Investigating the Knack of Reading Comprehension among EFL Students; Second-Year Students

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedications

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Abstract

Reading is one of the English language skills in addition to speaking, listening and writing; reading is an essential discipline to succeed in learning a foreign language. However, a lot of EFL students confront difficulties in comprehending texts, in which they are required to implement the reading strategies to overcome these hindrances. Reading strategies play an integral role in reading comprehension. The present study is concerned with the use of reading strategies among second-year foreign language learners at Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida, since the use of reading strategies help the learners to deeply understand the text. The research is based mainly on a mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative), three research instruments were conducted: a questionnaire delivered to fifty (50) second-year EFL learners, an interview with four (04) teachers of English in charge of the reading-writing, culture and civilization, and literature modules, and for the sake of gathering more data an observation was opted of eight (08) different sessions in the earlier mentioned disciplines. On the basis of the results of the study, it is concluded that students use a wide range of reading strategies, still, they endure some difficulties in terms of vocabulary shortage and pronunciation complications, due to; the absence of reading habit in general. In the light of these results, it was proposed for the foreign language learners to encompass the reading culture in their field of study for its benefits for them in obtaining new vocabulary, pratices on words pronounciation, and attain the syntax of grammatical utterances. Further, the reading-writing module tutors ought to work on promoting the reading module because of its significance for the learners in acquiring a language. Additionally, the higher education and scientific research institutions need to separate the reading module from the writing module so that each module earns its own appropriate time and instruction.

KeyWords: English, language, Reading, Skills.

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EFL……………………………………………..…….English as a Foreign Language

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General Introduction

Reading has always been an interesting learning subject for most learners. It is considered as a gateway to another universe for numerous of people. Even so, reading is such a valued activity for the amount of learners; a lot find it a hard task especially in the term of understanding. For the sake of comprehending and succeeding in foreign language learning, learners must use and develop the reading techniques, because, reading does not just require the ability to pronounce words that are written down, but also the understanding of ideas.

All the learners had a prior knowledge of the reading strategies since primary school because they used to read a lot of texts, answer their questions, give the themes, and provide summaries and you can only do that by skimming and scanning. Furthermore, in the university, particularly in civilization and literature exams, students who do not understand the texts go directly to the questions, look for a key word, search for this unfamiliar word or its synonym in the text and write the entire paragraph that this key word has been mentioned in, to help themselves answer the questions, a practice known as skimming. They are asked to give themes and summaries, they need to read and understand the whole text, and this is known as scanning. It is obveious that all the learners are familiar with the reading strategies even if some used them unconsciously.

In this research work the researcher explored the reading skills used by the second-year EFL learners, as well as the main isseus behind second-year learners' reading comprehension difficulties. In the area of foreign languages students as mentioned before, already have previous knowledge about the reading strategies, but some of them just do not aware of these strategies' use, because they just did not learn them in a structured reading lesson. The second issue for the EFL learners is the lack of reading that affects comprehension. Many EFL learners prefer reading in Arabic, others favour French and only few of them like reading in English, and this is the main problem that causes reading difficulties, because learners should often read in their field of study to gain new vocabulary, see words structure, and become familiar with the grammar rules.

The main concern of this study is to explore whether second-year EFL students' use of the reading strategies in cmprehending texts. In addition, it aims at determine which of these strategies are employed by the second-year learners. Moreover, it seeks to investigate the students' awareness of the reading strategies. More precisely; the ultimate objective of this scientific work is to check how they cope with the difficulties that challenge their reading process. Our study tries to bridge the gap of comprehension difficulties, since reading is important in second and foreign language learning.

In order to conduct this investigation, the following questions were asked:

1. What are the reading strategies used by second-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Tahar Saida University?
2. To what extent are second-year EFL students aware of the appropriate use of the reading strategies?

In order to answer these questions, the following hypotheses were recommended:

1. Second-year EFL students might use distinguishable strategies in reading comprehension.
2. Second-year EFL students would be aware of the adequate use of the reading strategies.

To conduct this investigation a mixed-method is adopted. That is to say, the data collection and analysis rely on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher used of three data collection instruments; the first one is the questionnaire addressed to second-year EFL learners in the Department of English Dr. Moulay Tahar, Saida University. The second tool is an interview addressed to their teachers in charge of the reading-writing, culture and civilization, and literature modules. The third research instrument is a classroom observational sessions held with the previous mentioned modules. The overarching purpose of choosing these research tools are to collect data from different angles; the learner's perspective, the teachers' feedback, and the researcher notes. The data which are collected from the questionnaire and the interview will be analyzed in the form of pie charts, tables, and graphs.

This dissertation structure follows the University of Saida's thesis guide; it contains a General Introduction, three chapters and a General Conclusion. The first chapter deals with the literature review related to the theoretical concepts as well as definition of relevant and key terms. The second chapter presents the Research Design in addition to the procedures of

data collection and data analysis. The third chapter presents and discusses the findings of the chosen data collection tools, in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses. Finally, the General Conclusion presents a summary of the main points developed throughout the discussion and provides some suggestions and recommendations for further research in the field of the reading strategies.

The findings of the present study revealed that second-year EFL learners use considerable reading techniques, however, they face difficulties to understand texts due to multiple reasons such as; the lack of reading, the lack of vocabularies, and the linguistics weaknesses. It was highlighted as suggestions that the reading module need to be taught separately from the writing module because each module is fundamental in learning a new language and can not be discontinued. Moreover, educators of the reading-writing module should give more attention on the reading module as the writing module by reason of its importance in acquiring the language. In addition, foreign language learners have to constatly read in their area of study to fulfill the requirements in learning the language such as; new terminology, grammar rules, and word articulation.

Chapter One: Literature Review.

1.1.   Introduction

Reading is an essential aspect in foreign language learning. In general, it refers back to the procedure that entails the reception and the translation of information.

This section is theoretical and tackles the issue of reading skills and their apparent difficulties. It consists of two parts; the first part deals with an overview of reading, its techniques, and its models. The second part is about the reading comprehension difficulties and their main factors.

1.2.   Definition of Reading

The concept of reading is defined by many scholars. Koda (2007) says that reading is the conversion of prints into language and then into the intended message by the author. The same as Francoise Grellet (1981) defines reading as an ability that constantly involves, guessing, predicting, checking, and asking oneself questions. That is to say, reading is a language skill that requires suitable thinking, guessing, predicting, and asking oneself inquiries to get the data from the text.

> "Reading is a combination of being able to recognize or analyze words almost instantly and to understand what the words mean when they are strung together in a sentence, a paragraph, or a longer passage."(Salazar, 1995: p.41).

Mc Neil (1984) states that reading is an interactive procedure among the reader and the textual content, which meaning is each discovered and created. Moreover, Anderson (2003) describes reading as a method of a reader combining information from a text and their background to construct significance. In other words, reading is an interactive complex process that involves a reader, a text, and interaction between them. The text encodes the meaning by using words, sentences, and paragraphs, and then the reader decodes the means relying on his or her knowledge and skills.

1.3.   The Process of Reading

The reader selects some elements before starting reading in an endeavor to make the reading process easier and clearer. According to Grellet (1981) the process of reading requires some elements to be fulfilled:

The material to read: there exist multiple text types that students may come across such as short stories, poems, handbooks, books, and so on.

Why do we read: the purposes of reading differ: Students read either for pleasure or academic purposes.

How do we read: there is not one limited reading way; it may be done through different ways: skimming (passing one's eyes rapidly over the text to get its substance), scanning (passing one's eyes quickly over the text to obtain specific information), extensive reading, and intensive reading. How we read depends on what and why we are reading. It varies from one student to another.

1.4. Definition of Strategy

The word strategy according to Oxford languages Dictionary refers to a plan of actions designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. In foreign language learning, learners make use of a combination of strategies to attain their learning tasks. In this context, strategy refers to various procedures and methods adopted by learners to reinforce and ameliorate their understanding.

Acoording to Nickols (2016) strategy is the devotion of the short or long goals and the series of actions to allocate resources to realize those goals. In other words, strategies are students' aspects of fulfilling and improving a purpose. In addition, strategies are means that help developing students' capacities and abilities in learning and overcoming their difficulties.

1.5. Micro Skills and Macro Skills of Reading

Reading is one of the four skills in language teaching. Murcia (2001) expresses that reading is a process of comprehending a written text. The reader has to make several concurrent tasks like deciphering the message by understanding the written symbols, inferring the message by altering the words, and understanding what the authors' purpose is. There are some micro and macro skills in reading which is proposed by Davis in Alderson (2000) that need to be developed for effective reading, which is presented below:

1.5.1. Micro-Skills

Davis in Alderson (2000) distinguishes eight micro-skills of reading:

- Recalling word meanings.
- Drawing infrenences about the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items.
- Finding answer to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase.
- Weaving together ideas in the content.
- Drawing infrences from the content.
- Understanding the communicative value of sentences.
- Identifying a writer's technique.
- Following the structure of a passage.

1.5.2. Macro-Skills

- It is about realizing the communicative processes of written texts, according to form and purpose.
- More importantly, macro skills make a distinction between literal and implicit meanings.
- Also, to formulate and use a battery of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning, and detecting discourse matters.
- Finally, to understand from context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.

Therefore, based on the micro-skills and macro-skills that have been determined, the reading activities should include the micro skills and macro skills as well as using reading strategies that are considered necessary by the students. It aims at helping students comprehend the text successfully and making it easier for them to deal with various kinds of texts.

1.6.   Reading Techniques

Reading has many types of techniques that a reader can use according to his or her purpose.

1.6.1.   Skimming

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), skimming is a specialized type of reading in which the reader reads quickly for an overall understanding of the text and to get the meaning of the passage. In the same sense, Broun (2004) states that skimming is the method of fast reading of the passage in order to decide its core or most important idea. It means that skimming is a sort of analyzing quickly without looking at all the details. Besides, the reason for skimming is to understand what a text is about, and its general message.

1.6.2. Scanning

Scanning is a velocity reading method used to search for unique data withinside the textual content. Harmer (2007) states that when readers use scanning in reading they do not have to read every word and line, on the contrary, they use it when searching for specific information. The process does not require analyzing the whole thing in detail; this means that the reader does not read longer and examines all of the textual content word by word, and however, s/he as a substitute extracts particular information without analyzing the whole paragraph. Thus, while a reader scans written textual content s/he is going hastily via the text.

