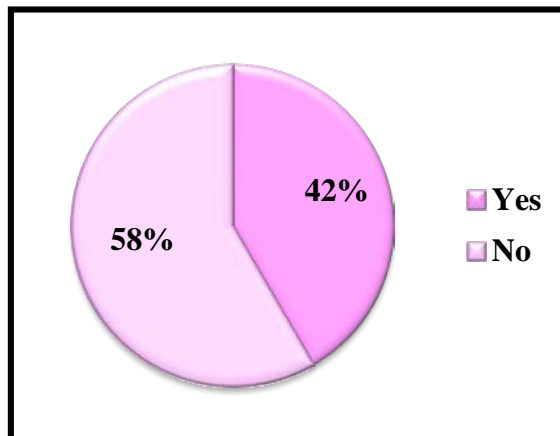


Table 2.11: Pre-Reading Time.

Figure 2.10: Pre-Reading Time.

The data above show that 41.66% provide a sufficient time to the pre-reading stage. Perhaps these informants view it as an important warming-up stage to prepare their pupils for the topic of the text because it includes brainstorming tasks. However, 58.33% of the respondents declare that they do not provide a sufficient time to this stage. This can be related either to the lack of time devoted to the reading session in general or they cannot manage it they prefer to enter to processing the texts and the questions directly.

12. Have you ever used the KWL Chart in reading classroom?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0%
No	12	100%
Total	12	100%

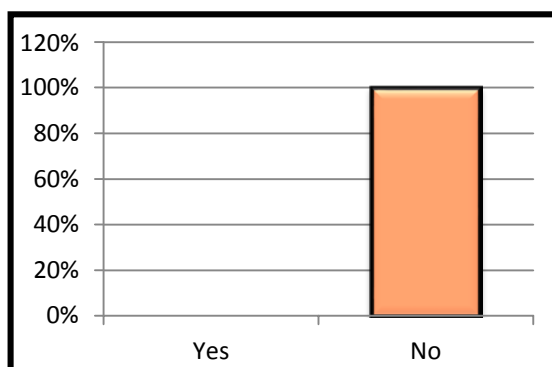


Table 2.12: The Use of KWL chart.

Figure 2.11: The Use of KWL chart.

In the bar graph above, it is distinctly shown that all teachers do not use the KWL chart during the reading session. We think that they do not even know the nature of the KWL strategy, which is a chart that teachers draw on the whiteboard to assist pupils with arranging their learning before, during, and after a lesson. They can be used to stimulate pupils' interest in a new topic, activate past knowledge, communicate unit objectives, and track pupils' progress (Echevarría, Vogt, and Short,

2013). (See the table below). This may be interpreted by the teachers' lack of training and their continued use of traditional teaching methods.

Topic:		
What I Know	What I want to Know	What I learned

Table 2.13: KWL Chart Sample.

13. According to your experience, do you think that using L1 as a strategy to simplify and address the meaning is useless for your fourth-year EFL learners during teaching reading comprehension?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	75%
No	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.14: The use of L1.

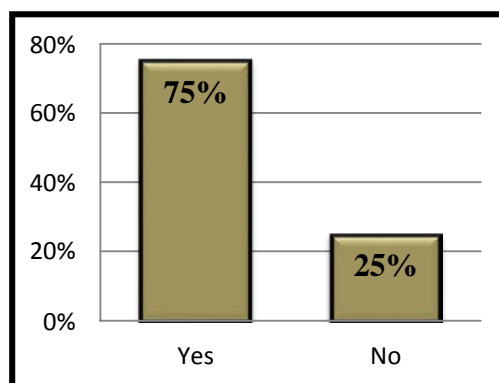


Figure 2.12: The use of L1.

From the figures above, we notice that when teaching reading, 75% of the informants view that using L1 as a strategy to simplify and address the meaning is useless for their fourth-year EFL learners. Either this is due to their belief that their pupils are competent enough to understand the basic vocabulary, or they prefer to provide multiple English synonyms and antonyms. They may also use body language to address the meaning of the text. While the remaining 25% think that using L1 as a strategy to simplify and address the meaning is useful for their fourth-year EFL learners. We do not know whether this is due to their belief that their pupils cannot understand the content of the text because they do not have the basic linguistic competence, or whether they think it is a fast technique to save time and address the meaning to their learners easily and effectively.

14. What activities do you use in post-reading stage to assess your pupils' reading comprehension?

	Frequency	Percentage
Crossword puzzles	0	0%
Multiple-choice questions	4	33.33%
Focusing on the new vocabulary (synonyms/antonyms)	3	25%
Focusing on the reading comprehension questions	5	41.66%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.15: Activities of Assessing Reading.

