MEMOIRE DE FIN D'ETUDES

Réalisé en vue de l'obtention du diplôme de MASTER

Option : didactique des Langues Etrangères

Thème

Investigating the Causes and the Effects of EFL Reading Constraints
Case Study: 4th Year Pupils at BenMaiza Abderrahmane Middle School –BBA-

Présenté par :   **Encadré par :**

-Benseghir Afaf   Dr. Bouazid Tayeb

-Lebidi Feriel

Soutenu publiquement le 03 / 07 / 2022   devant le jury composé de :

Benhamimid Abdennour	MAA	Président
Bouazid Tayeb	MCA	Directeur de mémoire
Habitouche Mustapha	MAA	Examinateur

Année universitaire : 2021-2022

Dedication

To the Almighty God who has given me the physical and mental health to undertake this project. To my parents; Kamel and Nacira who are my honor and gratitude throughout all my life. To my husband Taha who was my source of help and support. To my dear children ; Moudjib and Mouiz who shared me every moment throughout my study. To my brothers Abdelbaki and Raouf ; who I missed a lot. To my sisters Nesrine, Hanen and Dalel; my source support and guidance. To all my nieces and nephews; from Iness my eldest niece to Moutie my youngest nephew. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

By Afaf Benseghir

Dedication

I dedicate this work

To my parents. To my best father in the world. To my mum who motivates me all the time to search and work hard my Allah protect them.

To all my sisters Iness, Wafa, Imene. To my brother and my love Mohammed Amine.

To my hasband , my sweet heart son Islam, my sweet heart daughters Sakina and Djihane and to my niece Sidra.

To each member of my family.

To all my dear classmates who assist me in my investigation.

By Feriel Lebidi

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Reading is one of the four main skills that an EFL learner should master to attain the required competence leading to academic professionalism and success in comprehension. However, most EFL learners are suffering different reading constraints. The purpose of our study was to investigate the causes of these constraints and to determine the extent to which they affect academic performance of middle school learners . A descriptive quantitative/ qualitative design was employed where questionnaires were administered to both middle school teachers of English and fourth year learners at Ben Maiza Abderrahmane school-BBA. The surveys were coded, piloted and analyzed according to the themes of the study. Quantitative data were analyzed by the use of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) and the results were displayed for further recommended similar work.

List of Tables

V

List of Figures

Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

QCA : Qualitative Content Analysis

ITP : Information Transfer Process

List of Symbols

% : Percentage

X : The Calculated percentages

Z : The Value of the Answer

Y: The Total Number of Participants

Table of Contents

Chapter One: EFL Reading and Constraints Faced by Middle School Learners

Part One: Definition of reading , types, the purpose, definition of reading comprehension, essential skills for reading comprehension, theoretical models of the reading process and reading and the other skills.

Part Two: Intermediate EFL Reading

Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology

Part One: Research Design

Part two: Research Findings, analysis and Recommendations

General Introduction

1.Introduction

      Reading, one of the four language skills, is an essential aspect of learning and one way to develop the others skills. It helps increase learners' knowledge and stimulates their imagination. According to Wixon, Weber and Robert(1987), reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader, the text and the context of the reading situation. Hence, learning a foreign language without giving importance to reading skill may cause different constraints that learners encounter. This research aims at examining reading constraints, investigating their causes and exploring their negative impact on the learners and their academic performance. Our subject of study was chosen after my experience in field of teaching for a period of more than seven years and observing pupils' difficulties to read chosen texts fluently, comprehensively and purposefully. Accordingly, this study determines the majority of reading difficulties being psychological ; including low self-confidence, lack of motivation, lack of attention or pedagogical including lack of reading materials , unfamiliarity with topics and other factors.

2.Statement of the Problem

      According to Lerner (2006), a number of learners, for unexplained reasons, are unable to use reading as a tool for learning, getting new information, ideas attitudes and values from standard 4 upwards. Even if they have been taught, it is quite unfortunate that a large number (17.5 per cent) of them are unable to read efficiently at higher class levels (Lerner, 2006).

      Based on my experience as a middle school teacher, I run into several problems which hinder my job among which learners reading constraints, which would strongly affect the other skills. This research will fit into this context and investigate the causes of learners reading difficulties, their effects on learners' learning process and suggest solutions to

overcome this problem by determining the role of the teacher to implement successful reading strategies to promote sound reading and to enhance the quality of education so as to pave the way for learners for more expressive reading skills.

3. Research questions

In the light of what has been discussed above, we formed the following questions :

1. What are the types of EFL reading constraints?

2. What are the main causes of reading constraints and their effects on the learners' academic performance?

3. How can learners improve their reading skills and what strategies should be used to minimize reading difficulties amongst them?

4. Aims and Objectives

The intended aims of this study were to:

1. Investigate the types of reading constraints of ELF learners.

2. Sort out and discuss the main causes leading to reading constraints and their negative effects on EFL learning process.

3. Establish appropriate strategies that would enhance the reading skill for a successful and effective educational performance.

5. Hypothesis

If learners are taught how to read effectively, they will not encounter reading constraints?

6. Literature review

Learning is the cognitive process of transforming information into a relatively permanent change in one's skills, knowledge, behaviors and attitudes so as to respond adequately to situations which may or may not have been previously encountered.

Robert S Worth defines learning as "the result of experience ". People learn languages to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences, to establish relationships with others and strive to make sense of their world. Hence, learning a new language involves learning the four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, taking into consideration that focusing on only one activity –skill- will lead to fall of the rest.

Reading; one of the four language skills, is the cognitive process of extracting meaning from a written or printed text. According to Grellet (2004:7),'' reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the next is often more important than what one finds in it . In reading, the students should be taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements whether these are ideas or simple words.

It is the means by which we can collect information, enrich our knowledge and enlarge our cultures about a specific knowledge area. It is the mind's food. Egyptian writer Abbas Mahmoud Al- Aqqad was once asked about reading, he replied "Reading is a religious obligation not just an extra superficial activity" and this is strongly approved in our Holy book "Qaran" ; being the first reference which announced the importance of reading. Reading is made up of multiple components: word recognition, fluency, comprehension, understanding of vocabulary and language structures, active learning and enjoyment of reading (Richek , Caldwell, Jennings & Lerner 1996) . However, learners may face different reading difficulties.

Reading; being paring word recognition with comprehension in a fluent manner, is one of the most important skills that learners should master to collect and share information and ideas of others, to enlarge their stock of vocabulary, to promote their culture about a specific topic, to extend their knowledge of language and to provide an avenue for efficient second language acquisition and reading proficiency (Constantino, 1994 ; krashen , 1989; Mckay, 1982). Indeed ,reading is a complex interaction between the text and the reader.

7. Research methodology

To answer the research questions raised at the outset of the study of EFL learners' reading constraints , we used a quantitative method because it dealt with the quantity of the problem in Middle school for both teachers and pupils and then the results of improving reading skills. Based on teachers' observations, we conducted questionnaires for both teachers and pupils to prove that this problem really exists with them, then we moved to the focus group to discover the causes of poor reading.

This method provided relevant data to address the research questions. In addition, data to be collected were about the types of reading difficulties, the reasons why learners suffer from reading difficulties and their negative effects on the learning process and finally how to deal with these problems by providing some optimal strategies and solutions. This research was conducted for both teachers of English language and pupils of 4th year at Ben Mayza Aberrahmane Middle School, Al-Achir . Pupils are the case of study who have this problem and who are affected by it whereas the teachers are observing and checking whether the students are reading accurately and comprehensively or just accepting in a subjective biased way.

The dependable research method was the descriptive one as we described major reading constraints that foreign language learners may face. The Questionnaire was the sole research tool used to gather data from four English teachers at school and thirty pupils. The

results of the questionnaires proved that reading difficulties differ from one pupil to another depending on their causes. Based on the results obtained, we suggested some recommendations to help pupils overcome these difficulties and pay much more attention to benefits of reading abilities.

8. Chapter Division

Our work is divided into two chapters: chapter one part one deals with definition of reading-Scope and rationale, Types of Reading, Characteristics of reading, Reading and other skills.

Part Two treats the Intermediate EFL Reading: defining Middle School Learners, how this category of School Learners read, constraints faced by EFL Middle school learners, causes and effects of EFL Reading Constraints and finally the possible remedies suggested.

Chapter two is devoted to the research design and methodology, the collection and analysis of the data gathered from questionnaires and provide general results. It also suggests some recommendations to raise pupils' awareness about the importance of effective reading.

9. Outcomes

In this research, results were in a form of statistics and numbers were formalized in tables for each question in the questionnaire to provide information about reasons why they can't be good readers and what types of difficulties they may encounter while reading. In addition, the discussion provided information in form of the causes of reading difficulties and their negative effects on learners and how to deal with this problem. At last, suggested solutions and recommendations were mentioned to help improve the reading skill.

10.Ethical Considerations

. This research is done for the first time at Ben Mayza Abederrahmane Middle School with 4th year pupils and English language teachers of the school. We asked students if they

really suffer from this problem. The study was realized after having the permission of the school to do the questionnaire in the classroom but not during the class time to not interrupt them. They were extra sessions where pupils have free time. Participants who were teachers and students participated on their free will and used the suitable way to express their thoughts and ideas. In addition, students were not obliged to answer, but it is for their benefit. Teachers were also invited to answer the questionnaire if they really want to. It has no risk neither on teachers nor on pupils. They have all the security and choice whether to be participants or not. The results were honestly presented according to pupils' answers as well as recommendations of teachers.

11. Significance of the study

Through this research and depending on the findings of this study, we tried to map out and seek solutions to the problems faced by EFL learners who would be able to use appropriate strategies to read accurately and comprehensively so as to attain maximum learning and to understand how to engage with reading constraints in the learning process. Determining the problem of reading constraints of EFL middle school learners and the effects of these constraints on their academic performance helps suggest some remedies to overcome them.

12. Limitations

To begin with the sample, it is agreed that the larger the sample is, the more precise results will be. Accordingly, it seems that our sample is not sufficient to draw valid conclusions. In addition, the poor linguistic background of learners obliged us to translate into Arabic language repeatedly. At last, due to the current situation and because of the pandemic, learners were not always available and time was tight to complete the study to the fullest.

Chapter One:

EFL Reading and Constraints Faced by Middle School Learners

Part One:

Definition of reading , types, purpose, definition of reading comprehension, essential skills for reading comprehension, theoretical models of the reading process and reading and the other skills.

Introduction

Learning is a complex process of discovery, collaboration, and inquiry facilitated by language. Composed of interrelated and rule- governed symbol systems, language is a social and uniquely human means of representing, exploring, and communicating meaning. As well as being a defining feature of culture, language is an unmistakable mark of personal identity, and is essential for forming interpersonal relationships, understanding social situations, extending experience, reflecting on thought and action, and contributing to democratic society. Language is the primary basis of all communication and the primary instrument of thought.