1.7.   Reading Types

There are two types of reading; intensive and extensive

1.7.1. Extensive Reading

Nation (2008) opines that extensive reading is a shape of meaning-centred input. The emphasis is essentially placed on the meaning of the text instead of the structure or the aim. Extensive reading is the reading of large texts, for the reason of having facts or simply pleasure. Extensive reading is essential for the development of reading capabilities and additionally language acquisition. In other words, extensive reading is a critical method that enables the development of reading skills. Furthermore, it complements correct pronunciation particularly, reading loudly, learn each time new terminologies, and help in the writing skills.

1.7.2. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is the type of reading in detail for precise purposes. Readers here examine brief texts to extract particular information. Nation (2008) argues that intensive study of reading texts may be a way of growing learners' knowledge of language functions and their management of reading strategies. Students will be able to learn as much as possible vocabulary items, linguistic features, and reading strategies and how to relate all the three elements creatively to write professionally.

Intensive reading is the reading that is only limited to the short texts with slower speed of reading, and carried out with the aim of understanding the whole content of reading. This method is highly recommended when students do not like reading or rarely read.

1.7.3. Visuals as a Reading Strategy

Peek (1993) demonstrates that images; stimulate the EFL learners to study the reading text, clarify and illustrate the ambiguities, boost their attention, and encourage more detailed processing of the given information included in the illustrations. In addition, Levin and Mayer (1993) clarify that using pictures is a valuable strategy when linguistic texts are complex. Accordingly, Mayer et al. (1995) mentioned that learners need to engage between visual and linguistic modes of representations for meaningful learning. This is why many scholars in the field of reading comprehension stress the necessity of using visuals as a strategy that enhances the learners' reading comprehension.

Moreover, Tavasolli et al. (2005) illustrate that using pictural context can be an important, effective, and beneficial tool in a reading program. That is, the use of pictures in EFL classes to illustrate the reading texts is a significant reading strategy since it promotes the learners' comprehension.

The significance of images is not limited only to the promotion of the EFL learners' reading comprehension; rather, further researchers such as Diamond (2008) explains that

learners usually activate their background knowledge and schema to relate their own life experiences with the given pictures to facilitate the new given information. In this regard, visuals allow the learners to activate their background knowledge about the meaning transmitted in the linguistic mode and enhance their comprehension as well.

1.7.4. The Survey, Question, Read, Recall, and Review Reading Strategy

The SQ3R is a well-known technique originally developed by Robinson in his book SQ3R Effective Study (1941). The main reason behind creating the SQ3R strategy was to solve memory deficiencies; as Flemming (2009) claims that readers forget what they have read right after learning it. Brown (2007) states that one effective series of procedures for approaching a reading text has come to be labeled the SQ3R technique. In his view, the SQ3R is the appropriate strategy that allows readers to better comprehend texts.

1.6.4.1 Survey

It is the first step in the SQ3R strategy; it refers to looking at the text's contents and organization in a general or broad way to gain a general overview of the text's objective, language, and topic. According to Flemming (2009) survey is to peek for the general synopsis of the topic content and organization. This highlights the key elements where the learners look at charts, graphs, pictures, maps, and other supporting materials that are central to the general understanding of the author's main ideas. In other words, the reader looks in advance at what he will read and this involves previewing the Titles, Table of Contents, Introductions, Chapter, Summaries, Bibliography, Headings, Key-words, and Plots.

1.6.4.2 Question

It is the second stage in the SQ3R strategy in which the reader alters what he has already surveyed into questions. Robinson (Cited in Flemming, 2009) explains questioning as formulating questions at the beginning of each passage to offer an immediate questioning manner and an essential idea and to organize the following hypotheses. While questioning the reader, he tries to relate the ideas of the text to his background questions and identify the new information to acquire. Thus, the learner transforms headings, titles and key concepts into questions. According to Flemming (2009) questioning is an effective way to maintain attention while reading and makes the reader focused and motivated.

1.6.4.3 Read

The next step is the first R in the SQ3R strategy; it tends for reading a text by dividing it into parts to help the reader keep attention. In the reading stage, the reader looks for answers to the questions already asked. In addition, the learner rereads the captions under the graphs, pictures, etc. While reading, the reader stops and slows down for difficult passages.

Flemming (2009) states that while reading, the reader answers and confirms the question and the prediction that have been already asked.

1.6.4.4 Recall

Robinson (1941) in his original version of the SQ3R titled the second R as "Recite", which means reciting the answers to the questions asked at the beginning. It is considered as a step for checking the comprehension of the text. In this stage, the learner either orally asks questions while reading to summarize or recites the words by taking notes to focus on the key concepts. This step is summarized in writing down answers in one's own words or talking out loud. However, the modern version named the R as "Recall". In Flemming's (2009) view, there exist many ways to reach this step, look as relying on the text and trying whether you can recite the points as Robinson already suggested.

1.6.4.5 Review

Flemming (2009) suggests that while reviewing, the reader checks the understanding of a text by remembering the heading and key points. This step stands for the last R in the SQ3R. It takes place after finishing reading a whole chapter to examine and evaluate what one has read. Sometimes, recalling cannot ensure remembering the key points of the texts. Thus, reviewing is the main step to keep ideas and concepts related to the material unique.

1.8.   Reading Strategies Categories

Many scholars have formalized different types of reading strategies. For instante, Oxford (1990) has categorized them into six types: memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, compensation, and effective strategies. Besides, Cohen (1998) has ascertained four groups of strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, social, and effective.

1.8.1. Cognitive Strategies

Wonden and Rubin (1987) define cognitive strategies as performances or mental steps that learners design to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content. In the same vein, Oxford (1990) states that cognitive strategies are the most suitable learning strategies among EFL learners. These tactics are used by learners to operate language problems adequately as sociocultural ones. In addition, Oxford (2001) identifies five cognitive reading strategies: guessing from context, analyzing, skimming, taking notes, and reducing.

1.8.2. Meta-Cognitive Strategies

These are a pattern of reflection about the procedure of learning. According to Flavell (1976), metacognitive strategies are one's proficiency relating to one's mental function. Metacognitive strategies refer to aptitudes that learners use to program and mentor their

learning process. It is assumed that excellent learners use their metacognitive skills to enhance their understanding and meet their needs.

1.8.3.   Word Level Strategies

Block (1986) argues that word-level strategies also called "local linguistic" refer to tricks used for understanding small linguistic units of the language ranging from word level to sentence level. Word-level procedures encompass suspecting the meaning of unknown words, comprehending the grammatical details of words, and realizing words from word families.

1.8.4.   Text level Strategies

They refer to strategies used for large linguistic units for ascertaining a comprehensive meaning. Barnett (1988) asserted that while using text-level strategies, the reader predicts meaning using titles and diagrams to attain comprehension.

1.9.   Reading Models

A reading model starts from the moment the reader's eyes meet with the passage until the construction of the purpose. It elucidates all that happens in the reading process. Rumelhart (1977) refers to reading models as a shift from visual representations into thought. So, every reading effort includes the reader, the text, and the statement during the procedure of reading is a reading model. Redondo (1997) established three main theoretical models in reading: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive one.

1.9.1.   Bottom-Up Model

This model is widely correlated with Gough (1972). He argued that while the reader is striving to filter a text to construct meaning, s/he has seen to improve from the smallest units of language to visual ones. Brown (2007) defines the bottom-up model as using the mental data-processing mechanism, to put linguistic clues (letters, morphemes, syllabus, words, phrases, and discourse makers). In addition, Eunjeo (2009) comments that this model is focusing on individual words, pausing for grammatical difficulties. Finally, Dambacher (2010) discussed that the bottom-up model functions as an elaboration of receptive signals, thus implying undertakings providing the retrieval of a word mental presentation. Yet, this model has proved to be insufficient since comprehension and meaning do not only require the deciphering of letters that is emphasis should also be put on the Linguistique features of language to construct understanding (p. 61).

1.9.2. Top-Down Model

The theory of this strategy is about guessing the meaning of the target reading content. Goodman (1971) firstly comments on the top-down model as a "psycholinguistic guessing game", by revealing that the readers predict text meaning primarily based on their occurring or background knowledge. In addition, the top-down model has identified under the cognitive process that the processing of a text begins in the mind of the reader. Abersold and Field (1997) assert that the meaning, which is obtained from the reader's knowledge, expectations, hypothesis, and concerns to the text, is reconfirmed by identifying the letters and words that appeared on the text. The major weakness of the top-down model is its over-reliance on the background information of the reader who may fail to confirm his/her prediction.

1.9.3. Interactive Model

The interactive model includes both bottom-up and top-down models. It considers reading as a process of designing meaning from text through the use of both previously discussed models simultaneously. Eskey (1988) defines the interactive model as the constant exchange between bottom-up and top-down processing in the meaning of a text. This model combines both surface strculture systems (the sensory bottom-up reading) with a deep structure system (the thinking systems-down reading) to build meaning for the reader.in other words; readers use both knowledge structure and background knowledge to extract the essence of the text.

1.10.   Reading Comprehension

Howell and Morehead (1993) declare that reading comprehension is the act of integrating information in a passage with prior knowledge to construct meaning. Furthermore, Snow (2002) claims that comprehension entails three elements which are:

1. The reader who is doing the comprehending.
2. The text that is to be comprehended.
3. The activity in which the comprehension is a part.

That is to say, reading comprehension is the proficiency of receiving the meaning from the text relying on both empirical knowledge and evidence from the text. In the same way, Flores et al. (2004) argue that reading comprehension skills are the mind's ability to understand the ideas, the message, the text-based, the purpose of the text, and the author.

In addition, Paris (2008) affirms that comprehension means understanding words, relating ideas between text and previous knowledge, forming and intervening meaning in the discussion with others. In short, reading comprehension is the way of designing meaning from a text-based on background knowledge and information from the text.

1.11. Teaching Reading

Creative teachers use some creative techniques while teaching reading lessons to help their students improve themselves and become better readers. According to Nation (2008), the students' use of such effective techniques helps them overcome problems of text comprehension. Different grammatical features can be explained, more vocabulary items can be learned, pronunciation is improved, and language practice is enhanced. Spratt et al. (2011) spotlight some key concepts to teach reading:

- **Presentation techniques:** this is an introductory step in any reading course. It is not always related to course context; it can be a quick review, joke, questions, puzzles, and word association.

- **Pre-teaching vocabulary:** it is the first step before reading the passage, it aims at indicating learners and paving the way for what is coming up it also encourages students to predict the content. For instance, to ask students about the lexes related to a certain term or element. It helps them identify vocabulary terms by guessing and providing synonyms.