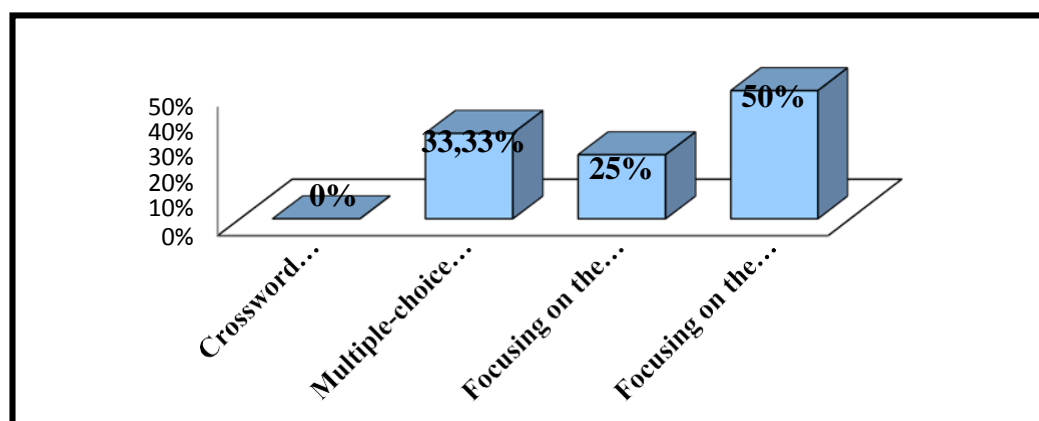


Figure 2.13: Activities of Assessing Reading.

From the figure above, we notice that 50% of English teachers assess reading comprehension by focusing on reading comprehension questions. It may be the most effective way to evaluate their pupils' understanding by pushing them to do the intensive reading for the given text and try to activate their critical thinking. While 33.33% prefer to use multiple-choice questions to check their pupils' reading comprehension questions. It may be a more comfortable technique for their pupils; it shows their pupils' concentration and ability to choose the appropriate answer. 25% focus on the new vocabulary, which may help them check their pupils' understanding of the reading text and their ability to use the new vocabulary in other contexts correctly. However, crossword puzzle activities have no vote. Perhaps teachers cannot integrate it as a reading assessment activity because it takes time and it is more effective for first-year middle school English learners.

15. Do you think that motivation play a significant role in enhancing reading for English language development?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	100 %
No	0	0%
Total	12	100%

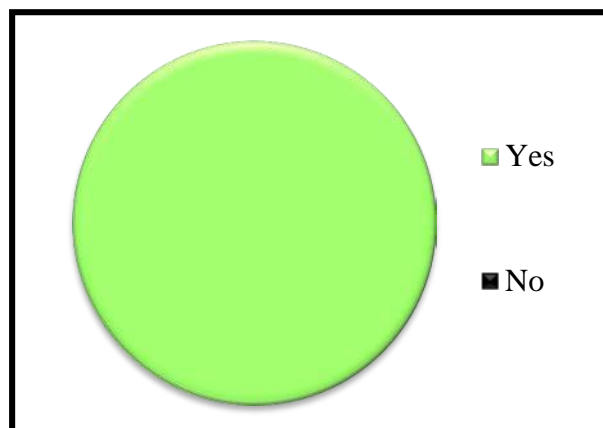


Table 2.16: The role of motivation.

Figure 2.14: The role of motivation.

According to the findings, 100% of the respondents agree that motivation is important in improving reading skills for English language development. Perhaps they learn to achieve a goal, pass their English exam, enjoy the process of learning, satisfy their parents, or obtain a reward, which can lead them to develop their linguistic competence spontaneously.

16. Which of the following suggestions you recommend to improve the Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement?

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Devote more hours to reading sessions.	4	33.33%
Encourage reading for pleasure through involving pupils into reading clubs.	2	16.33%
Develop pupils' vocabulary through reading assignments and projects.	3	25%
Teach critical thinking skills and decoding strategies	1	8.33%
Provide more materials and improve the efficiency of fourth-year middle school EFL teachers.	2	16.33%
Total	12	100%

Table 2.17: Suggestions to improve Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement .

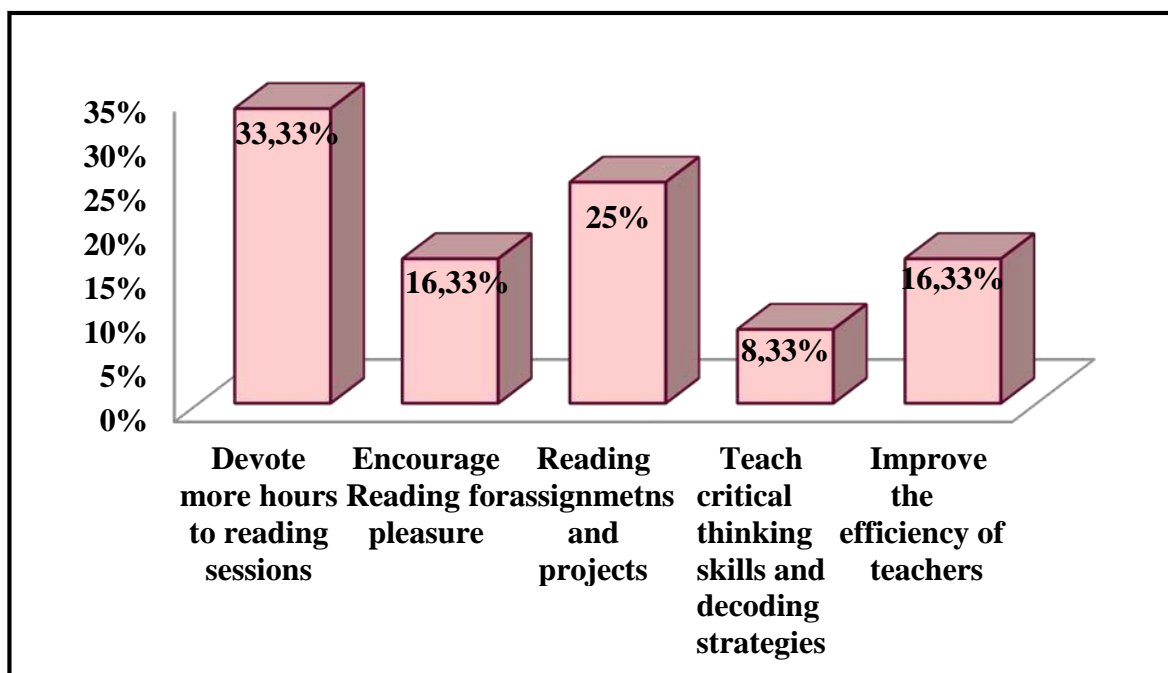


Figure 2.16: Suggestions to improve Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement.

From the bar graph above, we note that 33.33% suggest devoting more hours to reading sessions. Teachers may see the time devoted is not sufficient to teach all the reading skills, and strategies, and to analyze the whole text. While 16.33% of the participants recommend encouraging reading for pleasure by involving pupils in reading clubs, which may increase pupils' motivation to read as much as possible in English. 25% of the informants suggest developing pupils' vocabulary by giving them reading assignments and projects. Perhaps this assessment technique forces pupils to be engaged in reading to avoid being punished and get good marks. While 8.33% choose to teach critical thinking skills and decoding strategies to their pupils. They may be effective in saving time and getting the text's interpretation cleverly and easily. As for the last 16.33%, they suppose that improving the materials and the efficiency of teachers is the most effective way to enhance the reading comprehension achievement of the Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL. They may see that the low reading achievement of the Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners is due to the lack of materials, and lack of training for EFL teachers in Algeria.

2.3.2. Classroom Observation:

Topic 01: Globalization:	
Pre-reading (17 min)	<p>The teacher Wrote the word “Globalization” on the whiteboard then asked the pupils to read the word loudly one by one. We observed that none of them could pronounce the word correctly; the majority of them pronounced it: / glɒbəlɪzeɪʃən/, and others read it in French. The teacher corrected and said: /glɒbəlɪzeɪʃən/ and asked the pupils to pronounce it and read it many times loudly. Then he asked them: “what is the meaning of the written word?” They kept silence and were waiting for the teacher’s answer. Instead, the teacher did not answer; he turned to the whiteboard and divided the word into two parts: Global+ ization then pointed with his hand to the word “Global” and started to use body language drawing a suddenly one of the pupils answered randomly: “It means the Earth”. Another one added: “It means the world”. The teacher interacted by saying: “not really”. It was obvious that his pupils would never guess the meaning for that he turned again to the whiteboard and wrote the meaning of globalization in Arabic. The teacher waited to get some interaction; unfortunately, his pupils were not familiar with the word even in their mother tongue which made the teacher disappointed. However, he added some questions such as: “What is internet? What is Technology? Do you use Facebook, Instagram, and snapchat? We noticed that all the pupils recognized the words and answered: “yes”. He immediately asked again; “what is globalization?” The pupils keep quiet for a while then some of the pupils answered: “Technology!” The teacher replied: “Yes, maybe” and then he looked to his watch and said: “Quickly, open your books on page 118”.</p> <p>During this stage, despite of the teacher attempts to activate his pupils prior knowledge, in the very beginning, we observed that all the majority of pupils did not react with the teacher at all and found the word ambiguous even in their mother tongue. This shows that they did not meet with the word “Globalization” and had no background on this topic. But, when the teacher mentioned familiar words, he received a significant participation and interaction.</p>
While-reading	<p>In this stage, the teacher started to read loudly the text given in the textbook on page 118 (see appendix 02) and the pupils were following.</p>