Language Learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Students learn language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, establish relationships with family members and friends, and strive to make sense and order of their world. There are four main skills of language learning; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

1.1.1 Definition of Reading

To give a straightforward definition of reading is not an easy matter. Many writers and researchers in the field of psychology, linguistics and language teaching gave different definitions about what reading is.

Reading is one of the most useful skills in learning a foreign language. It serves as a means by which the "unbounded field of knowledge" lies open before us and we are able to know new facts and relationship. Francis Bacon was very correct when, in one of his essays, "Our Studies" wrote, "Reading makes a full man….. ". According to Gray, "Reading is a form of experience".

Indeed, good reading habits promote " self education" which helps in the modification of personality. Reading, trains our mind and broadens outlook. If one has developed a taste for reading in school days, he will realize that nothing but reading is the best utilization of his hours of leisure.

Of all the linguistic skills, reading is perhaps one that requires our attention most and lacking which we find that there are a great retardation in reading activities of our pupils.

According to Nunan (2003:68), reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning.

Mikuleckey (2011:5) states that reading is a complex conscious and unconscious mental process in which the reader uses a variety of strategies and reconstructs the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended , based on data from the text ,from the readers' prior knowledge .Grellet claimed that reading is an active skill. It constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking, and asking oneself question s(Khoiriya 2010:1).

Reading is a very important skill, where everything is required to read on number of different occasions and take reading as a vehicle to collect some information ,to enrich one's knowledge of language ,to enlarge one's culture about specific knowledge area or to read for pleasure .In fact ,reading is an interactive process combining top-down and bottom-up processing (Baerbett,1989).As a result, it is very important for students to use appropriate reading strategies to increase their comprehension .According to Barnett(1989), the term "strategy means the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read "(p66) .In other words ,reading comprehension requires the integration and application of multiple strategies or skills. Those strategies involve memory,cognitive,compensation,metacognitive,affective,social,and text-taking strategies (Caverly,1997;O'malleyChamot,stiwner-manzanares,Kupper&russo,1985;oxford,1990; zhang,1993).

Reading is the construction of meaning from printed or written message (Richard:1998:12). Reading begins with the accurate, swift, and automatic visual recognition of vocabulary, independent of the context in which it occurs.

A recent view point of reading was proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978) through the socio-cultural theory of learning (Lantolf 2006; Remi&Lawrence,2012).In the light of such a theory, reading is viewed as a social skill that requires an active participation, interaction and involvement of learners(Reza&Mahmood,2013).

1.1.2 Types of Reading

There are four different types of reading academic texts: skimming, scanning, extensive and intensive reading. Each is used for a specific purpose.

1.1.2.1 Skimming

To skim means to turn ones' eyes over the text or the paragraph in order to get a quick idea of the gist of it. Harmer says, "By encouraging students to have a quick look at the text before plunging into it for detail, we help them to a general understanding of what it is all about". (Harmer :2001:202) Here, the reader is not concerned about the details in the text ,but just to get an idea of what is going on. Patricia Hedge confirms this by saying that, "Skimming is used to get global impression of the content of the text by focusing on headings and the first lines of paragraphs".(Hedge:2000:195).On his turn, Hyland states that skimming is a more text-oriented form of surveying and refers to the method of glancing through a text to extract the gist or main points .(Hyland:1990:14).

1.1.2.2 Scanning:

The technique used to look for specific information in a text is called scanning. Here the pupils are asked to look out for a specific item of information while reading or searching

rapidly through a text to find a specific point of information. This strategy of reading, saves time and pupils understand and remember much more of what they have read. Hyland (1990:16) states that "Scanning is a useful skill for data gathering review , using reference books, or judging whether a text contains material deserving further study".

But, the problem is that, sometimes the pupils do not scan efficiently because when reading, their attention is caught by some difficult words in the text ,hence, they find themselves out of the right tack. Therefore, to overcome this problem, pupils should fix a reading purpose. Hyland confirms this by stating that when the reader has a clearly defined purpose ,he can anticipate where to find the information and what form it will take allowing rapid eye movement down the page searching for particular sections or clues.

1.1.2.3 Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is called supplementary reading. It is a kind of reading that students do outside of the classroom. Students read articles, long texts, reports, short stories, books and novels for the aim of concluding with final understanding searching for pleasure and information like reading stories. Grellet (1986) states that :"Extensive reading deals with reading an entire text ,usually for enjoyment, such as short stories, novels, or plays". It is a fluency reading, which usually ends with constructing a general understanding of the text. According to Palmer (1964) , "extensive reading is usually rapid reading in which the reader focuses more on the meaning rather than the language" .In addition, extensive reading develops reading ability and independency for students in ELF classrooms. In the same vein, Hedge(2003:204-205) states some of the advantages in using extensive reading. He argued that "learners can build their language competence, progress in their reading ability, become more independent in their studies, acquire cultural knowledge ,and develop confidence and motivation to carry on learning".

1.1.2.4 Intensive Reading:

Intensive reading is called ''text based or skill based reading'' (Tuan 2001:665). It is a careful and concentrated reading that pupils do inside the classroom. In this type of reading, the pupils are asked to read texts to analyze the used information and the content . Intensive reading is concerned with looking for more details. In this case, the reader may read shorter texts to extract definite information or may try to recognize and analyze the organization and content of the texts being read(Abu-Ghararah,1998;Urquhart&Weir,1998;Grellet,1986).

Moreover, Haarman et al.(1988) defines intensive reading as "the style we employ when we wish to have a very clear and complete understanding of the written text". Reading intensively clarifies the ideas and helps readers get in touch with the exact meaning of the reading passage. Therefore, readers try to comprehend the lexical and syntactic levels of the text. Some reading strategies are included within intensive reading such as skimming and scanning that require slow and clear reading .Furthermore, some reasons lead the teacher to use this type of reading in the teaching process. Paran (2003:40) states that'' intensive reading is needed for four main reasons: to help learners comprehend written texts, to become more aware of the text organization to better comprehend ,to learn how to use and monitor effective reading strategies ,and to develop literacy skills necessary to generate productive expressions in L2''.Thus ,all these reasons contribute to better comprehending the written text and developing language study and accuracy .

Extensive reading and intensive reading are two reading types that are used in comprehending the text. Hence, the reader can benefit from both types and use them appropriately when and where necessary. In fact, the type of texts selects the reading behavior that students use during the reading course.

1.1.3. Purpose of reading:

Reading is an activity with a purpose .A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge .A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. Reading also plays an important role in civic life. Through reading, the individual keeps informed on the political, social, economic and cultural problems of his country. Reading affects our attitudes, beliefs, standards, morals, judgments, and general behavior ;it shapes our thinking and our actions. The purpose of reading is to correlate the ideas on the text to what you have already known. The reader must understand about the subject that he/she reads to connect the ideas.

According to Grabe William and L.Fredrika (2002), "the category of purpose for reading includes are: reading to search for simple information, reading to skim quickly, reading to learn from text, reading to integrate information, reading to write, reading to critique texts and reading for general comprehension.

1.1.4. Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension is the process of understanding the meaning between words and sentences (McNamara,2007).Comprehension is a complex activity that occurs in the transaction between the reader and the written materials. As stated by Parado (2004),

"comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interpreting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the readers take in relationships to the text"(p.272).According to her, this definition which is given by some teachers means that reading comprehension requires all the capacities, knowledge, and experiences of the reader.

Similarly, Wooly(2011) claims that "reading comprehension is the process of getting meaning from text. The goal, therefore ,is to gain an overall understanding of what is

described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences"(p.15).He means that comprehension is a mental process that demands the linking between ideas across sentences to get meaning from the whole text rather than understanding the sense of every single word .This activity refers to one of the most important types of reading which is skimming in order to get the general information.

To better comprehend a text, the instructor provides his learners with comprehension strategies that encourage a range of mental abilities in order to understand the text. Moreover, Snow (2004:1) claims that reading comprehension includes three important elements :the reader who is the doer of the act of comprehension and tries to appreciate the intended sense of the text, the text which is selected for reading ,the activity that is used in the reading course to facilitate the understanding.

In addition to that, reading and comprehension are two terms that cannot be separated. No reading exists without using minds and no comprehension without reading texts.

So, a reader who has a text in hand reads and comprehends at the same time to fulfill his understanding.

Moreover, comprehension of texts is easily achieved with the existence of fluency. Therefore, fluent readers are able to read and comprehend a text without difficulties.

1.1.5. Essential Skills for Reading Comprehension:

According to   Paris, S. G., & Hamilton, E. E. (2014). There are five essential skills for reading comprehension include: decoding, fluency, vocabulary, inference and retention.

1.1.5.1. Decoding

Decoding is a skill that relies on your ability to sound out words you have heard but never seen written out. It relies on phonemic awareness, which is the ability to hear individual

sounds in words and connect those sounds to letters. Making the connection between a letter or group of letters and the sounds they make is a crucial step to "sounding out" or decoding words.

1.1.5.2. Fluency

Fluency refers to a mix of different factors. First, it focuses on your ability to decode new vocabulary quickly while reading. Fluency is what it sounds like to read ,which can directly impact your ability to comprehend what you read .For example ,as a child becomes more fluent in his reading, he will be able to quickly find meaning and an understanding of what they read ,which contributes to understanding the text.

1.1.5.3. Vocabulary:

The ability to decode or determine the meaning of new words can also influence your reading comprehension .When you can quickly interpret new meanings and identify relationships between new vocabulary and familiar terms, you can increase your ability to make assumptions, form ideas and generally better understand the texts you read.

1.1.5.4. Inference:

Inference is also a key element of reading comprehension .When we make inferences, we are connecting information from texts to our own ideas and opinions that help us identify the meaning of what we read. For instance, when reading an article about plastics in the oceans ,you might make inference that to reduce the amount of plastic waste you should recycle. Inferring happens when we read a text where the purpose and meaning of the text is not implicitly stated. Additionally, the ability to connect ideas and make inferences can help increase retention.

1.1.5.5. Retention:

Reading comprehension is typically all about retaining what we read .Comprehension is based on the retention of information .By practicing your summarizing skills and remembering what you have read, you can further strengthen your reading comprehension.

1.1.6. Theoretical Models of the Reading Process

According to Barbara in (utomo2008),states the three views of reading processes are bottom up, top down and interactive views.

1.1.6.1. Bottom up:

Simply stated, the bottom up view of reading focuses on text based processing as the major instructional concern of teacher .Learning to read is viewed as a series of association or sub-skills that are reinforced until they become automatic. Letters are linked to form words, words are linked to form sentences, and sentences are linked to form ideas ;that is, the parts of reading are put together to form the whole. This is viewed as a bottom up processing text shapes the learners response.