- **Lead-in:** It involves having a look at the title or the pictures accompanied with the text to predict what the text is about, they are often used to raise students' energy.

- **Main activities:** they are comprehension activities to develop different reading skills and techniques, teachers encourage students to produce different new ideas and give them enough freedom to explore them. For example, asking students questions to be answered from the text.

- **Post-task activities:** it is the last step in the reading process. They are activities used to ask learners to relate the topic of the text, such as gap feeling, and exploring the expended note.

All these concepts will contribute to the communicative effect of the text. The use of these techniques permits teachers to learn more about their student's performance. Reading can be done for various purposes and comprehensive reading is what makes a skilled EFL learner, a strong reader. It must be learned and developed.

1.12. Principles of Teaching Reading

To achieve the goals of teaching and learning processes, teachers should emphasis on teaching the reading comprehension. By that meaning Harmer (1998) formulates six principles in teaching reading, they are as follows:

a) Reading is not a passive skill

Reading is an extremely active skill; learners do not only catch the surface structure of the text but also grap the content.

b) Students need to be engaged with what they are reading

When the readers are not interested in the texts or the lesson, they will not receive the benefits of learning.

c) Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text

The meaning of the language used in a text is a considerable part. It is necessary to give opportunities for the readers to express feelings about the topic.

d) Prediction is a major factor in reading

The readers need to guess the content of the text by looking at the title or related images. This can be an exciting and motivating task for the learners who have imagination.

e) Match the task to the topic

Interactive texts provide interesting questions that the learners will find it easy to answer. Teachers are expected to choose good reading tasks which can be interactive to learners.

f) Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full

Teachers should integrate the reading text into interesting lesson sequences, using discussion, multiple tasks, and language study.

1.13. Motivation in Reading

In general, motivation is the willingness that a person has when doing something to fulfill particular goals. Thus, the students need motivation in their studies because most academic learning requires sufficient energy from students during the years of study.

According to Geen (1995), motivation is related to the initiation, direction, intensity, and diligence of behaviour. Therefore, motivation in reading is the willingness to read and recieve a meaningful sense of a particular text.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) claim that motivation has two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation in reading refers to the reading without a specific purpose and the activity is done for its own sake and naturally. However, extrinsic motivation relies on rewards if the reading activity is done. The two types of motivation are correlated and complete each other and enhance students reading frequency. Duke and Pearson (2001) confirm that reading motivation is affected by different factor such as; the type of the text, the amount of possessed vocabulary, the automaticity of decoding, reading fluency, and the use and understanding of the reading strategies. Thus, these factors encourage readers to comprehend different texts.

1.12.   Reading Difficulties in English Language Classroom

For many foreign language learners, reading comprehension is a major problem that hinders the comprehension of the ideas included within the text. Wiggin (1977) argues that many foreign language learners do not understand text-based messages from an interaction of syntax and rhetoric due to the absence of skills or practice. This reveals that any reading comprehension process may be implicated by many difficulties which cause the lack of perception, problems in words pronounciation, and limited number of terminologies.

Likewise, Ho Vang Chang in his research study "A study of Reading Compression Problems in English Encountered by First-Year Students of Faculty of Finance Studies at HNus" (2007) asserted that insufficient vocabulary and the need to reread are the two most severe problems that hinder the student's comprehension from English reading. That is to say, if a student's knowledge of English is poor; his reading will also be poor, thus, provoking poor comprehension.

Furthermore, comprehension difficulties have different characteristics, they are as follows: First one is confusion as Kerfoot (1965) declares in his research about the meaning of words and sentences. Second one is the lack of concentration while reading. Third one is the incapability to relate ideas in a passage. Fourth one is the difficulty in differentiating substantial information from small details.

1.13.   Factors behind Reading Comprehension Difficulties

1.13.1.   Pronunciation Problems

Several factors are influencing the pronunciation of second language learners. That is, the first interference by interference of mother language, prior pronunciation instruction, the insufficient language knowledge of English phonology and phonetics, learners' age, and learners' attitude and psychological aspects.

Bolton and Kwok (1990) assert that it is a natural phenomenon the intonation transfer for the second language learners to mother language. In the same expansion, Bell (1995) declares that the problem in learning pronunciation is the difference between first language and second language.

1.13.2. Linguistic Weakness

This factor has to do with the lack of the reader's EFL vocabulary. Recognizing the printed words and constructing the cotextual meaning is the fundamental virtue of acquiring a rich vocabulary. Hoover and Coughts (1990) estimate that without the ability to decipher or perceive words there will be no reading comprehension.

1.13.3. Lack of Reading

Many scholars in the field of reading comprehension emphasize the importance of reading habits because of their significance in improving the EFL learners reading comprehension skills. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) mentions that reading habits play a crucial role in knowledge transfer and enabling a person to achieve functional efficiency.

1.14.   Overcoming Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Comprehension goes hand in hand with reading, and it is a sign of success in academic achievement. However, comprehension is the basic dilemma that learners face during the reading process. The following items capitalize on some clues to overcome the comprehension burden.

1.14.1.   Read the Assigned Material More Times

This technique can be peneficial for learners in term of:

- Grasp what they did not understand in the first glimpse.

- Strengthens understanding of the pattern, rhythm and pronounciation of the textual context.
- Developing a deeper understanding of the text.

1.14.2. Read Extensively in the Discipline Area

There is no way any learner will achieve a new language only in the limited number of hours in class. In particular, reading habit helps learner to build reading speed and reading fluency, obtain new vocabularies, become actively engaged in their field of study, and increases their motivation. On the contrerary, poor readers struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy, low achievement in reading assignement, and the decreasing in the academic achievements.

1.14.3.   The Collaborative Work

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to learning and teaching that involves pair or group of learners working together to complete a task, solve a problem, or create a product. Slavin (1995) states that in collaborative learning, students are expected to help each other, discuss, argue with one another, and assess each other knowledge.

The academic benefits of the collaborative learning demostrated as follow:
- Collaborative learning promotes critical thinking skills.
- Helpful in motivating students and improve classroom results.
- Involves students actively in the learning process.
- Models students' appropriate problem solving techniques.
- Alternate students and teachers assessment techniques.

1.14.3. The Use of Dicionaries

Vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency. A lot of students have comprehension problems due to unfamiliar words, and dictionary can be used to enrich the learners' vocabulary size. According to Nation and Meara (2010) dictionary use is one of vocabulary learning strategies. That is to say, using dictionaries provide learners with definitions of new words and enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition.

1.15.   Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has dealt with the review of literature that shed light on the reading strategies that the learners should use while reading texts. Further, it focused on the difficulties that face the students during the reading process. Moreover, it explored the concept of reading comprehension, reading strategies categories, and reading models, to improve   the   learner's   reading   comprehension.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Design.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is practical and covers the research design and methodology applied to determine the reading techniques used among second-year EFL learners. It presents the participants of the study, and then it identifies the research tools which are a questionnaire destined for learners, an interview for English language teachers in charge of reading-writing, civilization, literature modules, and observation in reading classes in the departments of English at Dr. Moulay Taher University of Saida. Finally, it explains the data analyses procedures.

2.2. Research Methodology

2.2.1. Study Context and Population

This study has taken place in a real context. That is the department of English at the University of Saida Dr. Moulay Taher. It seeks to determine the reading skills among second-year learners in the academic year 2021/2022. The participants in this research are second-year learners of the Department English Language and Literature and their teachers. Fifty (50) questionnaires have been distributed to students, four (04) teachers have been interviewed, and eight (08) reading sessions have been observed. The reason behind choosing these participants is to investigate the reading skills among second-year learners and teachers' views.

2.2.2   Case Study

Creswell (2002) defines a case study as a problem to be studied which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a "case" or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Furthermore, Yin (2003) states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evedent.

2.2.3   Qualitative research

According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups elucidate to a social human problem. The process of research involves appearing questions and procedures, collecting data in the participants setting, analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

Qualitative research aims to obtain a full picture of a matter according to the human perspective studies. In other words, it is related to ideas, perceptions, opinions or beliefs of the person being studied and it can not be measured by numbers.

2.2.4   Quantitative research

Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It is the opposite of qualitative research that involves collecting and analyzing non-numeracal data. Qualitative research can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider popuulations. Creswell (2003) assesrted that qualitative research can also be characterized as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

2.3.1. The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a tool used for collecting data about a specific subject. Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2010) defines it as follows: "*a questionnaire is a set of questions on a topic designed to be answered by a respondent….Questionnaires are used in many branches of applied linguistics*, *such as language surveys*, *the study of attitudes and motivation*, *and needs analysis*" (Richards and Shmidt, 2010, p. 478). That is to say, a questionnaire is a research instrument that can be used in the field of social sciences, and it consists of a set of items or questions designed to collect both qualitative data such as attitudes and motivation and it is designed also to collect quantitative data such as numbers and   statistics.

Accordingly, the questions should be asked, they can be either closed-ended questions or open-ended questions; closed-ended questions require the respondents to choose the appropriate answer from the suggested ones while the open-ended questions make the respondents feel free to give their opinions and answers as they like.

The questionnaire that is used for this study is addressed to second-year EFL learners in the Department of English at Saida University. It comprises closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions where the respondents need to tick the right answer to indicate a suitable answer. It mainly aims at determining the techniques that are used by the learners in reading comprehension and the factors that cause reading comprehension difficulties. It contains 16 items and is divided into 7 sections.

The first section is about the general information of the learners, the second section is about the importance of reading among learners, the third section deals with the learner's attitude toward reading, the fourth section deals with learners motivation toward reading, the fifth section comprises of the reading strategies used by the learners, the six sections is about learners difficulties while reading, and the last section is about the reading comprehension activities used by their teachers in reading classes.

2.3.1.1.   Types of Questionnaire

2.3.1.1.1.   Structured Questionnaire

Structured questionnaires fall under the category of quantitative research. Also known as a closed questionnaire, it contains direct and close questions, and it can accumulate large amounts of valuable data that gives deep insight into the minds of the large number of people who answer those questions.

2.3.1.1.2.   Unstructured Questionnaire

Is an instrument or guide used by a researcher who asks questions about a particular topic or issue, this type of questionnaire is usually formulated around the open-ended questions, which may give more valid data, as the respondents say what is important to them and express them in their own words.