<p>(18 min)</p>	<p>When he finished reading, he asked 4 pupils to read loudly (Each one read a paragraph).The teacher was correcting the pronunciation and explaining the difficult words and try to deliver the general meaning of the text in both Arabic and French. They really faced problems in pronunciation. Despite of the teacher’s efforts, It seemed that the pupils were still struggling and found the whole text boring and ambiguous. Then, After reading the text, the teacher tried to identify the key words in the text and tried to give a simple definition to the word “Globalization”, as well as, encouraged his pupils to actively respond to the ideas in the text through discussion and giving different opinions about their real life experiences.</p> <p>During this stage, we noticed that pupils started to understand to topic and the ideas of the text and had the general meaning of the text to some extent. This shows the importance of while-reading stage in activating pupils’ critical thinking to achieve the reading comprehension of the text.</p>
<p>Post- reading (25 min)</p>	<p>The teacher continued the reading session by giving them 15 min to answer the reading comprehension questions on pages 118-119 (see appendix 02). He asked them to work individually, and then suddenly he changed his mind and made them working in peers. After 15 min, they started to answer. We noticed that only 40% of them participated in answering the first two WH questions. While almost 80% participated in answering both the multiple-choice and the matching questions correctly. However, only 20% could answer the 6th and 7th questions which require providing synonyms and antonyms while the others gave random words ignoring the grammatical structures of the words. The same case to the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th questions, the majority of the pupils could not answer and create coherent sentences. We did not notice a significant participation. Additionally, although the twelfth question was easy (the pros and the cons of globalization), it was answered correctly by just 50%. The teacher skipped the 13th and 14th questions and went to the first part of task 3 which involves choosing an appropriate title to the text. Almost 100% selected the appropriate answer.</p> <p>Hence, these observations show that the majority of the pupils did not grasp and comprehend the text successfully because they still had some significant shortcomings.</p>

Based on our observations, we may conclude that the lesson was only 30% successful. Because the timing (the three reading stages) was not fairly distributed. The pre-reading stage took a lot of time (17min) that it was somehow wasted for nothing. We saw that the pupils were not aware of the topic and the text's content because they did not have even an enough experience in their mother tongue to relate the theme to their prior knowledge. Furthermore, the majority of the pupils (80%) were not proficient at reading the passage aloud (they had difficulties in pronouncing the words). Additionally, because they did not have a broad vocabulary, only 5% of them were able to determine the meaning of unknown words. However, we discovered that 40% of the students succeeded in scanning and skimming the text; they could understand the meaning and get at the author's point by using their critical thinking. In sum, a small number of pupils were able to respond and express their opinions about the topic.

Topic 02: Charity Work Stars Want To Save The World	
Pre- reading (10 min)	<p>The teacher distributed a printed handout (his own effort) to each one of his pupils (see appendix 03). It is about charity work. The main idea is: stars want to save the world. The teacher asked them to have a look to the pictures and asked “Do you know these actors?” We noted that all of them recognized the actors and had a background about the movies the actors were idols in. The pupils were highly motivated, inspired, and well participated. We noticed that they were totally eager to figure out what the topic is about. The actors included in the printed handout were: LEONARDO DI CAPRIO, GEORGE CLOONEY and MATT DAMON, SCARLETT JOHANSSON, and ANGELINA JOLIE. The pupils expressed in Arabic; they gave random thoughts and opinions about the different movies they saw. Especially, about the TITANIC.</p> <p>The atmosphere was enthusiastic. We noticed that 70% knew that these actors were donating to charities, especially ANGELINA JOLIE who adopted babies from different poor countries. The teacher was smiling and responding with “Yeah! Yes, that’s right, indeed” and he translated on the whiteboard almost each word his pupils mentioned in Arabic. Then, again, the teacher wrote the word “charity” and asked “what is a charity?” they all gave different answers in their mother tongue. Such as: giving money to poor people, donation, cooperation,</p>

	<p>mercy...etc.</p> <p>Then the teacher asked another question: “have you ever been a member of a charity?” We noticed that 40% of the pupils were actually involved in charities and associations in Bordj Bou-Argeridj city.</p> <p>In this stage, we noticed that the majority of pupils were motivated and excited to discover more. This is because they felt they are familiar with the theme and had a certain prior knowledge about it. They got the general meaning of the printed handouts easily. Hence, the teacher seemed to have an extra energy to dive deeper into the topic.</p>						
<p>While- reading (25 min)</p>	<p>The teacher started to read the text which is divided into sections; an introduction, then each of LEONARDO DI CAPRIO, GEORGE CLOONEY and MATT DAMON, SCARLETT JOHANSSON, and ANGELINA JOLIE had a separated paragraph (see appendix 03). The teacher was reading and shedding light on the key words. The pupils were paying attention and the most of them were highlighting the new vocabulary (the thing that we did not notice when we attend the reading session of the first topic: “Globalization”). Additionally, The teacher drew 2 tables; each one divided into 3 columns.</p> <p>The first table focused on vocabulary.</p>						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="454 1209 742 1265">Antonym</th> <th data-bbox="742 1209 1098 1265">Synonym</th> <th data-bbox="1098 1209 1436 1265">Word</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="454 1265 742 1321"></td> <td data-bbox="742 1265 1098 1321"></td> <td data-bbox="1098 1265 1436 1321"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Antonym	Synonym	Word			
	Antonym	Synonym	Word				
	<p>Here, we noticed that 70% could give synonyms and antonyms in English, whereas the last 30% recognize only the meaning in Arabic and could not provide synonyms and antonyms in English.</p> <p>The second table focused on the simple past tense and the past participle of the verbs (regular and irregular verbs).</p>						
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="454 1612 742 1668">Past participle</th> <th data-bbox="742 1612 1098 1668">Simple past</th> <th data-bbox="1098 1612 1436 1668">Infinitive</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="454 1668 742 1724"></td> <td data-bbox="742 1668 1098 1724"></td> <td data-bbox="1098 1668 1436 1724"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Past participle	Simple past	Infinitive				
Past participle	Simple past	Infinitive					
<p>Here, we observed some drawbacks; only 40% were memorizing the list of common irregular verbs, whereas the last 50% added the “ed” ending to all the verbs to indicate the simple past. Although the teacher made a review, they could not answer correctly. One of the pupils claimed that irregular verbs are too difficult to memorize by heart.</p>							