1.1.6.2. Top down:

Top down view of reading focuses on the reader. In this reading process, the reader is viewed as an active problem solver who guesses what the author is saying .Then, he samples textual cues; that is, reading is viewed as negotiating meaning between an author and a reader. This is viewed as top down process ,in which the reader's idea creates his response.

1.1.6.3. Interactive:

The interactive view of reading focuses on the active constructive nature of reading as the major instructional concern of the teachers .The reader is viewed as using both reader based (top down)processing to form a model of meaning. Although he is active ,his guesses

are formed on the basis of what the text says and what he already knows about this ; information that is reading viewed as constructing meaning. This is viewed as an interactive process where the reader strategically shifts between the text and what he already knows to construct his response.

1.1.7. Reading and the Other Skills

The aims of a language –teaching course are often defined with reference to the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) where the pupils are expected to understand the language they are learning. As the language is considered as the vehicle of communication, none of these four skills should be neglected. According to Zappolo (1981:31),quoting from Rankin, estimates that the studies of adults' use of the four communication skills mentioned above, show that approximately 45 % of their time is spent in listening ,as compared with 30% in speaking ,16% in reading ,and 9% in writing, despite the fact that reading ranks one before last in the time dedicated to learning a foreign language ,it is still an important skill.

However, its importance becomes meaningless when isolated from listening or speaking or writing .Harmer (2001:204)states that "the benefits of (extensive)reading are echoed by the benefits for (extensive)listening ".The more pupils listen ,the more language they acquire, and the better they get at listening activities and any other skill for that matter. David Williams (1990:19-20),on his turn ,made a thorough investigation showing the interrelation of the four skills in general and the reading one particular .He states "The theme of the reading passage can be reflected in activities in listening comprehension ,speaking and writing in the same instructional unit".

So, when a reading passage is selected ,its content may be identical to the content of the listening comprehension where the learners are supposed to extract meaning from the same discourse because both reading and listening are receptive skills. If the reading passage

is about how to prevent a dangerous disease to spread, for the listening comprehension exercise ,pupils may be asked to take notes on how to prevent any danger to happen (preventing home accidents, for instance).Williams has represented this linkage in the following diagram showing the mutual reinforcement of listening-and reading – comprehension skills

Same topic

| Oral Version | Listening → | Reinforcement of responses | ← Reading | Written Version |
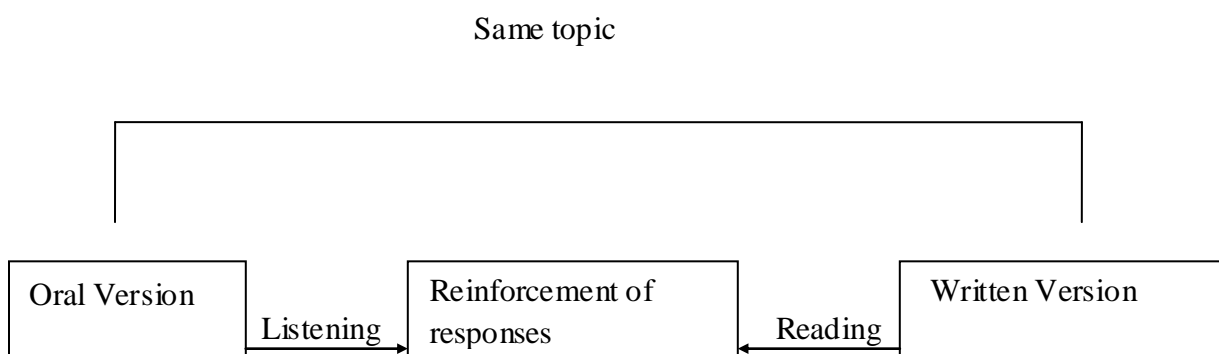
Figure 1:Generalized Scheme for Mutual Reinforcement of Listening –and Reading – Comprehension skills. (Urciuoli, B. (2008). Skills and selves in the new workplace. American ethnologist, 35(2), 211-228).

The process of reading comprehension and listening comprehension are interlinked with respect to grasping details, main ideas, and implied meaning ;summarizing essential points ; and recognizing the purpose or point of view of the message being communicated .

Reading can be linked with speaking and writing through information-transfer activities. If the reading passage the pupils are dealing with is entitled "Causes and consequences of delinquency ", pupils can take notes from their reading to the passage –the notes being based on guided format outlining details as to number the causes and consequences ,and giving examples, may be ,of people they know. After that, individual pupils can make oral reports, and when doing so, they should not read directly from their notes word for word. Hence, the reading exercise may be written under a form a diagram, a table or a pie chart, and the information would be transferred to continuous writing, or to an oral presentation. Therefore, in this and other similar exercises, the receptive skill of reading

is integrated with the productive skills of speaking (oral presentation) and writing (note taking).Also, when the pupils are passing on the message, they do through the medium of the spoken or the written word. Williams (1990:20) has shown in the following figure the Information-Transfer Process (ITP) where the information is firstly received when the pupils read the passage, and then they pass it through speaking or writing.

Information ⟶ RECEIVED (Reading) ⟶ TRANSFERRED < (Speaking) / (Writing)
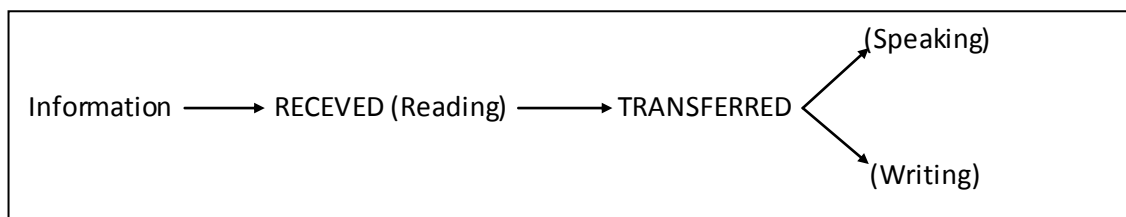
Figure 02: The Information –Transfer Process (ITP)

Generally speaking, both reading and writing are traditionally integrated because when asked to paraphrase a text or summarize it, we have to read first. Other exercises, uch as converting dialogues into reported speech or vice versa, require the pupils first to read and understand, and then write according to a particular style. Williams has shown that there are two ways in which reading and writing skills can be integrated (1) using the reading passage to exemplify a particular style of writing, and (2) using the reading passage as a text to be converted into another style of writing.

The first way is that when, for instance, pupils are given a reading passage where they are asked to make a close study of the cohesive devices, they would be better able to use them (ie , cohesive devices) in their own writing .In the same passage they can be asked to identify connecting words ,and to link pronouns and adjectives to the words they refer to. Also the pupils can be asked to study the sentence arrangement in the passage, and do completion exercises where they can insert words, phrases, or sentences to make a paragraph meaningful.

The second way of linking reading with writing, (always according to David Williams) is through text-conversation exercises. These give practice in expressing the same

idea in different styles or writing , in accordance with the audience , the need to be formal or intimate ,and the function or purpose of communication. For instance, pupils are asked to convert formal letters to informal ones, and vice versa.

We conclude that it cannot be assumed that other skills (writing, listening and speaking) can be developed out of the reading skill. Reading is a complex skill, which must be taught to be acquired. To omit it (viz. reading) from a language course is to deprive pupils of the opportunity to develop and improve their ability to read.

<div align="center">

Part Two:

</div>

Intermediate EFL Reading

Introduction

Middle school learners are qualitatively different than younger learners. Teachers and parents can significantly enhance the learning of students this age by understanding the cognitive and social characteristics of middle school learners. Using the right instructional strategies to maximize the learning advantages and addressing the learning challenges of middle school learners can make all the difference in their success.

1.2.1. Middle School Learners:

In Algeria, middle school learners are adolescent learners who are approximately between 11and 15 years. Accordingly, they are not enough aware of the main aims of learning, especially when it comes to an unfamiliar and foreign language such as English. Taking into consideration that school systems are often challenged to meet the needs of students who are not performing at grade level expectations and provide support services to help those students to close the achievement gap, at such an age, the process of learning English in a successful way requires some factors that enable the learner to accept and be familiar with this foreign language .One of the main most essential factors of the foreign language learning process is motivation. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term motivation means "a force or influence that causes someone to do something" ("motivation;"n.d). Otherwise, Andrea Holesinskà (2006) defined motivation as "a certain push that pushes students to take any action to achieve something" (p.11).

Indeed, the first is responsible for developing the pupils 'attention and makes him/her enjoy the lecture .Zoltàn Dornyei and kata Csizér (1998) offered a set of "ten commandments" for motivating language learners as the following:

-Set a personal example with your own behavior.

-Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

-Present the tasks properly.

-Develop a good relationship with learners.

-Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.

-Make the language classes interesting.

-Promote learner autonomy.

-Personalize the learning process.

-Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.

-Familiarize learners with the target language culture. (as cited in Brown, 2001, p.81).

1.2.2. How middle school learners read

Middle school is the time when reading skills start to catch up to listening skills (13),(25). As reading and listening skills do not normally converge until around eighth grade, it stands to reason that reading to children is an activity that does not have an expiration date (25). Students who read are exposed to new and interesting experiences with literature that they may not have otherwise had access to if exposed to if forced to read everything independently (25). This is also a time for middle school students to just enjoy the literature (25).

Read-aloud for this age group should show that reading is not just about answering the questions at the end of the passage or chapter; it should be about showing how literature can be enjoyable (25). For many students, reading in the middle school is centered on a textbook passage and follow-up questions. Read-aloud can expand students' exposure to reading materials, even materials are above their instructional level, by utilizing their listening skills. When the students' only task is to listen to the material being read, not worrying about pronunciation, taking turns reading, ……etc, comprehension becomes the end result. Teachers can take advantage of the fact that many students have a higher listening capacity level than reading level by utilizing read-aloud.

According to Walther and Fuhler (28),"All in all, read-aloud time is relaxing, enjoyable, educational, and thought- provoking –a time when an author's words can fill the classroom and the minds of the listeners.

Middle school teachers can choose from teacher-centered techniques like a lecture to student-centered techniques like Literature Circles to a multitude of techniques that fall somewhere in between. Those that best fit the needs of the student and the teacher need to be implemented.

Read-aloud has both strengths and weaknesses. With a technique that has proven success in elementary and intervention settings, investigating the strengths of this technique could deepen the pool of appropriate strategies for use in the middle school classroom.