2.3.1.1.3   The semi-structured questionnaire

Include a combination of structured and unstructured segments with the same questionnaire. It contains both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

2.3.1.2   Types of Questionnaire Questions

2.3.1.2.1   Rank Order Scale

A rank order scale is a close-ended question that gives the respondents a set of items and asks them to put items in some of the order. That is to say, the rank order scale allows respondents to rearrange and rank multiple-choice options in a specific order.

2.3.1.2.2   Likert Scale

Is a part of closed-ended questions; also is a type of rating scale used to measure attitudes or opinion. This type of question is used to measure respondents' agreement or disagreement toward a given subject.

2.3.1.2.2   Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions are better suited for quantitative research. It refers to short answers questions, where participants are provided with options to choose a response from. In other words, close-ended questions provoke a simple response from a respondent.

2.3.1.2.3   Multiple Choice Questions

Multiple-choice questions are a type of closed question which it provides the respondents with multiple answers options. Respondents here can choose single select or multi-select answers from the multiple answers options.

2.3.1.2.4   Open-Ended Questions

Unlike closed-ended questions, the respondents here are not provided with a list of options to choose from, nor are it a yes or no type of question. Open-ended type questions allow the participants to elaborate detailed information based on their review or opinion on a specific topic.

2.3.1.2.5   Dichotomous Questions

It is a type of closed-ended question that can have two possible answers. It can be yes or no, true or false, agree or disagree type of questions.

2.3.1.2.6   Semantic Differential Scale

Is a seven-point rating scale used to drive the respondent's attitude towards the given object or even by asking him to select an appropriate position on a scale between two dipolar adj (such as warm or cold) (powerful or week).

2.3.2. The Interview

It is the second research instrument used in this study. It is usually used by researchers to collect data about a particular field of investigation (it is generally used to gather qualitative data). According to Kothari (2004), the interview method requires the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. In the same way, Kothari (2004) argues that interviews go through different ways either with personal interaction or through phone-call. Accordingly, personal interview requires a direct verbal interaction between the interviewer who instigates the interview by asking questions and gathering information and the interviewee who is anticipated to respond to these questions.

In order to ensure the comparability of the interviews and the findings of this scientific work, a structured interview has been employed. In fact, Edward and Holland (2013) comment that structured interview contains of sequence of questions provided to the interviewee with flexibility of responces. Moreover, Edward and Holland (2013) estimate that the main objective of this type of interview is to attain equivalent information from the interviewee. Indeed, the current study relied on a structured interview that took place at Dr. Moulay Tahar-Saida University. After being assured about the ethical aspects and being informed about the research objectives, four teachers of English language in charge of reading- writing, civilization, and literature accepted to take part in the interview and took ten to fifteen minutes when providing their answers.

2.3.2.1 Types of Interviews

2.3.2.1.1 One by One Interview

Is one of the most common qualitative researches, it is a personal interview that is carried on with one respondent at a time. This interview can be performed face to face or throw the phone, and it is purely a conversation method that enables the researcher together precise data about what people believe.

2.3.2.1.2 Focus Group

It is a kind of group interview that includes a limited number of respondents (from 6 to 10) who have been brought together to discuss a paparticular subject, answer questions, solve a problem, or suggest ideas.

2.3.1.1.3 Structured Interview

Also known as standardized interviews; It is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks a particular set of pre-determined questions. It can be conducted through phone or face-to-face interviews.

2.3.1.1.4 Unstructured interview

Is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks questions that are not prepared in advance. Those questions are formulated during the interview based on what the interviewer observes. Also, it is known as an informal interview.

2.3.3. The Observation

In all domains of knowledge, observation is viewed as a key for any exploration or discovery. In scientific research, humanities, linguists, and sociologists have observed human phenomena attached to individuals' behaviors attitudes toward something or somebody's practices, tendencies, and apprehension…etc. *Observation regards as the systematic description of the events, behaviors, and artifacts of a social* setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79).   The observation tool addresses the learning environment, student engagement, instructional quality, and curriculum implementation.

 Observation phase or observation, in general, requires careful attention, diligence, and time.

Careful attention: a good observer enjoys accurate observation of phenomena to witness changes or mutations, metamorphosis occurring within the process.

Note-taking: the observer should be present-minded all the time to take note of every single detail.

Activeness: this means that the researcher has to be active in dealing with the observed matter, as he or she has to imply him or herself by asking, inquiries when the opportunity arises.

2.3.3.1   Types of Observation

There are many types of observation methods available and the major ones are listed below.

2.3.3.1.1   Casual vs. Formal Observation

Casual Observation often takes place during the initial stages of a research project. The researcher goes to the situation looking to find the categories and behaviors that will be used later in the formal observation stage. In the first stage, the researcher may also be considering factors such as the best place to stand, or the least obtrusive way to dress. When carrying out a Formal observation, the researcher will have a clear idea of what behaviors they are looking for, and how they will be recorded. It is common, especially in laboratory situations, to record video information, and then analyze it in more detail later.

2.3.3.1.2   Direct vs. Indirect Observation

Observation can also be either Direct or Indirect. Direct Observation is when you watch interactions, processes, or behaviors as they occur. For example, observing a teacher teaching a lesson from a Psychology curriculum to determine whether they are delivering it with fidelity. Indirect Observation is when you watch the results of interactions, processes, or behaviors. For example, observing the amount of plate waste left by students in a school cafeteria to determine whether it is acceptable to them.

2.3.3.1.3   Structured Observation

Structured observation is a set of formal techniques which seek to provide sympatric description of behavior and test causal hypotheses. As the researcher already understands "what" is relevant for research purposes, he is in a better position to devise a specific plan beforehand for making and recording observations. In these observational techniques, there is

a focus on the specified aspect of the behaviour which takes place both in the field as well as laboratory.

2.3.3.1.4   Unstructured Observation

The purpose of unstructured observation is to provide a "richer" and more direct account of the behavioral phenomenon under study. In these methods, attempts are made to analyze true the complexities of the social situations rather than impose any structure over it. If required, in the light of the new knowledge, the definition of the problem can also be changed. The unstructured methods seek to generate rather than test the hypotheses. These are flexible in nature.

2.3.3.1.5   Participant Observation

Participant Observation is one of the most common methods for qualitative data collection. It is also one of the most demanding techniques of observation. It requires that the researcher become a participant in the culture or context being observed. Participant observation incorporates how to enter the context, the role of the researcher as a participant, the collection and storage of field notes, and the analysis of field data. Participant observation often requires months or years of intensive work because the researcher needs to become accepted as a natural part of the culture to assure that the observations are of the natural phenomenon.

2.4.   Data Analyses Procedures

This part is concerned with the description of the methods used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire, and the qualitative data collected from the interviews and the observation. It deals with Quantitative Statistical procedures, Qualitative Content Analysis, and the Ethnographic approach respectively.

2.4.1   Qualitative Procedure: Qualitative Content Analysis

According to Hsieh and Shannon qualitative content analysis is an organized classification process of interpretation of textual content data. Another definition proclaimed by Holsti (2005) affirms that qualitative content analysis is a technique of making inferences systematically and objectively of a text. This technique enables researchers to systematically reduce large amounts of words and texts into fewer content categories through coding and

categorization. Hence, this study uses this technique to categorize the answers of the participants, teachers'recorded and written interviews, and the observation outcomes.

2.4.2   Quantitative Statistical Procedure

As said before, the present study uses questionnaires containing close-ended questions which give numerical data. The results are interpreted in terms of numerical data coded in software (Microsoft Excel) in the form of percentages, then presented in form of diagrams and pie charts.

2.5.   Triangulation

Triangulation in research means using multiple datasets, methods, and theories to address a research question, instead of approaching a research question from just one theoretical perspective. Also, it is a strategy that can help to enhance validity and credibility of the findings, and it is useful to avoid the flaws and bias that come with reliance on a singel research tequnique.

The current research encompasses the methodological triangulation type that refers to the use of different methods to approach the same research question. In other words, methodological triangulation is the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study.

2.6.   Research Principles

Research ethics and principals are important in promoting the aim of the research such as, truth, knowledge and avoidance of error, supporting the collaborative work values namely, fairness and mutual respect between researchers, and moral and social values for instance, human rights and responsibility.

2.6.1.   Validity

Validity refers to how accurately a method measures what is intended to measures. When the research produces results that correspond to real properties, characteristic, and variations, it is considered as high validity research.

2.6.2.   Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability a method measures something. That is to say, when the same results are consistently achieved by using the same methods under the same circumstances, the measurementis considered reliable.

2.7. Conclusion

Summing up, this chapter has shed light on the research design and methodology used in the study. First, it has presented the context and the participants of the research. Then, it has clarified the data collection procedures which consist of a questionnaire for second-year EFL learners, interviews with their teachers, and an observation in reading sessions. Finally, it has explained the data analysis procedures. The results of closed-ended questions are obtained from the quantitative content analysis while the qualitative content analysis is used to interpret the results of the open-ended questions. The results that are collected from these data procedures will help to investigate the reading comprehension strategies that are used by EFL learners.

Chapter Three: Data Analyses and Interpretation

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with presenting and discussing the results obtained from the questionnaire distributed to a group of fifty (50) second-year students of the Department of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University. Also, findings obtained from the structured interview conducted with four (04) teachers in charge of the reading and writing, culture and civilization, and literature modules. In addition to the results reached from the observation of eight (08) sessions in the same mentioned modules. It aims to provide answers to the research questions raised by the study. The quantitative results are presented in percentages and then converted into tables, pie charts, and bar graphs, while the qualitative results are interpreted in form of narrative passages.

3.2. Data Analyses

The questionnaire was carried out quantitatively, the interview and the classroom observation were carried out qualitatively.

3.2.1 Students' Questionnaire Presentation

The researcher has designed a questionnaire contains of seven (07) sections and sixsteen questions devided into open-ended, closed-ended, multiple choice, and dichotomous questions, addressed to fifty (50) second-year EFL learners in the department of English. The aim of this questionnaire was to collect data of different concerns about the reading strategies that the learners use in the reading module, in which in ten (10) minutes the fifty (50) papers were answered and returned back.