	<p>To sum up, we noticed that the majority of pupils were participating, despite the fact that they were using Arabic. They presented that the interpretation of the given text was absorbed to an extent led the teacher not to reread the passage.</p>
<p>Post- reading (25min)</p>	<p>In this stage, The teacher asked his pupils to answer the three activities (WH questions, Matching, and then conjugation) (see appendix 03) which are included in the same handouts. He gave them around 20 min and asked them to solve the first seventh. WH questions and let the last fifth ones as homework. After 20 min, the teacher said: “time is up” they started to answer. We noted that the majority were participating (around 80%). However, some of them made mistakes in converting the main verb as a stem. Moving to second activity (Match each word with its appropriate definition), 90% were participating; they selected the appropriate definition for each word. Whereas, the last activity (Put the verbs in brackets in their right form) was hard to done correctly. Only 40% could solve the whole activity correctly. While the last 60% solved only the half activity.</p> <p>Despite the fact that the majority of the pupils could not answer the third activity (related to grammar competence), the pupils, in this reading session, presented that they grasped and comprehended the text successfully; the majority of them answered quickly and correctly the reading comprehension questions because they had strong background about the topic and were motivated during the reading session.</p>

Based on our observations, we may conclude that the lesson was 80% successful because the timing (the three reading stages) was equally distributed. We saw that the pupils were highly aware of the topic and the text's content because they had enough experience in their mother tongue to relate the theme to their prior knowledge. Additionally, because the majority of them had a lot of previous information on the topic, 70% were able to determine the meaning of unknown words, and provide synonyms and antonyms. We discovered that 80% of the pupils succeeded in scanning and skimming the text; they could understand the meaning and get at the author's point by using their critical thinking. However, 60% had difficulties in memorizing irregular verbs because they are difficult to learn and recall since they don't respect any rules. In conclusion, a large proportion of pupils were inspired, motivated, and able to absorb the content of the topic.

Chapter 3

Main Results discussion and Recommendations

3.1. Main Results discussion.

This Study tried to examine the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by fourth-year middle school EFL learners at Belaarbi Baabouche middle school.

The findings of this study showed that fourth-year middle school EFL learners encountered a number of reading comprehension problems when engaging in reading activities such as: mispronunciation, new vocabulary, decoding issues, lack of prior knowledge in L1 (Arabic), and the recognition of tenses.

The results indicate that both fourth-year middle school EFL learners and teachers agreed that the most serious obstacle that caused the low reading comprehension was the unfamiliar vocabulary. Vocabulary size is considered to be an important predictor of the ability to comprehend written texts; they are strongly related. Contrary to the globalization topic, pupils showed a higher performance of comprehension, were motivated to learn, and participated during the reading session of a familiar topic (Charity work) because they recognized the word itself and decoded it. Moreover, because they had sufficient information in their mother tongue (Arabic) they showed high confidence and could identify the main idea easily, which clarifies the importance of using L1 (Arabic) as a mean to save time, and address the meaning effectively.

Additionally, the findings reveal that the low level of reading comprehension of fourth middle school EFL learners is related to the insufficient time devoted to the reading sessions. This obstacle made teachers struggling in managing the reading session and was obliged to skip and give short time to the pre-reading stage, which in turn affect negatively the while-reading stage when pupils need to cognitively process the text.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers agreed that the English reading curriculum of fourth middle school EFL learners is and not suitable because it contains several complicated texts that pass the pupils' mental capacities and they do not even have a background in Arabic on them. Thus, it decreases their reading comprehension achievement.

The Analysis of teachers' answers indicates that they are totally aware of both the importance of reading comprehension and their pupils reading comprehension difficulties; they focused on reading comprehension questions. In order to enhance the Algerian fourth middle school EFL learners reading comprehension achievement, the majority of teachers recommended devoting more hours to reading sessions, developing pupils' vocabulary through reading assignments and projects, and encouraging reading for pleasure through involving pupils into reading clubs.

3.2. Recommendations.

To improve the Algerian fourth middle school EFL learners reading comprehension achievement, we suggest the following:

3.2.1. To the Educational Authority.

Algerian educational authorities should make efforts to improve the reading comprehension competence and performance of fourth-year EFL middle school pupils. Before engaging Algerian EFL middle school teachers in the teaching process, authorities should first equip them with adequate training. Second, they should attempt to limit the number of students in classrooms in order to make reading sessions more successful. Third, they should organize national English reading contests to motivate students to achieve their best. Fourth, they must allocate more time to reading. Finally, educational authorities should update the English curriculum of fourth-year pupils by picking texts and themes that correspond to the students' mental capacities and are relevant to their environment.