The Algerian educational system has adopted the necessity of improving the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). English is taught first in Algeria in the elementary (middle) public and even private schools. Algerian pupils are taught English seven years before university. In fact, in order to improve the learners' level, Algeria has adopted different teaching approaches, moving from the Grammar Translation Method in the 1960's which gives much importance to the language properties in an overt way, to the Direct Method and the Audio Lingual Method .However, in 2003 the Competency -Based Approach (CBA) was adopted in schools .It particularly focuses on the notion of competency and gives much importance to communication.

1.2.3. Constraints Faced by EFL Middle School Learners

The Algerian Ministry of Education stresses the importance of teaching all English language skills at all levels; from first year middle school to third year secondary school. Despite that, students still face many challenges in learning English among which reading difficulties .Wood.W (2001:29) states that "reading is a very complex process and this reason is not surprising to find students encounter problems in learning to read ".Therefore, we find it worthy to investigate the difficulties that fourth year middle school learners encounter in reading classes.

1.2.3.1 Poor comprehension skills: Reading comprehension is a complex process which requires the organization of prior cognitive skills and abilities. Wallace (1992:14) states that "readers are helped in their interpretation of text both by their knowledge of the principals of words formation and by their ability to attributes an appropriate function of texts". Reading comprehension generally depends on comprehending the target language. This requires comprehending words, sentences and contexts of the text. Yet, comprehension typically requires the previous knowledge of incorporating these words and sentences within understanding of the context and the meaning of the text. However, when readers are not able to understand the whole text, they will encounter difficulties in decoding words in such text. Hence, pupils with weak comprehension skills have difficulty recalling what they have read. They might get parts, or some details, but may have difficulty remembering a book or story as a whole.

1.2.3.2. Fluency: is defined as the ability to read expressively and meaningfully with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. It is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. In order to understand what they read, learners must be able to read fluently whether they are reading aloud or silently. Hedge (2000:192) states "a fluent reader has a good knowledge of language structure and can recognize a wide range of vocabulary automatically". However, most EFL learners face difficulties to read fluently. They may not be motivated to read what they do not choose to read. As a result, they will not enjoy the benefits of what they have read among which fluency.

1.2.3.3. Word decoding: Decoding is the reader's ability to make a combination between sounds and letters.. Vacca, et al (2000:27) have asserted that" decoding process is based on learners' attention by which he/she breaks down a word into individual phonemes and recognition based on those phonemes "
However, researchers in this field have argued that students encounter difficulties to make a relationship between sounds and letters to get the right meaning. Wood.W (2001:31) states that "failing readers with poor phonemic awareness are much less likely to discover letter-sound relationship". Students with this type of difficulty cannot progress better because decoding process is an essential part in learning to read that takes a long period of time and this is what researchers called "Bottom-up" model difficulty. Wallace (1992:9) states that" students with this difficulty cannot initially make necessary connection between the language they hear and the language they see print".

1.2.3.4. Ignoring punctuation: Punctuation is essential and is used to convey and clarify the meaning of the written language. It aids the reader in understanding the writers' intended message and helps indicate the pauses and the emphasis on certain ideas or thoughts that are discussed in the text. However, beginner learners do pay attention to it and so lose opportunity to comprehend and extract meanings.

1.2.4. Causes of EFL Reading Constraints

After listing some types of reading constraints faced by FFL middle school learners, investigating causes behind these constraints which are mostly related to the learners and the teaching methods is imperative. To begin with learners, most of their reading difficulties are caused by their lack of interest to learn English language, lack of reading habit, frustration and anxiety. Environmental factors including the learners' home, school, social and cultural environments may also influence learners' reading ability. Besides, lack of vocabulary and misunderstanding of grammatical structures are also among the factors which hinder the learners to read professionally and comprehensively.

Secondly, teaching methods have a great impact on teaching reading as they help learners to perform at least as expected and improve their reading skills using such strategies as skimming, scanning, predicting and summarizing to comprehend a text. Consequently, Poor teaching methods affect negatively learners' reading ability and demotivate them. Additionally, the lack of co-operative learning in reading instruction, overcrowded classrooms, language interference, mismatch of some reading material with the students' life and teachers' teaching malpractices, among others, hindered the students understanding of English texts.

1.2.5. Effects of Reading Constraints

Reading is crucial in the process of learning, especially in the basic education. Effective reading is relevant to students at all levels and for the rest of one's life. However, many (but not all) EFL learners suffer worrying problematic issues among which reading constraints.

Academic, social and emotional issues bound for learners who are poor readers. To start with their academic performance, learners with poor reading abilities mostly fail in all other academic subjects and become repeaters. Ricket, List and Lerner (1989) agreed that reading constraints are principle cause of failure in schools. Socially speaking, poor readers are more vulnerable to chronic absenteeism and dropouts which may lead them to be threatened with

social scourges including the consumption of drugs. Emotionally, poor readers have low-self esteem and perceive themselves less valued members of their classes as they struggle with a skill that many of their peers pick up naturally.

1.2.6. General Remedies for EFL Learners

Remedies help learners to enhance their learning process through the following steps:

1st - EFL learners should engage in the task or the course and express their own thoughts and ideas. This will raise their self-esteem and lead to success.

2nd - EFL learners should eliminate anxiety and shyness in their manner while speaking English.

3rd - EFL learners should construct their confidence in their learning abilities through practicing the language .This assists them to get rid of communicative difficulties.

4th - EFL learners should find out their weaknesses and try to improve them so as to have a high proficiency level of English.

Conclusion

We divided the previous chapter into two parts. In the first one, we dealt with reading in general; its definition, its types , its purposes reading comprehension and reading and other skills. In the second part, we tried to give an overview about Algerian middle school learners, how they read, the constraints they face while reading ,causes of these constraints, their effects and some remedies to overcome them.

Chapter Two:

Research Design and Methodology

<div align="center">**Part One:**</div>

Research Design

Introduction

When conducting a study, researchers are generally trying to find an explanation for the existence of a phenomenon or seeking to validate hypotheses been put and answering questions been asked. This is where descriptive research comes in. The present chapter is devoted to methodology. It highlights the techniques used to answer the research questions put forward in the general introduction about reading constraints of 4th year middle pupils at Ben Maiza Abderrahmane Middle School , causes of these constraints and their effects on the learning process. It also provides a description of the context of the study. This chapter is divided into two sections.

The first one deals with the data collection tools, which consists of questionnaires designed to the learners and teachers of English in the same school. The second section deals with the data analysis method; it explains that the close-ended questions weree analyzed relying on a statistical method . Concerning the open-ended questions of the teachers' questionnaire , Qualitative Content Analysis is used to analyze the gathered data.

2.1.1. Context of the Study

The present research is held in a concrete context. That is to say, fourth year pupils at BenMaiza Abderrahmane middle school in BBA of the school year 2021/2022 . This investigation seeks to explore pupils' difficulties that they encounter while reading ,the causes of these difficulties and their effects. At the end, teachers suggested some solutions and recommendations to overcome these difficulties.

2.1.2. The Participants

The participants included in the present research involve (04) teachers of English at Ben Maiza Abderrahmane middle school, who responded to the questions designed in the questionnaire, and thirty (30) students who are selected according to the random sampling method to answer also questions designed in the questionnaire. Thus, the results obtained from this research tool, represent all the fourth year pupils at Ben Maiza Abderrahmane middle school.

2.1.3. Procedures of Data Collection

Data collection tools refer to the instruments used to collect data researchers need. In this study, we opted for one data collection instrument in order to investigate middle school learners' reading difficulties: Questionnaire in the purpose of solving these reading difficulties.

2.1.3.1 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is one of the instruments that we used to collect data. Wilson and Me lean (cited in Cohen et al, 2007:317) define the questionnaire as "a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured often numerical data being able to be administered without the presence of the research and often being comparatively straight forward to analyze". The questionnaires which were administered to both teachers and learners are composed of 18 and 19 questions respectively. The teachers' questionnaire consist of both closed-ended questions ;where the participants are expected to choose one of the responses suggested, and the open-ended questions ;where they are required to provide personal answers. Both questionnaires are divided into three sections; dealing with the reading constraints learners suffer from , their causes and their effects on learners' academic

performance. At the end of teachers' questionnaire, a question was asked to seek some solutions to overcome this problem and enhance learners' reading skill.

2.1.3.2. Classroom Observation

Our topic of study comes as a result of an experience lasted for 7 years in the field of teaching in the same school and noticing this problem. As a matter of fact, classroom observation is the second research tool used with learners of fourth year who were chosen randomly.

2.1.4. Procedures of Data Analysis

The study uses a mixed-method research. The data analysis is based on a quantitative and on qualitative analysis of the findings. The quantitative analysis is based on statistics, and the qualitative analysis interprets the results.

2.1.4.1. Statistical Analysis

As already stated, both quantitative and qualitative researches have been used to analyze the data. The findings of closed-ended questions deal with statistics and percentages. The Rule of Three has been used to turn the obtained results into percentages. This statistical method is calculated by the following application $X = Z . 100 / Y$ in which X refers to the number of percentages., Z refers to the number of the answers and Y refers to the sampled population. Then, the outcomes are shown in form of tables .

2.1.4.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

It is a procedure of interpreting and analyzing qualitative data gathered from teachers' questionnaire .Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define QCA as "a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns." That is to say, it transforms the

gathered data into forms of explanation, analyzing, understanding the gathered information and then it involves the categorization process and put the data into themes and topics. The QCA serves to analyze all the information gathered.

Conclusion

This chapter has clarified the methodological tools used in this investigation. First, we have used one collection tool which is the questionnaire. In this investigation, the mixed-method approach is adopted in order to analyze the gathered data. Creswell (1999) affirms that both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data is the most suitable methods to conduct a given research. In this research, the statistical method (Rule of Three) is used to calculate the percentages gathered from the questionnaire. After that, the qualitative method is used to analyze the open-ended questions of the teachers' questionnaire . In the next chapter, the obtained results will yield valuable insights about the reading difficulties that middle school encounter and the adequate strategies to overcome them.

Part Two:

Research Findings, Analysis, and Recommendations

2.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

2.2.1.1. Aim of the questionnaire

This questionnaire presents an analysis of the research findings with teachers of English. It aims at discovering the main reading constraints that 4th-year middle school may face and may affect their academic performance. With aid of teachers and based on their experiences, this study investigates the main causes behind these constraints and their effects and attempts to suggest some recommendations at the end to lessen this problem.

2.2.1.2. Description of the questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is designed to explore the main reading constraints that 4th-year middle school learners suffer from. It is designed for middle school teachers of English. It is subdivided into three sections:

Section one includes questions to teachers from (1) to (4) to gather background information for respondents for purposes of sample description.

Section two: presents the results of the research questions, from (5) to (13), formulated in the study about reading as a language skill that must be mastered.

Section three: discusses and analyzes reading constraints that teachers may discover in their learners, causes of these constraints and their effects from (14) to (17).