Section one: Learners' information

Question one: Gender
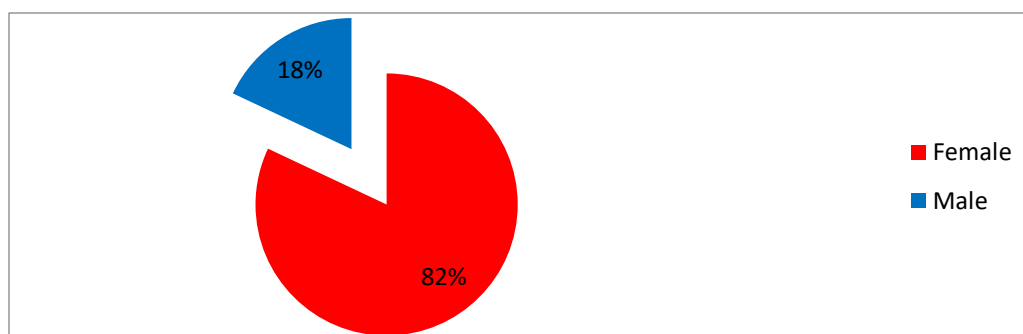
Graph 3.1: Students' Gender

The majority of the students, which is 82%, are females and only 18% from the total represents males.

Section two: The Importance of Reading

Question Two: Is reading comprehension important in learning English?
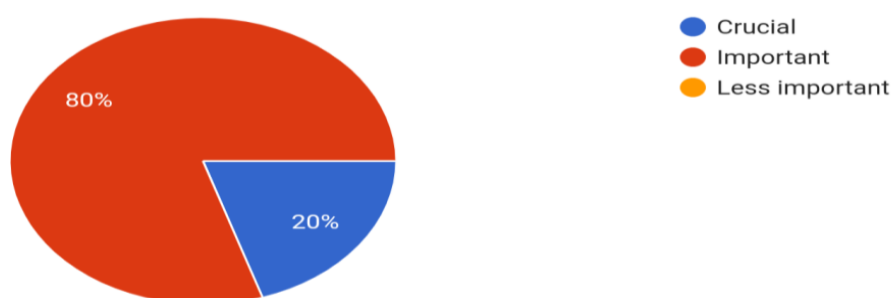
Graph 3.2: The Importance of Reading Comprehension in Learning English

Graph 02 shows that most of the learners' (80%) consider reading comprehension as an important element in learning English. This result reveals that students are aware of the importance of reading. In addition to (20%) of them see it as a crucial step in helping them to improve their reading skills and to enrich their vocabulary.

Section three: Learners' Attitude toward reading

Question Three: Do you like the reading module? And why?
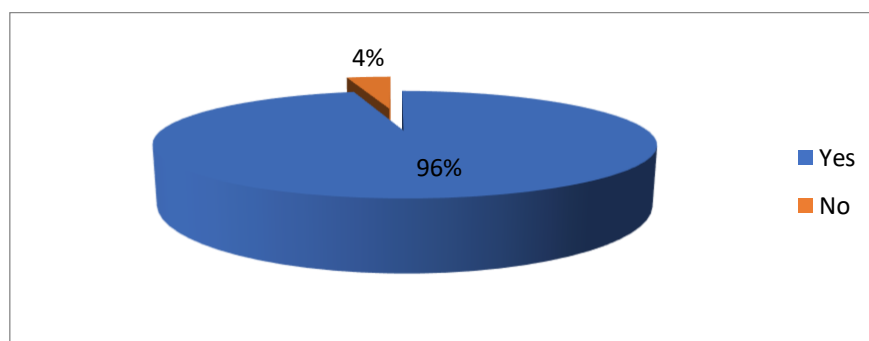
Diagram 3.3: Students' Attitude towards the Reading Module.

As indicated in the piechart above, the vast learners (96%) like the reading module. They argue that it helps them learn how to pronounce words, learn more vocabulary, and improve their reading skills. However, (4%) of the learners dislike this module because they view it as a complex skill.

Question Four: Is reading comprehension complex and time-consuming?

.

Diagram3.4: Reading Comprehension is hard and Time-consuming.

The following diagram reveals that most of the learners (54%) indicate that they are neutral toward reading. This percentage represents the majority, who refuses to provide an answer on reading comprehension, while (24%) claimed that reading is a complex and time-consuming, in contrast to (22%) of the participants whom agree on that.
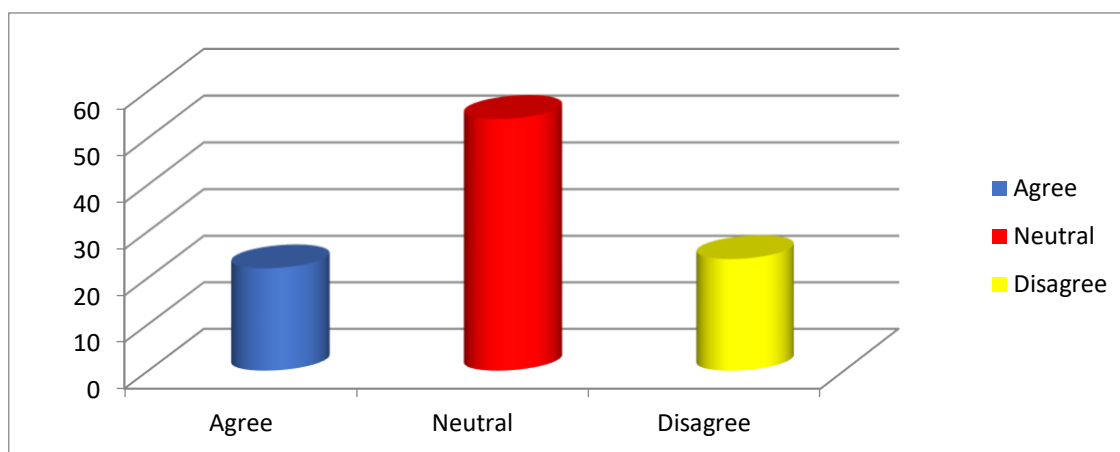
Question Five: How do you feel when you are asked to read in the classroom?

This question is an open-ended question in which the majority of the students reported that they enjoy and feel happy and exited when their teachers ask them to read in the classroom, because they consider reading as the main method that makes them correct their spelling mistakes, and help them to read attentively and speak fluently. Wereease, others say that they feel stressed, anscious, and shy when they are asked to read. And few others escape this question.

Section three: Learners' motivation while reading

Question Six: do you feel motivated when reading?

Yes : 47

No : 03

From the answers, it appears that most of the students (94%) affirm that they are motivated when reading, simply because English is their favourite language. Moreover, (6%), which represents three (3) students tends to express a negative attitude.

Question Seven: In what way do your teachers motivate you in the reading module?

The results gathered from this open-ended question show that the greatest portion of the students claim that their teachers motivate them in a positive way. For example, they give them passages and handouts to read at home, they ask them to read books in order to improve their reading skills; also they encourage them to work in groups to exchange and discuss different ideas and opinions. Further, reading-writing teachers give them different types of texts to read for grabbing their interest. However, others did not answred this question.

Question Eight: Do you think that text selection impact your reading motivation?
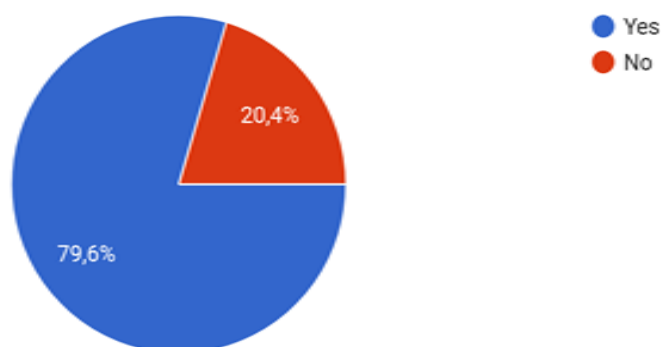
Diagram 3.5: The Impact of Text Selection on the Learners' Motivation.

Text selection has an immense influence on motivation. (79, 6%) of the learners answered with *'yes'*, as demonstrated in the above diagram such as poems, short stories, and written plays. While (20, 4%) did not declare that text selection has an impact on their motivation. This exhibits that choosing an appropriate literary work has a huge effect on the majority of the informants' reading comprehension.

Section Five: Reading Strategies

Question Nine: While reading are you aware of the the use of the reading strategies?
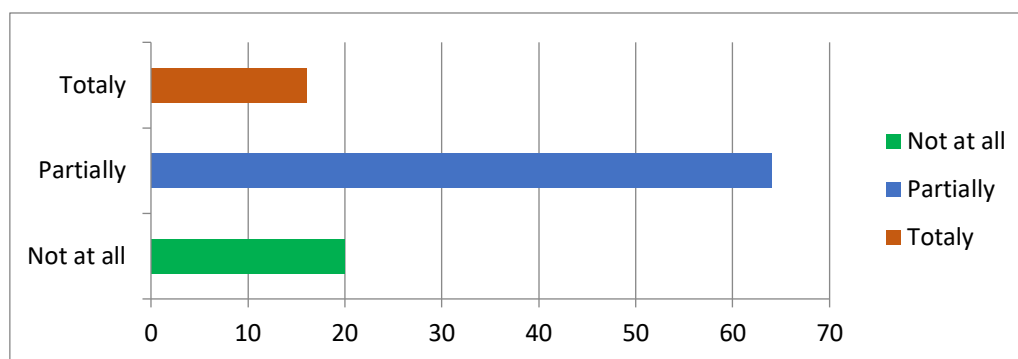
Diagram3.6: The Learners' Awareness of the Reading Strategies.

The outcomes clearly demonstrate that (64%) of participants are partially aware of reading strategies, while (20%) do not have any idea about the reading strategies, and only (16%) reported that they are totally aware and employ reading strategies in a given text.

    Question Ten: What are the reading techniques that you use while reading?

Table 3.1: The Learners' Techniques Used while Reading.

Options	N	%
Skimming	20	40%
Scanning	21	42%
Nothing	08	16%
Others	01	02%

As highlighted in table 01, it appears that (42%) of the learners use scanning in reading, (40%) of them use the skimming technique, (16%) of the participants do not use any technique in reading, and (02%) of the respondents use other techniques while reading. These answers show the prevalence of students using different kinds of reading strategies in reading texts.

Question Eleven: What are the reading strategies that your teachers use while teaching reading?

    A huge amount of responsdents did not answer this question, while few others illustrate that their teachers ask them to highlites important ideas while reading to generate a summury of what they have read, clarify for them the dificult words, give them answer questions to

mesure their understanding of the given passages, and others explain that their teachers use the SQ3R method to help them to be active and effective in reading comprehension.