3.2.2. To Fourth-Year Middle School EFL Teachers.

Teachers are asked to be aware of their students' reading comprehension problems and be ready to help them overcome them.

Teachers are expected to encourage and support their students to improve their vocabulary knowledge as much as possible. First and foremost, they must raise their awareness of the use of lexis in the classroom. They should encourage reading for pleasure in both their mother tongue and English by guiding them to choose books they are interested in. In this sense, the most appropriate type of book that is suitable for fourth-year middle school EFL learners is bilingual books. Bilingual books are an effective tool for vocabulary development because they make pupils read in English and read the translation script on the opposite page at the same time, which fosters their vocabulary intuitively and increases their reading comprehension achievement.

Critical thinking is important because it allows EFL learners to think independently and solve problems. To teach critical thinking, apply the three stages of teaching reading (especially the pre-reading stage), make your pupils debate and working in pairs, ask challenging questions, draw mind maps, train and urge them to use dictionaries and minimize using technology (Google Translate); give them an assignment each session in which they look for 10 new words in the dictionary, memorize them, and include them in different sentences. As a result, they will gradually increase their vocabulary.

3.2.3. To Fourth-Year Middle School EFL Learners.

Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners should be aware of their reading issues so that they can define their difficulties in reading comprehension and work to solve them.

According to the findings, fourth- year middle school EFL learners regarded the meaning of new words as the most significant barrier to understanding new texts. As a result, pupils must concentrate on expanding their vocabulary.

One of the most effective ways for kids to boost their vocabulary is to improve their reading habits (reading for pleasure) because the more they read the more vocabulary they will learn and know. It is common knowledge that becoming a skilled reader takes time and effort, and that the skills will develop naturally if one reads frequently. Fourth-year middle school EFL learners should also study vocabulary-building strategies and games such as crossword puzzles, and scrabble.

3.3. Conclusion.

The final chapter focused on discussing the main results. The data from the participants and classroom observations allowed us to affirm our hypothesis and provide evidence about the obstacles that Algerian fourth-year EFL learners face during their learning process. In addition, the chapter contained recommendations and strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

General Conclusion

The Algerian educational authority, EFL teachers, and pupils must pay close attention to reading skill due to its higher importance in the EFL teaching-learning process. The purpose of this study was to identify the major reasons influencing fourth-year EFL learners' low reading comprehension achievement in middle school. This research was conducted on the basis of a case study. It attempted to discover the true causes of the current level of English reading comprehension among fourth-year middle school pupils at Belaarbi Baabouche middle school.

It has been found that a variety of factors contribute to low reading comprehension achievement, which causes fourth-year middle school EFL learners to struggle with understanding the texts studied. In reality, the outcomes of the data collecting tool analysis confirmed our previously stated notion. The most major challenges encountered by fourth-year middle school EFL learners were the lack of vocabulary and an unfamiliar lexicon.

This study is completed with proposals and recommendations for educational authorities, teachers, and pupils. They aim to help fourth-year middle school EFL learners enhance their reading comprehension.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is insufficient to cover or shed light on the reading comprehension issues that plague middle school students. Furthermore, this theme is extremely broad. As a result, EFL researchers should conduct comparable investigations to undertake a more in-depth examination.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a research work. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions whose aim is to gather information about difficulties about reading comprehension difficulties of forth middle school EFL Learners. Your precious help is mostly appreciated.

1. How long have you been teaching English?

Years

2. Do you think that the English curriculum is appropriate for forth year middle school pupils?

Yes No

Please justify:

.....

3. Are your pupils interested in learning English?

Yes No

Please justify:

.....

4. Which of the following skills your pupils best prefer?

- Listening
- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

According to you, why?.....

5. In which area of language you think your learners need to learn more?

- | | | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vocabulary | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. According to your experience, how would you describe the reading level of the fourth-year pupils?

- a) Average
- b) Above average
- c) Below average

7. What is the main difficulty that your pupils face when reading?

- a) Reading aloud
- b) Difficulties of pronunciation
- c) Ambiguous words

8. According to you as a language teacher, what is the main cause behind this problem?

- a) Lack of time
- b) Lack of reading habit
- c) Lack of vocabulary
- d) The difficulty of the text

9. In English tests and exams, you find that your pupils struggling:

- a) In answering the reading comprehension questions (wh questions, finding synonyms)
- b) In answering the mastery of the language questions (grammar rules)
- c) In answering the situation of integration (writing paragraph)

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

Yes No

Why?

11. Do you give a sufficient time to the pre-reading stage?

Yes No

Please justify?

.....

12. Have you ever used KWL Charts in reading classroom?

Yes No

13. According to your experience, do you think that using L1 as a strategy to simplify and address the meaning is useless for your fourth- year EFL learners during teaching reading comprehension?

Yes No

Why?.....

14. What activities do you use in post-reading stage to assess your pupils' reading comprehension?

- a) Crossword puzzles
- b) Multiple choice questions
- c) Focusing on the new vocabulary
- d) Focusing on the reading comprehension questions

15. Do you think that motivation play a significant role in enhancing reading for English language development?

Yes No

Why?.....

16. Which of the following suggestions do you recommend to improve the Algerian fourth-year middle school EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement?