2.2.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Section one: Respondents' Demographic Information

1- Age of Teachers

The respondents' age was important to the study and the results were as indicated in the table below:

Age	From 21 to 30	From 31 to 40	More than 40
Participants	01	03	00
Percentage	25%	75%	00%

Table (01): Age of teachers

The age of the respondents fell in the age bracket of 31 to 40 years which forms 75% of the teachers respondents while 25% of the respondents were between 21 and 30. These findings are significant to say that the majority of teachers of English are middle-aged hence, young, energetic and able to put further effort.

2- Teachers' Educational Qualification:

Educational qualification	Bachelor	Master	PhD
Participants	03	01	00
Percentage	75٪	25 ٪	00٪

Table (02): Teachers' educational qualification

The distribution of teachers by their level of education showed that the majority of teachers (75٪) had Bachelor's degree, (25%) of them had a Master's degree; whereas no one has a Ph.D. degree. Therefore, they had adequate knowledge and are qualified enough to facilitate the process of language learning and hence to contribute to the upbringing of successful generations. These findings agreed with the teachers' statements that staff qualification is not a cause of poor academic performance.

3- Teachers' experience in the field:

Years of experience	0-5	6-10	More than 10
Participants	02	02	00
Percentage	50 ٪	50 ٪	00٪

Table (03): Teachers' years of service

The table above is about Teachers' experiences which evidenced high chances of having identified learners with reading difficulties. The results show that half of the teacher participants have less than (05) years of experience and the second half have more than 05 and less than 10 years of experience. Taking into consideration the importance of teaching experience in increasing teachers' effectiveness and thereby learners' achievement, the results show that such staff of teachers at Ben Maiza Abderrahmane middle do not have enough experience to meet all learners' needs in a professional and adequate way.

4- Attendance of training programs:

Teachers' attendance of training programs	Yes	No
Participants	04	00
Percentage	100٪	00 ٪

Table (04): Attendance of training programs

Based on the results obtained, there was a consensus among teachers that training programs are necessary to be always informed with education updates and enlightened on the emerging issues. Seminars with inspectors, conferences, and coordination sessions are the training programs that teachers usually attend to develop their teaching performance and improve its outcomes.

Section two: About Reading as a skill

5- As Most important skill

Most important skill	reading	writing	listening	Speaking
Participants	03	01	02	04
Percentage	75 ٪	25 ٪	50٪	100٪

Table (05): Reading as a most important skill

There was a consensus among teachers that all language skills are equally important. However, "speaking" is said to be the most important one (100%) as it reflects learners' proficiency and their ability to communicate information. Reading (75 ٪) has been ranked second. Teachers claim that "reading" as a receptive skill is the most important in language learning as it helps develop other related skills and hence learners' professional knowledge. Listening is just as important as the previously mentioned skills. Voting Teachers (50٪) see that having an effective listening skill means being able to display interest in the topic being discussed and understand the information provided. (25 ٪) of teachers find that writing is the most important skill in language learning as it fosters learners' ability to express themselves, explain their ideas, and make their thinking and learning visible and permanent.

6-Importance of teaching reading

Teaching reading is important	Yes	No
Participants	04	00
Percentage	100 ٪	00 ٪

Table (06): Teaching reading is important

All teachers (100 ٪) agreed that reading skill is necessary to be taught. They claimed that reading is important for learners' language learning development in particular and for their life in general. They also agreed that students who read more are able to speak more fluently than students who do not, despite having done the same amount of classes. Teachers participants also find that teaching reading allows learners to engage with them, cultivating a rich learning experience and supporting their brains with correct language structures.

7- Are reading sessions programmed as separate sessions in the syllabus?

Teaching reading is important	Yes	No
Participants	04	00
Percentage	100 ٪	00 ٪

Table (07): The involvement of Reading in the syllabus

The teachers unanimously (100 ٪) agreed that "reading sessions "are programed as separate sessions in the syllabus. Since reading has always been of prime importance in EFL learning, it has become imperative to design separately for reading as a skill in the syllabus.

8- Based on your experience, why is reading important in language learning?

After gathering teachers' responses, there was a consensus among them that reading is important both for learning in general and language learning specifically. It is great for improving vocabulary after coming across a lot of new words when reading. It is also good for learners' grammar as it provides them with a variety of grammar structures. Moreover, it is agreed that reading helps to learn other aspects of language. Unlike listening and speaking skills, reading is convenient as it does not need a partner to be practiced. In addition, teachers asserted that reading exercises the brain, reduces stress, increases general knowledge,and improves focus, memory, empathy, and communication skills .

9- What type of reading would be more beneficial for learners?

Most important skill	Intensive	Extensive	interactive	Loud	silent	All of them
Participants	03	00	01	00	02	03
Percentage	75 ٪	00 ٪	25٪	00٪	50٪	75٪

Table (08) : Types of reading more beneficial for learners

The table above reveals types of reading and seeks to probe the most beneficial ones for better learning outcomes. Result reflect that most participants (75 ٪) use all of them when teaching; depending on the text to be used and its context. "Intensive Reading "is said to be the most practical type (75%). It is about reading with full concentration and complete focus to get a better understanding of information. Silent reading is also an important type (50%) as it helps learners develop the strategies they need for fast reading with better comprehension and maximum attention to meaning whereas (25٪) of teachers find "interactive reading" an efficient type that helps learners develop their reading abilities.

10- Characteristics of a Good Language Reader

Different answers were suggested by teachers to determine the characteristics of a good language reader. We summarized them as follows:

1. A good language reader is that one who is able to recognize and decode words comprehensively. Hedge (2000:192) affirms that" good language readers recognize and decode, accurately and quickly, words, grammatical structures, and other linguistic features and are aware of the process they are engaged in".

2. Wallace also claims that" a good language reader is that one who has the ability to use meta cognitive skills effectively.

3. **Fluency:** A good language reader is a skillful one who can read texts quickly with great attention to intonation, pronunciation, and rhyme. Hedge (2000:192) states "a fluent reader has a good knowledge of language structure and can recognize a wide range of vocabulary automatically".

4. **Efficacy:** relates to the student's belief that he can be a successful reader who makes connections between receptive and productive skills and who has had mostly positive reading experience. Effective readers have a strong sense of self-esteem, do not feel frustrated while reading difficult words and do not feel shy when engaged in reading experiences.

5. **Interest:** A good reader is an interested student who is always trying to sneak in a few extra minutes of reading. He /She is interested in the sense that he/she participates eagerly in reading discussions, have much to contribute, and do not need to be forced "to read".

6. **Comprehension:** A good language reader has the ability to understand what the writer intends to convey so that he/she can interpret the text. (Michel, et al 2007. 87) state "comprehension

7. require more than the extraction of meaning from the author's message. It is generally understood that a reader must read and interpret a text "

8. Interaction: is a term used by "Hedge" to describe good language readers who communicate with the text effectively as a result of applying a range of reading strategies that lead students to obtain comprehension.

9. Background knowledge: is unique and personal. Successful readers do not limit their background knowledge simply to their life experiences. Instead, they can draw on their reading experiences to also help them make sense of a text. A good language reader is still learning from the text he/she is reading.

10. Critique: A good language reader makes an analysis of the text he/she reads by reading the lines, between the lines, and beyond the lines. In other words, he/she has the ability to read explicitly and implicitly to get the real intended meaning.

11- How do you plan for the reading sessions?

Teachers agreed unanimously on the fact that the PDP framework is pragmatic to ensure students' motivation, engagement and activeness before, while and after reading a text (pre- during- post stages).

The stages of this framework are explained as followed:

11.1 Pre-reading stage: Learners prepare to read. In most cases, learners do not choose to read the text, so they need to develop an interest or desire to work it. Learners need to know the key vocabulary they will read and understand why they are going to read the text. Matching vocabulary to pictures, arranging pictures in the order to be confirmed or changed after reading the text, skimming to find the idea and eliciting related prior knowledge, asking pointed questions to whet pupils' appetite and raise their motivation are some useful activities during this stage.

11.2 During the reading stage:

Learners do a series of tasks that help them understand the text and which may help them develop their reading skills. MCQ, true/ false/not mentioned, table filling, sentence completion, and open-ended questions are the most appropriate activities during this stage.

11.3 Post-reading stage:

After "the during tasks", learners need a chance to work further with the text, its topic, its content, and vocabulary. The role of the teacher here is that of an evaluator who checks the setting of objectives and activities. In this stage, there is an opportunity to diagnose more common mistakes and offer remedial work to the whole class. Imagining different endings, retelling the text from a different point of view and summarizing are significant activities to check learners' comprehension.

12 - The most effective strategies that enhance learners' reading skills in middle school

Reading strategies; being the planned activities that help readers translate printed words to meaning, are essential and important for all learners. Hence, teachers reported the strategies they use to enhance reading in their classes during the different stages of the lesson. The results are presented in Table 09.

Stages / Teachers	Pre-reading	During –reading	Post-reading
Teacher (01)	Skimming & scanning	Thinking aloud & marginalizing notes	Answering comprehension questions & learning logs
Teacher (02)	Skimming, scanning, and previewing	marginalizing notes& decoding observations	Summarizing
Teacher (03)	Skimming & scanning and previewing	marginalizing notes, decoding observations & thinking aloud	Summarizing &learning logs

Teacher (04)	Skimming, scanning, previewing &predicting	marginalizing notes, decoding observations & thinking aloud	Answering comprehension question, KWL charts &summarizing

Table (09): Strategies put in place to help learners enhance their reading skills during the different stages of the lesson

Table (09) shows strategies put in place to help learners enhance their reading skills during the different stages of the reading session. These strategies are presented as follows:

12.1 Pre-reading :

(03) teachers claimed "skimming "– "scanning " and "previewing " as their most useful pre-reading strategies while the fourth teacher added "predicting" as another strategy that may brainstorm his learners through titles, pictures, and diagrams, and help them anticipate what will be in the text.

12.2 During reading: As for during the reading stage, teachers unanimously find that useful strategies which are very important to the ultimate goal of gathering and transforming a text into knowledge are thinking aloud, marginalizing notes, writing, and recording observations.

12.3 Post-reading :

(03)teachers reported that answering comprehension questions, learning logs; a record of what has been learned, summarizing and the fourth added K-W-L charts (What I **K**now, **W**ant to know and **L**earn) as the most significant strategies during this stage.

13- What are the benefits of reading as a language skill?