Section six: Learners' Difficulties While Reading

Question Twelve: Do you find difficulties when you are reading a text?
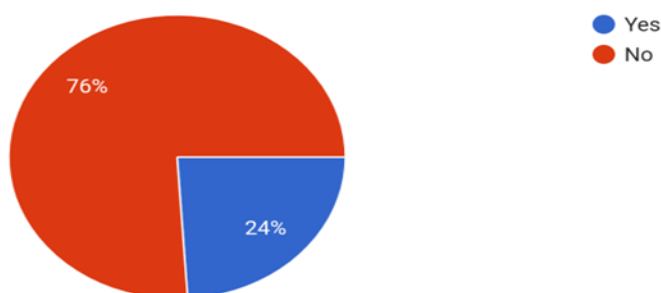
Diagram3.7: Learners' View of Reading Difficulties.

As for diagram 07, the results indicate that the majority of the respondents (76%) do not find difficulties when reading a text. Indeed, only (24%) of the respondents state that they face difficulties in reading texts. This implies that most of the learners do not encounter impediments in reading comprehention.

Question Thirteen: What kind of reading difficulties that you face while reading?
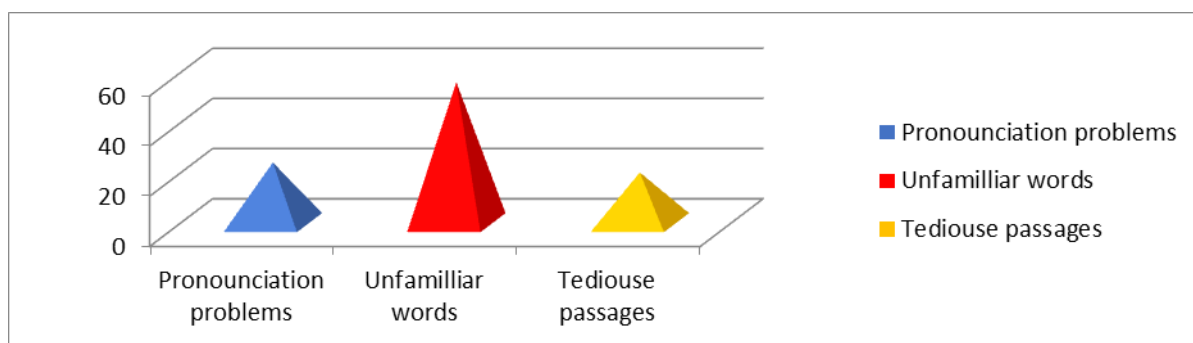
Diagram3.8: Reading Difficulties Facing Learners' while Reading.

The participants in this question reveal that (56%) of them face the problem of unfamiliar words when reading; whereas, (24%) of the participants find problems in pronounciation and (20%) of the informants see that tediouse passages prevent them from comprehending the literary text. This contradicts to what they have claimed on the previous answer when the majority reported that they do not have reading difficulties.

Question Fourteen: How do you react while facing reading difficulties?
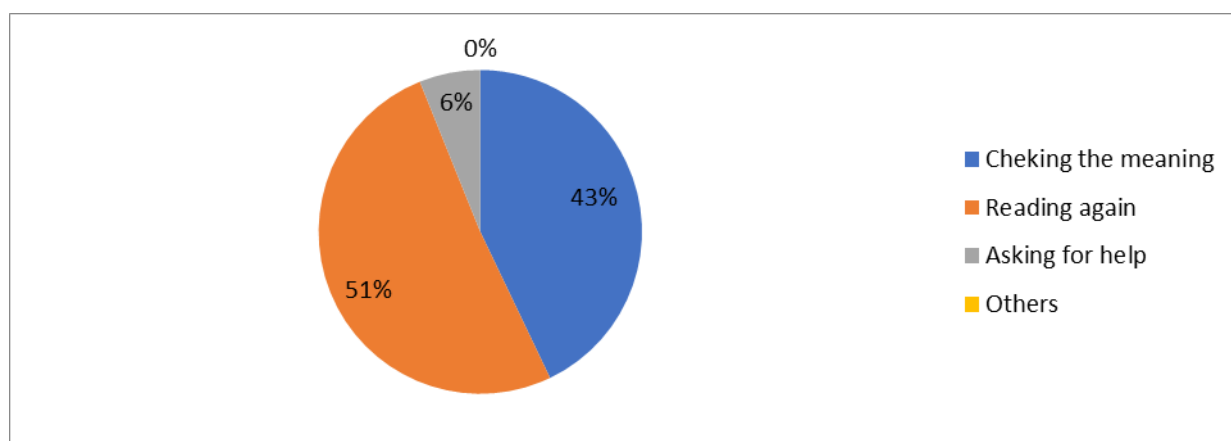
Diagram3.9: Learners' Reaction while Facing Reading Difficulties.

As demonstrated in diagram 09, (51%) of the respondents state that when they face reading difficulties they read again the passage for more understanding. While, (43%) of the respondents overcome their difficulties by checking the meaning in the dictionary, and (6%) of the participants ask for help from their teachers and classmates in order to comprehend the text.

Section seven: Reading Comprehension Activities

Question Fifteen: What do you do after having finished reading?
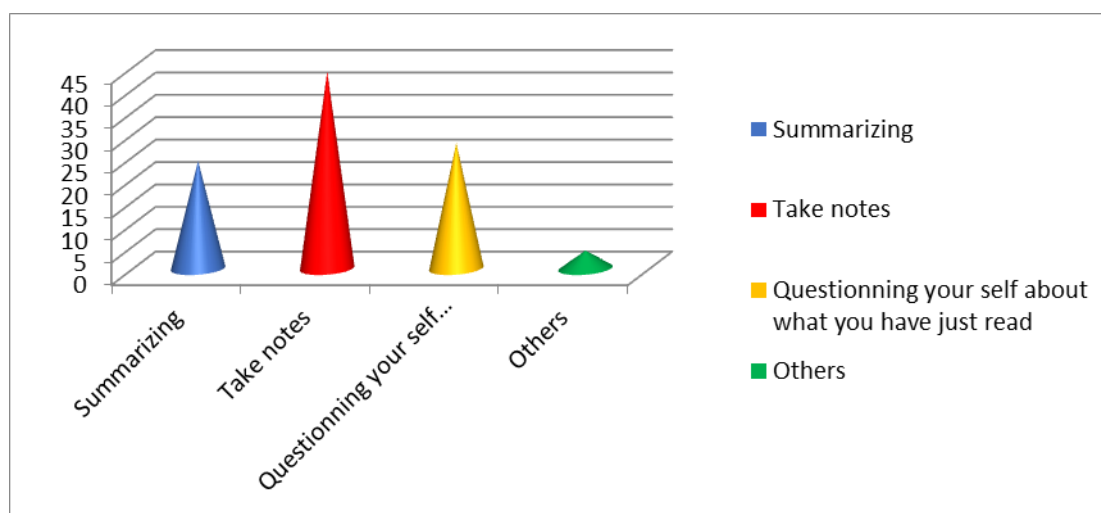
Diagram3.10: Learners' Final Process of Reading.

From the results displayed in diagram 10, it has been perceived that (44%) of the students rely on taking notes after finishing with reading. Moreover (28%) of the participants indicate that they question themselves about what they have read to obtain the general message of the text. (24%) assert that they summarize after reading in order to reformulate what they have grasped

from the text, and only (4%) of the participants claim that they use other tactics after finishing reading for general understanding.

Question Sixteen: What kind of reading activities do your teachers provide you with, in order to improve your reading comprehension?
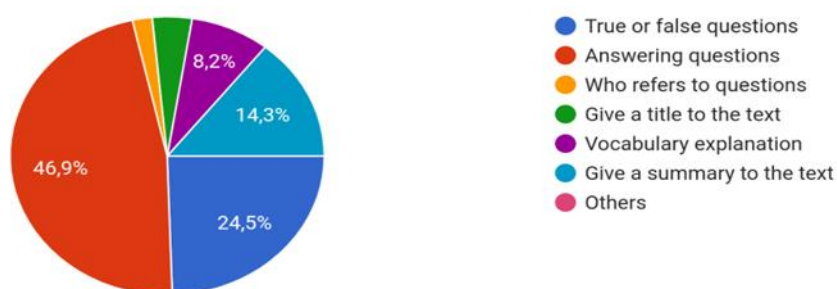
Diagram 3.11: Reading Activities used by the Participants Teachers.

Relying on the results presented in diagram 11, (46, 9%) of the participants affirm that their teachers use answering questions activities to improve the learners reading comprehension. In addition to (24, 5%) of the learners clarify that their teachers use true or false questions, also (14, 3%) of the students assert that their tutors ask them to give summaries to texts. (8, 2%) of participants their teachers give them activities about vocabulary explanations, (4, 1%) of students admitted that their teachers ask them to give title to the text, and (2%) of the learners declare that their teachers provide them with activities which refer to questions. This implies that the teachers use different activities in order to maintain the learners' understanding.

3.2.2.   Teachers' Interview Presentation

The researcher has designed a structured interview containing five (05) sections and ten (10) open-ended questions conducted to four teachers in charge of reading-writing, literature, culture and civilization modules, for the sake of gathering information about the reading strategies that are used by the learners from the teachers' point of view. Three teachers answered the interview via email, and one teacher answered it face to face with the researcher.

Section one: Teaching Experience

Question one: How long have you been teaching?

All the participants (four teachers) are experienced teachers whose experience varies from eight (08) to twelve (12) years. All of them work in the Department of English language at Saida University Dr. Moulay Tahar. Indeed, all the participants are familiar with the reading module; two of them are teachers in charge of the reading-writing module, one in charge of the culture and civilization module, and one in charge of the literature module.

Section Two: Reading Strategies

Question Two: Which method (strategy) do you use in teaching reading?

This question seeks to determine the strategies used by the teachers in teaching reading. Two teachers said that they use skimming and scanning in teaching the reading module. Moreover, one of the teachers answered that she uses different activities in addition to a discussion part in order to improve the learners reading skills. The last interviewee argues that s/he uses The Reader-Response Theory, which serves as a learner-centred strategy.

Question Three: Do you think your learners are motivated to learn (practice) reading (master the reading skills)?

In this question responses are diverse, in which two teachers asserted that some of the students are motivated to learn reading, another respondent claimed that they are motivated. While other interviewees confessed that they are not motivated to learn and master their reading skills.

Question Four: Are your learners aware of the reading strategies?