Suggestions	
Devote more hours to reading sessions.	
Encourage reading for pleasure through involving pupils into reading clubs.	
Develop pupils' vocabulary through reading assignments and projects.	
Teach critical thinking skills and decoding strategies	
Improve the efficiency of fourth-year middle school EFL teachers	

Thank you so much for your cooperation

Appendix 02



I read and do.

Task 1. I read text (1) and complete the bibliographical notes in my copybook.

Differences between countries become less evident each year. Nowadays, all over the world people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits and TV channels. Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of this? It is undoubtedly the case that the world today has become a global village. One of the effects of this is that increasingly people all over the world are exposed to similar services and products and adopt similar habits. **My** view is that this is largely a beneficial process and in this essay **I** will explain why.

The first point to make is that there are some downsides to this process of cultural globalisation, but **these** are relatively minor. The most significant of these disadvantages is that **it** can weaken national culture and traditions. For example, if people watch films and television programmes produced in the United States, sometimes **they** will adopt the lifestyle of the American characters they see on television. Typically, however, this only affects minor details such as clothing and does not seriously threaten national identity.

When we turn to the other side of the argument, there are two major points to make in favour of this process. The first of **these** is that the more we share habits, products and services, the better we understand each other and this reduces prejudice against other nations. The other point relates to modernity. It is a sign of progress in a society that people no longer are restricted to brands and products from **their** own society but are able to access more international goods.

In conclusion, **I** understand the point of view of people who worry about cultural globalisation because it is a threat to national traditions. However, this is outweighed by its positive impact on international understanding and the fact that **it** represents progress within a society.

Essay by Dominic Cole (www.dcielts.com)

Bibliographical Notes

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| • Author | • Type of document: | • Type of text: |
| • Source | a. blog article | a. descriptive |
| • Number of paragraphs | b. press article | b. narrative |
| | c. web article | c. argumentative |
| | d. essay | d. prescriptive |

Task 2. I read the text again and answer the following questions:

- Who or what do the words in bold type in the text refer to?
- Which of the following sentences explain the writer's statement: "the world today has become a global village"?

- a. "Differences between countries become less evident each year."
 - b. "All over the world people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits and TV channels."
 - c. "This is largely a beneficial process."
 - d. "Increasingly people all over the world are exposed to similar services and products and adopt similar habits."
3. The text is about:
- a. economic globalisation b. cultural globalisation c. technological globalisation
4. Justify your answer to question (3) with two sentences from the text.
5. Match each word from the text (1, 2, 3 ...) with its corresponding definition (a, b, c ...).
- 1. a brand (§ 1) a. an unfair, unreasonable opinion formed without enough thought
 - 2. outweigh (§ 1) b. negative aspects of something regarded as good
 - 3. essay (§ 1) c. a type of product made by a particular company
 - 4. downsides (§ 2) d. a short piece of writing on a particular subject
 - 5. prejudice (§ 3) e. be greater or more important than something else
6. Find in the text the words that are closest in meaning to the following:
obvious, clear (§ 1) – way of life (§ 2) – in support of (§ 3) – limited (§ 3) – products (§ 3)
7. Find in the text the words that are opposite in meaning to the following:
decreasingly (§ 1) – major (§ 2) – strengthen (§ 2) – against (§ 3) – negative (§ 4)
8. In which paragraph(s) does the writer express his opinion on cultural globalisation? Justify your answer with two sentences from the text.
9. How many arguments against cultural globalisation are mentioned in the text? Which adjective does the writer use to qualify these arguments?
10. How many arguments in favour of cultural globalisation are mentioned in the text? Which adjective does the writer use to qualify these arguments?
11. Does the writer use sequencers when he presents his arguments?
12. In the last paragraph, the writer summarises the pros and cons of cultural globalisation. Copy them out and classify them in the following table:

PROS	CONS
.....

13. Do you agree with the writer when he declares that cultural globalisation "*does not seriously threaten national identity*"? Justify your opinion with relevant examples.
14. Do you agree with the writer when he says that "*It is a sign of progress in a society that people no longer are restricted to brands and products from their own society but are able to access more international goods*"? Justify your opinion with relevant examples.

- Task 3.** Choose the most appropriate title to the text.
- a. Pros and Cons of Cultural Globalisation
 - b. Cultural Globalisation: A Threat to National Culture and Identity
 - c. Cultural Globalisation: A Beneficial Process to All Nations

Appendix 03

Mr. GARICHE Ahmed

2021-2022

4ms Classes

STARS WANT TO SAVE THE WORLD

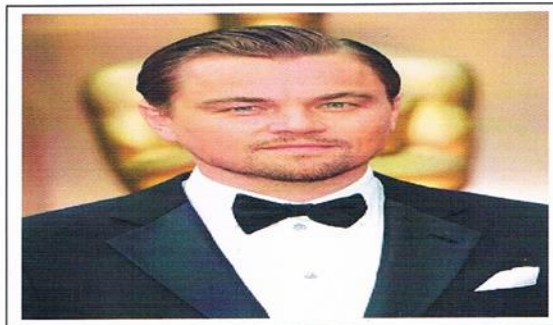
Hollywood stars are not just beautiful and talented, they are generous, too. In fact most stars do some sort of work for charity.