"Reading is an interactive process in which the reader's prior knowledge of the world interacts with the message conveyed directly or indirectly by the text "(Smith, 1995; P123). Starting with this definition and based on their experiences; teachers claimed that reading is basic learning and life skill that helps gain access to knowledge. In addition, reading in

42

English would undoubtedly help learners to be proficient learners who can create abilities correlated with their reading topics. It expands their vocabulary, promotes their imagination improves their concentration and ability to focus, reduces stress, and builds their self-esteem. Moreover, teachers reported that reading broadens learners' horizons as it gives them insights into diversity and other cultures and teaches them about different beliefs and ways of life that may be new to them. At last, teachers asserted that reading improves learners' school performance.

Section three: Reading Constraints, Causes, and Effects

This section presents the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire with teachers about reading constraints that 4th-year middle school learners encounter along with the factors that cause these constraints as well as their effects on learners and their learning process.

14- What type of constraints do your students mostly suffer from?

Types of Constraints Teachers	Poor comprehension skills	fluency	Word decoding	Ignoring Punctuation
Teacher (01)	✓		✓	✓
Teacher (02)	✓	✓		✓
Teacher (03)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teacher (04)	✓	✓		✓

Table (10): Types of reading constraints

Table (10) revealed the types of reading constraints that teachers may face while teaching reading. Teachers unanimously agreed that poor comprehension skills and ignoring punctuation are the major types of reading constraints their students suffer from. They argued that their learners are most of the time unable to summarize, draw conclusions or solve problems by the end of the reading session due to their poor comprehension skills. In addition, (03) teachers, claimed that "fluency" is also one type of reading constraint.

Accuracy; being the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression, teachers reported that most of their learners miss this feature. Word decoding was also claimed as a type of reading constraint that learners suffer from since they are not able to figure out most words they have heard but have never been seen in print. Taking into consideration its importance to the building of other skills, poor decoding skills may cause constraints in fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

15- Causes of Constraints that hinder learners during reading sessions

Teachers\nCauses	Teacher(01)	Teacher (02)	Teacher(03)	Teacher(04)
New vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mixed ability classes	✓	✓		✓
Overcrowded classes		✓	✓	✓
Time constraints	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mother tongue interference	✓	✓		
Lack of motivation	✓			✓

Table (11): Causes of reading constraints

In response to this question, there was a consensus among teachers that vocabulary is the most problematic issue. They claimed that new vocabulary, most of the time, hinders learners' understanding of the texts to be read. Time constraints are also one of the problems which are no less influential than its predecessor. Time was identified as a problem in the sense that the allotted time for learners to cognitively process meaning and train on reading efficiently is mostly insufficient and this is either due to overcrowded classes (declared by 3 teachers) or mixed-ability classes, the reasons why the opportunity to practice reading by all learners is lessened and then different problematic issues begin to appear. In addition, (03) teachers claimed that mother tongue interference is one of the causes behind learners' reading constraints, and (02) others reported that the lack of motivation influences learners' ability to read and then their academic success.

16- Pedagogical aspects which may influence learners' reading skill

Pedagogical Teachers aspects	Lessons are always well planned	Reading is a part of given homework	Reading materials are always available
Teacher (01)	✓	✓	
Teacher (02)		✓	✓
Teacher (03)	✓		
Teacher (04)	✓	✓	✓

Table (12): Pedagogical aspects which may influence learners' reading skill

Table (12) illustrates pedagogical aspects which may influence learners' ability to read effectively and hinder teachers while teaching reading. To start with lesson planning, (03) teachers claimed that they always prepare for their lessons and try to pick the best strategies and methods to realize the outlined objectives. However, the fourth teacher did not claim so. In addition, (03) respondents claimed that they always ask their learners to do given reading tasks as homework. As for the availability of reading materials, half of the participants claimed that reading materials are available whereas the second half did not agree with them arguing their opinion with the fact that as their learners are beginners, they need extra adequate aids, in addition to textbooks, to strengthen their reading skill.

17- Effects of reading constraints on the learning process

Based on teachers' responses, we obtained the following results:

- Poor reading ability negatively impacts children's socio-emotional adjustment. As learners' reading failure becomes increasingly evident, they may begin to hold more negative self-concepts, engage in more frequent task avoidance and feel depressed.

- Poor reading skills affect academic performance in all examinable subjects and are considered one of the principal causes of failure in schools.

- Presence of learners' chronic absenteeism and presence of dropout as a result of poor academic performance since adolescent poor readers have low esteem and perceive

themselves less valued members of their classes, "feeling of inferiority, lack of motivation and interpersonal hostility often result" (Chapman,1988, p.350)

18- Suggested solutions to enhance learners' reading ability

1- Devoting more hours to English sessions generally and reading sessions specifically.

2- Implementing adequate reading strategies which help facilitating the reading and understanding process.

3- Going beyond the traditional role of a teacher as a knowledge provider to a more analytical view of language teaching who boosts learners' feelings of autonomy and independence so that they can overcome their general learning style limitations and process new language information.

4- Letting pupils choose the books they want to read drawing on the belief that pupils have an inner motivation to read something they find interesting since" reading something they have to" does not have the same motivating effect.

5- Adopting "a reward system" where the learners can obtain rewards and bonus marks for reading outside of the class. Summarizing what has been read is the best way how to check their reading comprehension.

6- Identifying children with reading difficulties as early as possible and providing them with appropriate interventions rather than practicing the policy of" wait–and–fail" is worth in school performance.

2.2.2 Learners' Questionnaire

2.2.2.1 Aim of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to investigate 4th year middle school pupils' awareness of their reading difficulties, their causes, and their effects. Our study was directed specifically to them as they are going to pass an official exam which requires their proficiency in reading and analyzing texts. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude with some recommendations which may help improve learners' reading skills.

2.2.2.2. Description of questionnaire

Learners' questionnaire is designed to find out students' reading difficulties. It includes 30 4th-year pupils at Ben Mayza Abderrahmane Middle School for the academic year 2021-2022. Pupils were chosen randomly. The results of the questionnaire are to be analyzed quantitatively using the descriptive method. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

- **Section one:** this section includes questions to learners from (1 to 6) which aim to gather information about **age, gender, general academic level, most preferred school subject, and favorite skill during English sessions.**

- **Section two:** this section includes questionnaires from (7 to 14) to investigate learner's opinions about the **easiness of reading, importance of reading, the relation of English to other sessions, effects of reading on learners' linguistic background, frequency of practicing English, their reading ability and reading frequency.**

- **Section three:** includes questions from (15 to 18) to investigate **the most difficult skill, types of reading constraints, causes of these constraints, and effects of these constraints.**

2.2.2.3 Analysis of Learners' Questionnaire

In this section, we present the responses reported by thirty 4th year participants who responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire, which included 19 items, aimed to explore the potential factors hindering learners' reading abilities, their causes, and their effects.

Section one : Background information

1- **Age:**

Age	Participants	Percentage
Less than 15	23	76٪
More than 15	07	24٪

Table (13): Age

Table (13) shows the age of participants; bearing in mind that the legal age of 4th-year students is less than 15. The results show that (76٪) of learners are legal, and (24٪) are repeaters.

Hence, classrooms are of mixed ages and this may affect the general atmosphere of the classroom since the percentage of repeaters (24٪) is significant.

2- **Gender:**

Gender	Participants	Percentage
Male	10	33;33 ٪
Female	20	66,67 ٪

Table (14): Gender

Table (14) shows the gender of the participants. The results show that (66,67 ٪) of them are females and (33;33 ٪) are males. Hence, female is the predominant gender in the classroom.

3- General academic level:

General academic level	Participants	Percentage
Excellent	05	16,66 ⁒
good	06	20 ⁒
Accepted	14	46,66 ⁒
Poor	05	16,66 ⁒

Table (15): General academic level

Table (15) shows that the classroom is "mixed ability". In addition, the majority of students

are of an "acceptable level ". (10-11 as an average) which means that a large proportion of

them are threatened to fail their BEM exam.

4- Most preferred school subject:

Most preferred school subject	Participants	Percentage
Arabic	13	43,33 ⁒
foreign languages (French, English)	05	16,66 ⁒
scientific subjects	07	23;33 ⁒
Cultural subjects (history, geography)	03	10 ⁒
Artistic subjects	02	6,66 ⁒

Table (16): Most preferred school subject

The obtained data reveals that the highest percentage of students (43,33 ⁒) prefer Arabic as a

school subject arguing this with its easiness to be used and understood. The second proportion

shows a flair for scientific school subjects; including mathematics, physics, and biology.

Foreign languages got a small portion (16,66 ⁒) compared with their predecessors. Cultural

and artistic subjects are the least to be voted.

5- Are you satisfied with your level at English?

Satisfaction with the level at English	Participants	Percentage
Yes	09	30 ٪
No	21	70 ٪

Table (17): Satisfaction with the level at English

The table above reveals that the majority of learners (70 ٪) are not satisfied with their level

at English based on their marks obtained at English.

These results reflect the difficulty that the Algerian schools face in learning foreign languages

generally speaking and English language specifically.

6- Favorite skill during English sessions:

favorite skill	Participants	Percentage
Reading	02	6,66٪
Listening	06	20 ٪
Speaking	18	60 ٪
Writing	04	13.33 ٪

Table (18): favorite skill during English sessions

Results of this item show that most learners prefer productive skills (speaking &writing)

rather than receptive skills (listening& reading). To be more precise, speaking got the highest

score with about (60%) of learners preferring speaking sessions whereas reading was the

lowest with (6.66٪). Other students find listening and writing more important as they reflect

learners' ability to understand the target language and so to communicate effectively.

These results prompted us to rethink whether EFL learners can develop their language without

giving priority to receptive skills since learners prefer productive ones.

Section two: Reading as a skill

07- Reading is the most important skill

reading is the most important skill	Participants	Percentage
Yes	18	60 ٪
No	12	40 ٪

Table (19): Reading is the most important skill

This item sought to identify whether participants are aware of the importance of reading as a language skill that helps them to acquire a foreign language accurately and comprehensively. The responses reported in the table show that most respondents (60 ٪) are aware of the importance of reading. However, the proportion of respondents who deny its importance (40 ٪) is significant.

08- Reading is strongly related to :

Skills	Listening	speaking	Writing
Participants	03	09	18
Percentage	10 ٪	26.66 ٪	63.33٪

Table (20) : Most strongly related skills to reading

Table (20) shows that the majority of participants (63,66 ٪) consider writing as the most related skill to reading since it is strengthened with it. They support their opinion with their ability to write about a given topic after reading about it. In addition, reading comprehensively and critically would create in them the desire to write and share their ideas with others. The second portion of participants (26.66 ٪) think that reading is mostly related to speaking; arguing that reading gives them the opportunity to acquire new language items and structures which if used frequently through speaking, would help learners acquire them effectively. The least portion of participants (10 ٪) see that reading is related to listening since reading more and being familiar with items and structures will strengthen listening to the right pronunciation and so will help them learn the foreign language.