This question was asked to confirm whether learners use the reading strategies in reading or not. All the participants here agree that some of the learners are aware of reading strategies, even some times they use them without attention. Likewise, other students do not use the reading strategies in reading texts.

Section Three: Reading Difficulties

Question Five: Do your learners have difficulties in the reading comprehention?

All the teachers viewed that their learners have difficulties in reading comprehension. Indeed, one of the teachers declared that they have a considerable number of hindrances, but the most important aspect to focus on is that they understand the given text because sometimes they only do not find the adequate translation of texts.

Question Six: Accourding to you, what are the factors that leed to reading comprehention difficulties?

According to the participants' answers, the factors that led to reading comprehension difficulties among their learners are simply because they do not fancy reading, poor vocabulary, and the lack of background knowledge. Due to these factors, they do not know how to respond to the provided text.

Section Four: Classroom Management

Question Seven: What kind of reading activities do you assign to improve your learners reading comprehension?

As far as this question is concerned, teachers indicate that they use comprehension questions (yes/no questions, true/false questions, and simply answering questions) to evaluate the learners' comprehension, difficult questions for exploration, In addition, another respondent argues that group work is the best method to enhance the learners' motivation to accomplish their reading activities, for it helps them interact with one another and exchange knowledge.

Question Eight: Do you believe that text selction has an effect on the learners' reading comprehension, and motivation?

All the participants answered in favour, revealing that text selection has a huge impact on the learners' comprehension and motivation. Their answeres were as follows:

- "Of course, teachers should select suitable texts in term of length and simplicity."

- "In an EFL classroom the only thing that matters in terms of text selection is the "language used", it should be appropriate to the learners' level."

- "Of course, students display persistence, engagement and positive response towards topics they are interested in".

- "Yes, the text must be selective to stimulate the learners' interest and attention."

Question Nine: How can you help your learners when they do not understand a text?

From this question, our interviewees answer that they permit their students to check dictionaries to look for unfamiliar words meanings and give them synonyms to such words. Also, they allow their learners to work collaboratively because for some students working with peers can facilitate understanding for them. Another teacher illustrates that s/he never intervened, but rather, s/he leaves space for learners to improve themselves.

Section Five: Benefits of Reading Skills for Students

Question Ten: In your opinion, what are the advanteges of using skimming and scanning?

In this question, when the researcher inquired the interviewees about their point of view of skimming and scanning they illustrate that both of them help students save time and go straight to the required task, they permit to understand and to analyse the whole objective and features of the text, they facilitate comprehension and help in improving productivity and boost the learners' critical thinking.

3.2.3.   Classroom Observation Presentation

The researcher has designed an event sampling observation as a technique to collect data with second-year EFL learners. She conducted the research with four groups whose ages vary from eighteen to twenty, as a global number of ninty-six (96) learners. This observation was divided into eight sessions, she conducted with each group two sessions one reading-writing module, and the second module either culture and civilization or literature. This has been done to explore the learners' attitude towards reading comprehension from different angles.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher designed in the class a time sample in order to investigate the main issues that taches upon her subject matter. This time sample involves the main points which are:

- The reading strategies used by the learners when reading texts.

- Their motivation toward reading.

- Kinds of texts that are giving by their teachers, if they stimulate their interest or not.

•   Also, the reading activities used by the teachers and their ways of teaching the reading module.

3.2.3.1   Literature and Cuture and Civilization Classroom Observation

At the beginning of each culture and civilization or literature session, the teachers aimed to refresh the learners' minds about the previous lecture, and usually it takes 10 to 15 min in order to pave the way for the next lesson. Further, they always ask the learners to prepare (read) the upcoming lesson at home, so that the students obtain ideas about it. Then, they start explaining the lesson on the board for example, *Beowolf* in literature, and *The Handrend Years War* in culture and civilization, by writing down definitions, key concepts, new vocabulary, charts in order to minimize the learners' confusions if there are any.

According to what have been seen by the researcher, when the teachers give answering questions about the learning lesson, the dominant numbers of the learners interpret with them and provide well-organized answers and this is due to the good preparation and the background knowledge they have about the giving texts. After finishing with introducing and explaining the lesson, the teacher of literature asked two or three volunteers to give summaries, for instant; of the poem, the other learners read the poem again and work in pairs or in groups to find the elements of time and place. At the end of the lesson, the teacher gave the students the characteristic of epic poetry by writing them on the table with explanations and examples from the poem, and the learners took notes at the same time.

The same method of teaching reading was used in the lesson of *King Lear* and *the Battle with Grendel*. Whereas, in the culture and civilization module, after finishing the lesson presentation and after the students answered the questions excellently, the tutor began to give notes to the learners about the battles involved in the lesson, as well as a hondout of the royal family tree to avoid confusion of the United Kingdom kingsnames, and the learners began taking notes.

3.2.3.2   Reading-writing Module Classroom Observation

For the reading-writing module, teachers focused more on the writing skills compared to the reading skills, and this is due to the insufficient time as they claimed, in which they conducted the reading module only as a homework activity. They provide the learners with a text on Moodle platform and ask them to read it at home and answer its questions.

1.2. Data Interpretation

1.2.1. Disscussion of the Students' Questionnnaire

Section One: Learners' Information

This section contains only one question; it provides us with the participants' gender (male/ female). The results showed that the majority of the informants are females.

Section Two: The Importance of Reading

The interpretation of the second section revealed several facts about the importance of reading comprehension in learning English. The vast numbers of the students have the same view that reading comprehension in the EFL classroom is necessary. While the remaining number considered it as a crucial step in enriching their vocabulary and improving their reading skills. These findings confirm the awareness of second-year learners of the significance of the reading module and the endeavours they set for this it to attain the English language.

Section Three: Learners' Attitudes toward Reading

Accourding to the results, the majority of the students like the reading module because it is very important in learning English. It helps them learn how to pronounce words, learn new vocabularies, and improve their reading skills as one of the participants says" it helps us in developing our skills of reading". However, there are some students who dislike the reading module; they have claimed that reading is a difficult skill.

The large number of students affirms that reading comprehension is neutral in terms of complexity and time-consuming. This means that sometimes they take much time to comprehend the context of a givin text, sometimes they find several difficulties to understand the meaning, and other times they find it easy. While other respondents disagree that reading is a complex and time-consuming; for them it is an easy task. In contrast to others, who confirm that reading is a difficult process and this due to many reasons such as: the limitation of students' vocabulary, spelling and pronounciation problems, in addition to insufficient background knowledge. Accourding to Chang (2007) as he declares that the lack of vocabulary is one of the most severe problems that hinder students from comprehending English reading.

Concerning the learners' feelings when they are asked to read in the classroom, it appears that the majority of the participants feel happy and excited when reading in the classroom. As one of the participants says "it makes me feel excited to read in the classroom". This means that students like reading in class. However, there are some students who have admitted that they feel anxious, stressed, uncomfortable, and shy when they are asked to read in the classroom; because, they feel afraid to make some mistakes, as one of them reports "sometimes I feel stressed to make mistakes at reading or mispronounce the word" this due to the lack of reading, and practicing at home can be the solution for this kind of problems.

Section Four: Learners' Motivation toward Reading

The research showed that all the students are motivated while reading; simply because they like the English language, it is an international languge, language of technologies, and of course, to learn more about the language and gain more vocabularies. Except of, a few number of informants who expressed a negative attitude toward reading; maybe because they do not admire the English language.

The EFL teachers in reading classes motivate their students via different ways as the research revealed, in which they encourage their learners to read, always tell them that "reading is easy just pay attention" as one of the student argued, it is important to improve their reading and writing skills, and give them different works to read at home. This shows that the teachers of the reading modules emphasis on the learners motivation because of its important in enhancing their reading-writing skills.

The greatest portion of the learners agree that text selection has a huge impact on their reading motivation, and that confirms what have been mentioned in the first chapter when Duke and pearson (2001) confirm that reading motivation is effected by factors such as; the type of the text, the amount of possessed vocabulary, the automaticity of decoding, reading fluency, and the use and understanding of the reading strategies.

Section Five: Reading Strategies

Most of the learners are partially or totally aware of the reading strategies and this is due to the significance of the reading strategies in learning and acquiring the English language. While only few of them do not have any idea about the reading strategies. This confirms the first research hypothesis which states that second-year students are aware of the edequate use of reading strategies.

Among these strategies, the majority of the learners use either skimming or scanning techniques while reading and even sometimes they use both of them accourding the purposes. And this confirms the second research hypothesis that declares; second-year learners use distinguichable strategies in reading comprehension. As Broun (2004) defines skimming as; the method of fast reading of the whole passage for an overall understanding, Thus, Harmer (2007) states that scanning does not require reading the whole passage, but only extract specific information.

However, prevalence number of the learners did not answer the question of the reading strategies used by their teachers while reading instruction and this shows that they do not pay enough attention to recognize them when being used. Moreover, others discussed that their teachers explain for them difficult information, give them questions to answer, ask them to take summaries and taking notes of important ideas, and also use the SQ3R method which is according to Broun (2007) the appropriate strategy that allows readers to better comprehend the text . (See chapter 2 page 5-6)

Section six: Learners' Difficulties while Reading

Regarding learners' reading difficulties, the plurality of them state that they do not have reading difficulties, this contradict to their writing skills as one of the learners argued "because in my free time I reading more story and books" and other comment "because I used reading a lot", as it is knoun that a good reader is a good writer.

Most commun difficulty that the learners face accourding to this research is the problem of unfamiliar words; as one of the students claims "sometimes it is difficult for me to understand some words". Then, the problem of pronunciation as Bell (1995) asserted that the problem in learning pronounciation is the difference between first language and second language. The other problem is tedious passages which text selection has a huge effect on the learners' motivation to read.

Learners' reactions when facing reading difficulties differentiate from one learner to another. Some read again for more understanding, others check difficult words meaning in the dictionary and the rest participant ask for help from their classmates and teachers. This reveals students make efforts to correct their mistakes and learn the English language skills.

Section Seven: Reading Comprehension Activities

Concerning students' note-taking, question themselves what they have understood from the passage, and summarize after finishing reading, as an extra effort to enhance their capabilities and techniques in the reading module. Following this technique, the reading tasks will be easy for them to achieve and to gain further comprehension.

Teachers rely on different types of reading assessment; such as answering questions, true false questions, vocabulary explanations, and ask their learners to give summaries to texts. This final step in the reading process; helps both teachers and learners to mesure the learners' understanding of the giving passages, learn how to activate the reading skills, and practise them in further reading.