Today lots of actors, singers and celebrities, like Angelina Jolie, George Clooney, Matt Damon, Bono and Scarlett Johansson do charity work. But the concept of celebrities trying to help others is not new. The actress Audrey Hepburn, who was in the film *My fair Lady*, did work for UNICEF in the 1950s. She was a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador from 1988 until her death in 1993.

CHARITY WORK

In Hollywood it is fashionable to be concerned about the world and the environment. But can actors succeed where politicians failed? Well, some are succeeding very well! When a charity is connected to a star, it gets publicity. People become interested and they want to help: Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are often in the news because their work for charity. In 2006 when Jolie was expecting her baby she let People magazine print photos in exchange for a donation to a charity in Haiti. 'We cannot ignore the fact that millions of people are suffering. I want to help', says Jolie. Here are some actors and singers who are trying to make the world a better place.

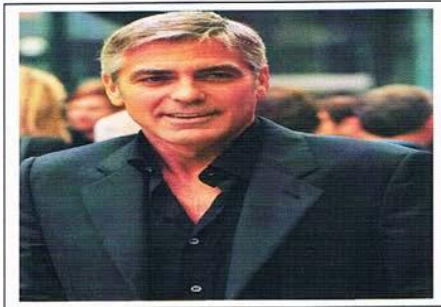
LEONARDO DI CAPRIO



Di Caprio is a determined environmentalist. In 2007, he made a documentary, *11th hour*, about the environment crisis caused by human actions. He flies in commercial planes and not private jets which use more fuel. He thinks that global warming is the biggest problem for humanity.

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GEORGE CLOONEY AND MATT DAMON



George Clooney, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt raise 5 million dollars for Darfur crisis during the premiere of *Ocean's thirteen* at the Cannes Festival. Now, Clooney wants every film festival to be a charity event. After Matt Damon saw extreme poverty in Zambia and South Africa, he wanted to help other parts of Africa, too. He made a documentary called *Running the Sahara* to get support for clean water programs in Africa.

SCARLETT JOHANSSON



In 2001 Scarlett Johansson didn't go to the Oscars: she preferred to tour India and Sri Lanka for the charity Oxfam. 'It is strange to come home when you see people living in poverty', she says, 'It's strange to be famous, but this means I can help a lot of people'.

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ANGELINA JOLIE



Angelina Jolie saw humanitarian crises when she was filming *Tomb Raider* in Cambodia in 2000. When Jolie is on a mission, she lives in the same way as other voluntary workers. ... Not very comfortable for a Hollywood star! Jolie says that stars earn too much money. 'I earn so much. It's crazy' she says. She gives a third of her money to charity .

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What did Audrey Hepburn do for charity?
2. When did she die?
3. What happens when a charity is connected to a celebrity?
4. What did Angelina Jolie do in 2006?
5. What is Leonardo di Caprio's documentary about?
6. Why doesn't Leonardo di Caprio use private jets?
7. How much money did George Clooney, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt raise for the Darfur crisis in 2007?
8. Why did Matt Damon make a documentary Running the Sahara?
9. Why didn't Scarlett Johansson go to the Oscars in 2007?
10. How much money does Angelina Jolie give to charity?
11. What do you think about these people?
12. What would you do to help poor people?

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Match each word with its appropriate definition

1. earn	a. a special day for a particular cultural event .
2. tour	b. the condition of being extremely poor .
3. poverty	c. to receive money for a work that we do .
4. documentary	d. wanting to do something letting nobody stop you .
5. festival	e. to visit a place and taking the time to learn about it.
6. global warming	f. television program that give facts about a subject .
7. determined	g. a gradual increase in the world temperatures .

Put the verbs in brackets in their right form :

1. If all Hollywood stars (**to be**) ready to help the poor , the world (**to be**) better .
2. I (**to write**) a summary as soon as I (**to finish**) the book .
3. After Angelina (**to star**) in Tomb Rider , she (**to visit**) some Asian Countries.
4. He (**to ask**) George Clooney for an autograph when he (**to see**) him at The Oscars Ceremony .
5. He (**not leave**) England until he (**to meet**) the Prime minister .

Résumé:

La lecture est une compétence essentielle qui doit être apprise pour acquérir efficacement une langue étrangère. Cependant, de nombreux apprenants de quatrième année du collège EFL ont du mal à comprendre le sens des textes. Les résultats montrent que les élèves ont du mal à comprendre la lecture en raison d'un manque de vocabulaire et de connaissances préalables de leur langue maternelle (arabe).

خلاصة:

تعتبر القراءة مهارة حيوية ومهمة من أجل اكتساب أي لغة أجنبية بشكل فعال. ومع ذلك، فإن العديد من تلاميذ السنة الرابعة متوسط يجدون صعوبات في فهم معنى النصوص الانجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يعانون من صعوبة فهم القراءة بسبب نقص المفردات ونقص في المكتسبات القبلية بلغتهم الأم (العربية).