9- Reading enriches vocabulary

Reading enriches vocabulary	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100 ٪
No	00	00 ٪

Table (21): reading enriches vocabulary

In this item, all students; regardless of their level of English and their preferred skill, claim that reading enriches their vocabulary, expands their knowledge, and enhances their imagination. The fact which reflects discrepancy about the importance of reading; neglecting it on the one side and recognizing its importance in the process of learning on the other side.

10- Frequency of Practicing Reading

Frequency of practicing reading	Participants	Percentage
Only during sessions of reading	12	40 ٪
during all sessions	18	60 ٪

Table (22): Students' attitudes toward practicing reading

Table (22) shows that the majority of students practice reading during all sessions (sessions of reading and sessions of other skills). They claim that they read instructions, and dialogues before acting them in sessions of speaking. They read texts before filling gaps in listening sessions and read given situations before starting writing in writing sessions. However, (40 ٪) of participants say that they practice reading only during reading sessions justifying their opinion with the fact that they wait for their teachers to help them and guide them to do tasks. The aforementioned opinions lead to the conviction that the lack of practicing reading may hinder students' performance and then their academic success.

11- My reading ability is:

Students reading ability	Strong	Average	Weak
Participants	05	15	10
Percentage	16.66 ٪	50 ٪	33.33٪

Table (23): Students reading ability

This table shows that the majority of students (50٪) consider their reading ability average ,
(33,33٪) of them see it weak and the least portion of them (16,66) see themselves as good
readers who have a strong reading ability. Based on the interpretation of these data, good
readers justify their strong ability to read with their strong motivation to read, their pre-
preparation before reading and their interaction with the texts they read. These strategies help
them to be good readers and guarantee their success.

12- I try to read in English outside the classroom

Reading outside the classroom	Always	Sometimes	Never
Participants	09	15	06
Percentage	30 ٪	50 ٪	20٪

Table (24) : Frequency of reading outside the classroom

The results obtained from the table above show that the of least portion of students (20 ٪)
never practices reading outside of the classroom, (30 ٪) of them always practice reading
especially while listening to songs and hymns and reading their lyrics whereas the majority
of them (50 ٪). Claim that they sometimes practice reading outside of the classroom due to
the fact that the widespread of English as a universal language leads to its appearance all
times and in all places (mass media – social media – ads……)

13- Which strategies do you use when reading?

Reading strategies	skimming	scanning	previewing	predicting
Participants	11	09	05	05
Percentage	36.66 ٪	30 ٪	16.66٪	16.66٪

Table (25) : Students' use of reading strategies

After explaining the aforementioned reading and analyzing the results, Table (17) shows that

4th-year middle schools use different reading strategies. (36.66 ٪) of the participants focus on

skimming, (30 ٪) on scamming while the least proportions of participants (16.66٪) claim that

they focus on previewing and predicting as reading strategies, the matter which reflects their

deficiency as good reading strategies. On the other hand, Choosing skimming and scanning as

their reading strategies reflects their awareness of the strategies adopted by teachers which

facilitate their reading comprehension. Skimming given pieces to be read to get their general

ideas and scanning them to get specific information are useful strategies which facilitate

reading as skill specifically and language learning generally.

Hudson (2007: 105) states that strategies are "procedures used in learning and thinking which

serve as a way of reaching goals in learning language, learning and communication strategies"

14- Are you a good reader? Tick the boxes which best describe you

Characteristics of good reader	a		B		c		d		E		F	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participants	21	O9	08	22	13	17	11	19	07	23	12	18
Percentage	70	30	26,6	73,3	43,3	56,6	36,6	63,3	23,3	76,6	40	60

Table (26): Characteristics of Good Readers

After analyzing learners' results of being or not being good readers of English, it is proved

that the majority of them are not good readers as most of them say they cannot read words

accurately and quickly(73,33) either because of ambiguity of new words or because of difficulties of pronunciation, they do not note the structure of the text before reading(76,66) and do not practice English at every opportunity(63,33).

Section three: Reading Constraints – Causes and Effects

15-The most difficult skill according to you is :

Most difficult skill	Reading	writing	listening	speaking
Participants	03	12	05	10
Percentage	10 ٪	40 ٪	16.66٪	33.33٪

Table (27) : Students' most difficult skill.

The table shows that writing is the most difficult skill according to students' responses (40 ٪) as it requires the integration of all skills at once. Speaking is the second most difficult skill (33.33٪) as it requires a certain background of knowledge information to be practiced. Whereas, reading (10 ٪) and listening (16.66٪) are considered to be less difficult. Based on these results, we can deduce that students have difficulties with productive skills (writing and speaking) more than the receptive ones (listening and reading). As a result, they ignored receptive skills; the reason why they failed to be good users of the English language who take into consideration the importance of all four language skills to learning a foreign language.

16- Reading is difficult

reading is easy	Participants	Percentage
Yes	23	23.33 ٪
No	07	76.66 ٪

Table (28) : Reading is difficult

Table (28) proves that the majority of learners (76.66 ٪) consider reading in English as a difficult task because they face constraints while reading whereas (23.33 ٪) find reading in English an easy task .

17- Reading constraints: What type of constraints do you suffer from?

Types of reading constraints	Fluency	Poor reading comprehension	Word decoding	No reading constraints
Participants	05	17	06	02
Percentage	16.66 ٪	56.66 ٪	20٪	06.66٪

Table (29) : Types of reading constraints

The table above shows that most respondents (56.66 ٪) usually find it difficult to understand texts , (20٪) of them find their difficulties with word decoding, (16.66 ٪) reported facing difficulty in reading fluently whereas only (06.66٪) claim not having any of the aforementioned difficulties.

18- Causes of reading constraints

  Against this backdrop, we moved further to explore potential causes contributing to these constraints. Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed a range of different factors which will be explained as follows:

1- Personal factors

Personal factors	Lack of interest in English	lack of reading habit	frustration	anxiety
Participants	02	17	03	08
Percentage	06.66 ٪	56.66 ٪	10٪	26.66٪

Table (30): Personal Factors of Reading Constraints

Based on the results obtained, it could be said that though learners are interested in English (only (6,66٪)are not interested in it) , most of them (56.66 ٪) lack the habit of reading. In

addition, learners' feelings may also influence their reading ability as (10٪) claim that they feel frustrated while reading whereas (26.66٪) feel anxious and stressed when reading an English text.

Hence, it could be said that interest in English and the motivation to learn do not prevent learners from having reading constraints.

2- **Linguistic factors:**

Linguistic factors	Lack of vocabulary	Length & complexity of sentences	confusing	None of them
Participants	18	07	03	02
Percentage	60 ٪	23.33 ٪	10٪	06.66٪

Table (31): Linguistic Factors related to Reading Constraints

This section consists of responses related to linguistic factors contributing to reading difficulties. As shown, the majority of learners (60 ٪) reported that they did not have enough vocabulary to read and understand texts, (23.33 ٪) claimed that the length and the complexity of sentences is one of the factors which hinder their reading abilities and cause them loss of focus and (10٪) agreed that they are unable to read in English because of the appearance of confusing words while reading. In addition, there are some other factors that hinder learners' reading ability including the cultural difference between Arabic and English, insufficient time of practice, the unfamiliarity of the text sometimes, the large size of classes, and the lack of adequate materials (dictionaries – internet).

19- **Effects of Reading constraints**

Effects of Reading constraints	A	B	C	D
Participants	11	12	05	02
Percentage	36.66 ٪	40 ٪	16.66٪	06.66٪

Table (32) : Effects of reading constraints on learners

The table above shows that the cumulative effects of reading constraints on learners are mostly psychological. (40%) of students claimed that they lose motivation and interest to read and communicate in English after facing reading constraints, (36.66 %) agreed that they have low self-esteem when failing to read and perceived themselves as less valued members of their classes, (16.66%) said that they lose concentration of what comes next during the session and (06.66%) of learners show disinterest if failing to read effectively.

Conclusion

This chapter has interpreted and discussed research findings from questionnaires distributed to both fourth year middle school pupils and English language teachers at the same school. The results has been analyzed in the light of the review of literature and the theoretical frame work. The results of the study show the compatibility between the responses of the teachers and the pupils in both questionnaires.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, we can conclude with the following recommendations:

- **Recommendations to Teachers:**

- It is highly recommended that teachers of English should pay more attention to teaching vocabulary in a way that allows for effective learning such as "vocabulary journals".

- "Task- Based- Activity" is also highly recommended to achieve the learning objectives successfully and relate learners' situations to their own lives.

- Adopting the " Reward system" for learners who read outside the classroom may also enhance their reading ability.

- Sharing pupils the same book to be read as a kind of competition between them and their teacher so as to encourage them to read.

- **Recommendations to Learners:**

-Learners are recommended to invest their inner motivation to read what they find interesting.

- Joining " Reading Clubs" to support and support and hone their skills, and participate in reading competitions.

- **Recommendations to Schools:**

-The school administrations should ensure the availability of reading materials including books, stories and dictionaries that go with learners' abilities and interests.

- The concern for the right of pupils to the reading hours inside the library.

- **Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Stakeholders:**

The Ministry of Education and Stakeholders in the education sector should come up with compulsory methods for enhancing reading skills such as:

-Paying more attention to the English language; being the language of international communication, the media and the internet , and allocating additional hours in the syllabus.

- Use of library lessons where students are able to choose what they want to read and therefore develop their reading skills.

- Ensuring the availability of adequate reading and learning materials.

- Adopting measures that help reduce absenteeism which causes educational retardation.

- Ensuring that the teachers' training programs are sufficiently developed so as to prepare them competently for teaching.

- Activating the role of the school counseling to help students remove barriers to academic success and support them in their psychological, academic and social development.

General Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the reading constraints that fourth year middle school pupils encounter while practicing reading. It also shed light on the factors that cause such constraints. The overall analysis of the data obtained by the questionnaires revealed several reading problems such as the lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, poor comprehension skills, poor fluency skills, word decoding along with ignoring punctuation and linguistic interference.

Results also showed that reading constraints result from a range of factors that are related to learners (lack of motivation to read in English), arrangement of classes (mixed ability classes and overcrowded classes), time constraints and the unavailability of adequate reading materials and equipment.

To gather the previously mentioned data, a Questionnaire has been adopted as a research tool. A questionnaire was distributed to 30 fourth year middle school pupils for the sake of identifying their reading constraints and the ways they are using to overcome them; taking into consideration that they were chosen randomly. Another questionnaire was conducted on four teachers of English at the same school; aiming to identify the causes of those constraints and their effects on the learners' process of learning.

To analyze the data, a mixed- method approach was selected; the quantitative for the sake of answering questions. The quantitative data of closed- ended questions were analyzed by using the "Rule of Three" and the qualitative data of open-ended questions were interpreted according to QCA.