1.2.2.   Discution of the Teachers' Interview

Section One: Teaching Experience

All the four participants are experienced teachers familiar with the reading module. Teaching experience has a significant impact on the learners' comprehension since they experience various teaching methods and they are aware of the suitable method that enhances the learners' understanding.

Section Two: Reading Strategies

One of the teachers' strategies is giving the learners' multiple activities such as; answering questions, true-false questions, give summaries to the text, and the Reader-Respone method, in order to improve their reading comprehension and skills. Similarily, as what have the students answered in the questionnaire in section five, other teachers use skimming and scanning because of its importance in understanding the texts and easily answer its related activities.

Learners' motivation diverse from one teacher's point of view to another, that is due to learners interest in the module whether is literature, culture and civilization, or reading-writing module in which they seem much more motivated to read literary text.

To confirm the second research hypothesis, teachers agreed that some of the learners are aware of the reading strategies and sometimes they even use them unconsciously. It is important for foreign language learners to be aware of their comprehension process during

reading. According to Singhal (2001), who indicates that reading strategies facilitate for the readers to conceive a task, help them to understand, and guide them to comprehend.

Section Three: Reading Difficulties

All the interviewee sees their learners to have reading difficulties that contradict the learners' answers in the questionnaire in which the majority argued that they do not have any difficulties in reading and it is an easy task as one of them commented. The reason behind these difficulties from the teachers' point of view; is the absence of reading among learners, that cause the lack of vocabuly, and eventually poor background knowledge. It is considered to be the major reason that causes reading problems.

Section Four: Classroom Management

In order to evaluate the learners' comprehension, teachers diverse their reading activities from simple answering questions to exploration questions to group work method, Chafe (1998) propagates that cooperative learning promotes communication and interaction, it allows students to work in groups; that means different backgrounds that increases the learners' opportunities to learn and share ideas, which is an effective technique of learning.

Text selection plays a huge role on learners' comprehension and motivation, Meurant (2010) advices the reading teachers that when providing relevant reading materials for the learners, it generates an interest that will boost learners' level of confidence and promote them in acquiring linguistics competence.

Schlecty (1994) states that students will interact and engage more in the classroom if they understand the lesson and this is up to the teacher to make new concepts easier for them to grasp. Interaction and communication between students and the teacher is the best technique to enhance learning.

Section Five: Benefits of Reading Skills for Students

Teachers emphasize that skimming and scanning help students go directly and specifically to the required information, get the gist of the text and make questions easier to answer, Veazi (2003) explains that students are motivated to look for specific information and look for clues they need in various types of texts. Reading techniques increase learners' interest, facilitate understanding, and save time for them.

1.2.3. Discussion of the Classroom Observation

Literature and Culture & Civilization Modules Classroom Observation Interpretation

Literature, culture and civilization modules stand on reading. Instractors of those modules give huge importance to reading comprehension in presenting their lessons, they provide their learners with literary text to prepare at home, then they give them different activities to answer and activate their knowledge background exactly as have been provided by the learners in the questionnaire. In addition to what the teachers have been answered in the interview most of the time learners use reading skills unconciousely. In certainty, learners make efforts in preparing these texts, interpret with their teachers in the classroom, and provide answers; this is due to the interesting topics and text that their tutors provide them with, also the teachers' ways of teaching that stimulate them to admire the session and work hard to achieve academic goals.

Reading-Writing Module Classroom Observation Interpretation

However, instractors of the reading-writing module do not rely on reading as much as on writing, only one of them uses reading as a homework activity and the others do not tackle reading at all. This impacts the learners writing skills negatively, although the teachers focus on the writing skills more than the reading skills, reading and writing go hand in hand with each other and one of them can not be abandoned.

1.3. Recommendations

After conducting this research, the researcher proposed some recommendations in order to put forward learners' awareness about the importance of the use of the reading strategies, and to overcome the reading comprehension difficulties.

1.For the English teachers'

Reading is an important intergrating skill in learning the English language. In this sense, reading-writing teachers should focus on the reading module the same as focusing on the wrinting module.

2.For the English learners'

Specializing in the English language field need reading in this language in order to acquire new vocabulary, learn the grammar rules, and be familiar with words and paragraph structure.

3.For the English departement administration

The reading module should be taught separately from the writing module because of its significance in learning and expanding the appropriate English language.

3.5.   Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the analyses, the discussion, and the recomendations of the gathered data from the questionnaire, the interview, and the classroom observation. It answers the study's research questions introduced in the general introduction. Moreover, it confirms the suggested hypotheses. In fact, it has been concluded that students are interested in reading, learn, and use the reading skills when the texts are important. Second-year EFL learners use multiple tecniques while reading such as skimming and scanning, Indeed, the majority of the learners hold that the use of the reading strategies helps them in gaining better understanding of the text and monitor their cognitive abilities. Furthermore, the results also reveals that students use different strategies to overcome the comprehension difficulties they encounter, for example, they work in groups, read again the passages, and use dictionaries to look for unfamiliar words definitions.

General Conclusion

This research aims to investigate the knack of reading comprehension among second-year EFL studendts at the Department of English University of Saida Dr. Moulay Tahar. First, it aims to analyze the strategies and techniques that the learners use in reading. Second, it tries to identify the main reasons that cause reading comprehension difficulties. After presenting the research findings and the analyses, the researcher draws some conclusions and provides several recommendations towards the implementation of the reading strategies and it importance in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

This research built upon two major research questions and two main research hypotheses. First, the research questions were:

- What are the reading strategies used by second-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Tahar, Saida University?
- To what extent are second-year EFL learners aware of the appropriate use of the reading strategies?
  Wherearse, the research hypotheses are confirmed and demonstrated in:
- Second-year EFL learnes use plenty of reading strategies.
- The majority of second-year EFL students are aware of the edequate use of the reading strategies.

The research adopted the mixed method approach; it combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods for data collection and analyses. In fact, the data collected through three research instruments: a questionnaire was distributed to fifty (50) second-year EFL students, an interview to four (04) teachers of English in charge of reading-writing, culture and civilization, and literature modules, and the last research instrument was a classroom observation in the above modules.

The interpretation of the findings of the students' questionnaire, the teachers' interview, and the classroom observation brought answers to the research questions. The results demonstrated that second-year EFL learners use distinguichable strategies in reading texts, such as; skimming, scanning, and the SQ3R strategy. Furthermore, the EFL teachers assess their learners' reading comprehension relying on multiple techniques, for example; they give them comprehension questions, true-false questions, word refrences question, and

ask them to provide summaries to texts. In addition to the collaborative work that have been observed inside the classroom between the teacher and the students and between coleages, that facilitate understanding among learners and also provide a positive vibes inside the classroom.

Moreover, the outcomes also showed that second-year EFL learners have multiple reading comprehension difficulties, which are insufficient vocabularies and pronounciation problems. The main issue that causes these difficulties is the lack of reading among students, and to overcome comprehension difficulties; students read again the text, ask for teachers or classmates help, and use dictionaries.

It was recommended that EFL learners need often read to obtain as much vocabulary as they can. The reading-writing instractors should focus on the reading module the same as the writing module. And the higher education and research institution should separate the reading module from the writing module; in order for each module gain its significance and time.

The current study has encountered one main limitation. This limitation is the absence of the reading module. Educators of the reading-writing module do not teach reading at all; they focus only on the writing skills and this absence affects nigatevely on the research outcomes. That is why the researcher added to his research study culture and civilization and literature modules.

In the end it is hoped that the findings of the research will pave the way to further researches interested in the same area of investigation.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview questions for teachers

Teaching experience

Q1: How long have you been teaching?

....

Reading strategies

Q2: Which method (strategy) do you use in teaching reading?

....

Q3: Do you think that your learners are motivated to learn (practise) reading (master the reading skills)?

....

Q4: Are your learners aware of the reading strategies?

....

Reading difficulties

Q5: Do your learners have difficulties in the reading comprehension?

....

Q6: According to you, what are the factors that lead to reading comprehension difficulties?

....

Classroom management

Q7: What kind of reading activities do you assign to improve your learners reading comprehension?

....

Q8: Do you believe that text selection has an effect on the learners reading comprehension motivation (achievement)?

....

Q9: how can you help your learners when they do not understand a text?

....

Benefits of reading skills for students

Q10: in your opinion, what are the advantages of using skimming and scanning?

....

Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear participant,

I am an undergraduate student at Saida University, Dr. Moulay Tahar. For my final project, I am examining the reading strategies and difficulties to reveals its impact on second-year EFL learners' reading comprehension. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the questionnaire. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Please answer all questions as honest as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavours. The data collection will provide useful information regarding the students' reading comprehension progress.

Learners' information

1.   Gender

•   Male ☐

•   Female ☐

The importance of reading

2.   Is reading comprehension important in learning English?

•   Crucial ☐

- Important ☐

- Less important ☐

Learners' attitude toward reading

3. Do you like the reading module?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

- Why?

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4. Is reading comprehension complex and time-consuming?

- Agree ☐

- Neutral ☐

- Diagree ☐

5. How do you feel when you are asked to read in the classroom?

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Learners' motivation toward reading

6. Are you motivated while reading?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

7. In what way do your teachers motivate you in the reading module?

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8. Do you think that text selection impact your reading motivation?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Reading strategies:

9. While reading are you aware of the use of the reading strategies?

- Not at all ☐

- Partially ☐

- Totally ☐

10. What are the reading techniques that you use while reading?

- Skimming ☐

- Scanning ☐

- Nothing ☐

- Others ☐

11. What are the reading strategies that your teachers use while teaching reading?

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Learners' difficultues while reading

12. Do you find difficulties when you are reading a text?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

- Why?

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13. What kind of reading difficulties that you face while reading?

- Pronounciation problems ☐

- Unfamilliar words ☐

- Tediouse passages ☐

14.   How do you react while facing reading dificulties?

- Cheking the meaning ☐

- Reading again ☐

- Asking for help ☐

- Others ☐

Reading comprehension activities

15.   What do you do after having finished reading?

- Summarizing ☐

- Take notes ☐

- Questioning yourself about what you have just read ☐

- Others ☐

16.   What kind of reading activities do your teachers provide you with, in order to improve your reading comprehension?

- True or false questions ☐

- Answering questions ☐

- Who refers to questions ☐

- Give a title to the text ☐

- Vocabulary Explanation ☐

- Give a summary to the text ☐

- Others ☐