Based on the results discussed in the previous chapter, we succeeded to answer the research questions and confirm the suggested hypotheses. The outcomes obtained from the revealed and confirmed that fourth- year middle school pupils face reading problem. The

supply of adequate reading materials and equipment and implementing library lessons were the measures strongly recommended by teachers in alleviating learners' reading constraints. The next part will be devoted to suggest some recommendations which may help reduce the severity of the problem and reiterating its importance for academic success.

REFERENCES

Alshammari, M. M. (2015). New developments in teaching reading comprehension skills to EFL learners. International journal of English language teaching.

Anderson, R. C., Wilson, P. T., & Fielding, L. G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. Reading research quarterly.

Applebee, A. N. (1993). Literature in the secondary school: Studies of curriculum and instruction in the United States. National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096 (Stock No. 30070-3050: $14.95 members, $19.95 nonmembers).

Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (1997). Extensive reading: What is it? Why bother?. LANGUAGE TEACHER-KYOTO-JALT.

Bia, K., & MABROUKI, A. (2016). Challenges to Novice English Language Teachers at Middle School (Doctoral dissertation, Ahmed Draia University-Adrar).

Charef, C. The Importance of Reading Skill in Enhancing EFL Students' Communication Skills A Case Study of Third Year Students of English at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra.

Cohen.L, Lawrence and Keith Marisson.(2007). Research Methods in Education(6th Ed). London and New York: Rutledge.

Crewell. (1999). Mixed Method Research : Introduction and Application. In G.J Cizek (Ed), Handbook of Educational Policy. New York: Academic Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. Language teaching research.

Firmansyah, A. (2018). An Analysis of Classroom Activities In Critical Reading Of Second Grade Students Of SMAN 3 Pekanbaru (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Riau).

Grellet . F,(2008), Developing Reading, Pearson education,Inc.

Gruner, E. R. (2019). Constructing the Adolescent Reader in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Hao, T. Z. (2020). History, Memory, and Islam through the Animal: The Zoomorphic Imaginary in Cirebon (Doctoral dissertation, National University of Singapore (Singapore).

Hedge. T, (2007), Teaching second language reading, Oxford University Press.

Hseih H.F and Shannon.S (2005).Three approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. Qualitative Health Research.

Kalavathi, K., & Chandran, A. (2021). READING SKILL–A KEY TO SELF LEARNING. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology.

Kheireddine, Y. (2020). An Investigation into the Role of Motivation in Enhancing Students' Reading Skill: the Case of First Year Students of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

Lerner, J. (2006). Learning disabilities and related disorder: Characteristics and teaching strategies(10th Ed). Houghton Mifflin.

Marchessault, J. K., & Larwin, K. H. (2014). The Potential Impact of Structured Read-Aloud on Middle School Reading Achievement. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education.

McCoach, D. B., & Flake, J. K. (2018). The role of motivation.

McNamara, D. S., Ozuru, Y., Best, R., & O'Reilly, T. (2007). The 4-pronged comprehension strategy framework. Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions, and technologies.

Novia, L. (2021). The Effectiveness of Using Fable Text on Students' Reading Comprehension in Narrative Text at the Second Semester of the Ninth Grade of SMPN 07 Bandar Lampung in the Academic Year of 2020/2021 (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung).

O'Rourke, S. P., Abbott, D. P., Cogan, M., Dube, R., Sloane, T. O., & Zappen, J. P. (1996). The most significant passage on rhetoric in the works of Francis bacon. Rhetoric Society Quarterly.

Paris, S. G., & Hamilton, E. E. (2014). The development of children's reading comprehension. In Handbook of research on reading comprehension(.Routeldge).

Rukminingsih, R. (2016). INCORPORATING DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY (DRTA) TECHNIQUE INTO EXTENSIVE READING CLASS. Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan.

Saïd, K. E. S. K. E. S., & IQsdiMerbahUniversity, O. A universiüy perspeeüive.

Salem, A. A. M. S. (2017). Scaffolding Reading Comprehension Skills. English Language Teaching.

Slimani, S. (2005). Failure of Achievement in Developing the Reading Skill in 'Comet' TEXTBOOK. A Case Study of Third Year Secondary School Pupils in Biskra (Doctoral dissertation, UNIVERSITÉ MOHAMED KHIDER–BISKRA). EFL Critical Reading

Souhila, L., & Meriem, S. (2020). Analysis of Factors that Promote The case of third year M'sila University (Doctoral University (Doctoral dissertation).

Tuan, L. T. (2011). Teaching Reading through WebQuest. JournaL of Language Teaching & Research.

Urciuoli, B. (2008). Skills and selves in the new workplace. American ethnologist.

Vacca.J etal,(2000), Reading and Learning to read, Pearson education, Inc.

Wallace.C (1992), Reading Oxford University Press.

Wixon,K.,Peters, C,.Weber, E.(1987). New directions in statewide readind assessment. The reading teacher.

Wood.W,(2001), Reading Difficulties, Pearson education, Inc.

Zhang, H., & Zou, W. (2020). Morphological intervention in promoting higher-order reading abilities among college- level second language learners. Sustainability

Appendices

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teachers-

You are invited to participate in **Investigating Causes and Effects of Reading Constraints** survey. Would you please devote some of your time to answer this questionnaire which would serve as a data collection tool for a Master Dissertation. Thanks for your cooperation in advance.

Section One: Background Information -Please tick (√) in the appropriate box in each case:

1. **Age**: …………….. … years old

2. **Degree:** Bachelor ☐   Master ☐   PhD ☐

3 . **Teaching Experience**:   0- 5 years ☐   6-10 years ☐   More than 10 years ☐

4. **Attendance of training programs: Yes**   ☐   ☐

Section Two: About Reading as a skill-

5. **According to you, what is the most important skill?.............**

   Reading ☐   Writing ☐ Listening   Speaking ☐

6. **Is it important to teach reading?**   Yes ☐   No ☐

7. **Are reading sessions programmed in the syllabus as separate sessions?**

      a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

8. **Based on your experience, why is reading important in language learning?**

………………………………………………….

9. **What type of reading would be more beneficial for learners ?..................................**

Intensive ☐ extensive ☐ interactive ☐ loud ☐ silent ☐ All o f them ☐

10. **What are the characteristics of a good language reader?**

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

11. How do you plan your reading sessions?

……
……
……
……...

12. According to you and your experience, what are the effective reading strategies that enhance learners' reading skill before , while and after reading?

Before reading:…………………………………………………………………………………

……..

While reading:

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

………..

After reading :

……

………

……

13. What are the benefits of reading as a language skill?

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

Section Three: **Reading difficulties , Causes and Effects**

14. What types of reading constraints do your students mostly suffer from?

Poor comprehension skills ☐ fluency ☐ word decoding ☐ Ignoring punctuation ☐

15. What causes reading constraints?
Overcrowded classes ☐ Mixed ability classes ☐ Time constraints ☐ Mother tongue interference ☐ Lack of motivation ☐ New vocabulary ☐

16. What about pedagogical aspects ? Do you think that :

1-Teachers' lessons are always well planned ☐

2 -Reading is a part of given home works ☐

3- Reading materials are always available ☐

17. What are the effects of students' reading constraints on their learning process?

…………………………………………………68………………………………………………………
………
…………………………..................

18. What solutions would you suggest to enhance learners' reading ability?

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

-Thanks for your cooperation-

Learners' Questionnaire

Dear Students-

You are invited to participate in **Investigating Causes and Effects of Reading Constraints** survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to listen to you and read your feedback about the problem of reading difficulties you've experienced. Please, take some moments to reflect on each question addressed and try to be as sincere as possible. Your answers will remain confidential and they will be only used in finding ways to remedy this problem through your own contribution.

Section One: Background Information -Please tick (√) in the appropriate box in each case:

1- Age: ……………. … years old

2- What is your gender?   a. Male ☐   b. Female ☐

3-Your general academic level: Excellent ☐   Good ☐   accepted ☐   poor ☐

4- What is your most preferred school subject?..

5-Are you satisfied with your marks at English?   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

6-Your favourite skill during English session is: Reading ☐   writing ☐

Listening ☐   Speaking ☐

Section Two: Reading as a skill

7- Reading is the most important skill:

 a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

9-Reading is strongly related to:

Writing ☐   **Speaking** ☐   **Listening** ☐

10- I practise reading :

a. only during reading sessions ☐   b. during all sessions ☐

11- My reading ability is:

a. strong ☐   b. average ☐   c. weak ☐

13- I try to read in English outside of the classroom:

 a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

14- Are you a good reader? Tick the boxes which best describe you

a. Have a strong motivation to read and communicate in English a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

b. read words accurately and quickly   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

c. use reading strategies   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

d. practise reading at every opportunity   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

e. note structure of the text before reading   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

f. interact with the text while reading   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

Section three: Reading constraints , their causes and effects

15- The most difficult skill according to you is :

  a. reading [ ]   b. writing [ ]   c. listening [ ]   d. speaking [ ]

16-Reading is difficult : a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]

17-What type of difficulties do you suffer from?

  a. fluency [ ]   b. Poor reading comprehension [ ]

  c. word decoding [ ]   d. No reading constraints [ ]

18- What causes reading constraints? Tick the option which suits you

  1- **Personal factors:**
     a. lack of interest ....   c. Frustration......
     b. lack of reading habit ......   d. Anxiety...........
  2- **Linguistic factors**
     a. lack of vocabulary ....   c. Confusing words......
     b. complexity and length of sentences ...   d. None of them..........

19- Effects of reading constraints?

  A) Low self esteem [ ]   B) lack of motivation and interest [ ]

  C) loss of concentration of what comes next in the session [ ]   D) I don't care [ ]

-Thanks for your cooperation-

Abstract in Arabic

تعد مهارة القراءة واحدة من المهارات الربعة التي وجب على متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية إتقانها لاكتساب الكفاءات اللازمة لتحقيق النجاح الدراسي.وبالرغم من ذلك , فإن معظم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية يعانون من جملة من العوائق التي تحول دون ذلك. تهدف هذه الدراسة التي خصت مجموعة من طلبة السنة الرابعة متوسط متكونة من 30 تلميذا إلى تحديد هذه العوائق , معرفة أسبابها والنتائج المترتبة عنها. ومحاولة إعطاء حلول لمعالجتها .

تم جمع المعلومات في إطار دراسة وصفية تحليلية عن طريق استبيان أنجز طرح على مجموعة من التلاميذ وأساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في المؤسسة وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من التوصيات منها دور الأستاذ والأطراف الفاعلة في تفعيل آليات كفيلة بتشجيع التلاميذ على القراءة وتبيين أهميتها على الصعيد العلمي وحتى العملي , والحد من المعيقات التي تحول دون ذلك.