## Dedication

*To the memory of my grandfather*

*To my dear parents*

*To my sisters and brothers*

*Thank you*

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, Praise and Glory to *Allah* for bestowing me with strength and patience to carry out this work successfully despite the troubles I have floundered along.

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THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

## Abstract

The primary focus of the present research is to investigate reading comprehension difficulties encountered by Algerian third-year students at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school in Constantine and the reasons behind these difficulties. Moreover, it seeks to investigate the extent to which the official English textbook *New Prospects* participate in addressing third year secondary school students' reading comprehension difficulties. In order to answer these questions, a teachers' and a students' questionnaires were designed and administered .The students' questionnaire was designed and submitted to sixty four third year secondary school students at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school in the wilaya of Constantine. The teachers' questionnaire was designed and implemented to thirty three EFL teachers from different secondary schools in Constantine. The findings reveal that the most common reading comprehension problems faced by third-year students are related to insufficient lexical and syntactic knowledge in general and lack of ability to recognize text structure. Besides, it is found that the major causes of students' poor reading comprehension are lack of reading culture, inadequate vocabulary knowledge, and insufficient time for practicing intensive and extensive reading inside the classroom.

The results also show that the selected reading materials introduced in the official textbook *New Prospects* and teachers' poor knowledge of teaching reading comprehension under the Competency-Based approach have a negative impact on students' reading comprehension competence. Finally, this research has been concluded with some suggestions and recommendations on teaching reading comprehension to EFL learners.

*Keywords:* Reading Comprehension, Reading Comprehension difficulties, Causes, EFL Students, Secondary school level.

## List of Abbreviations

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**CBLT:** Competency-Based Language Teaching

**CLT:** Communicative-Language Teaching Approach

**GTM:** Grammar-Translation Method

**EFL:** English Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

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## Introduction

It is beyond doubt that English has become widely used as an international medium, and a very important language to learn. This fact is attributed to the status this language has worldwide as the language of education, scientific publications, technology transfer, internet communication, and commerce (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). In other words, English has become a lingua franca that can assure an efficient involvement in global affairs. In Algeria, English today has the status of a second foreign language, and it represents an important component of the Algerian educational system since all the Algerian students study English for seven years starting from middle school to secondary school.

Being aware of the global spread of English and its importance in international affairs, Algeria like other non-English speaking countries has adopted different curricula and approaches to teach English. However, these approaches have been criticized for motivating the learners to blindly accept what is prescribed for them, without questioning the content. In an attempt to update the educational system, Algeria launched in July 2002 educational reforms that intended to suppress the growing dissatisfaction of the previous approaches by adopting the Competency-Based approach. These reforms found reflection in new syllabi and textbooks at different educational levels. The Competency-Based approach claims for the necessity to redefine the roles of both teachers and learners, since it seeks to make the learners more autonomous and competent in their learning process. Moreover, it has been adopted in teaching English in order to enhance learners' capacities and install competencies among which reading is an important one.

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

As this is the age of globalization, reading in English has become part and parcel of modern life. Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt and Kamil (2003) assumed that reading opens up new worlds and opportunities as well as gaining new knowledge, enjoying literature, and doing everyday things that are a part of modern life. This status determines its importance in language and academic development. Harmer (2007) asserted: "through reading students get more. Reading can improve students' vocabulary knowledge, on spelling and writing."(p.99).While Day and Bamford (1989) stated that "reading is the only way, we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers" (p. 38). Academically, reading is prominent in developing academic skills, critical thinking, and academic purposes (Solikhah, 2015).

Broadly speaking, one of the most frequent topics in EFL and ESL classrooms is the issue of reading. Reading is considered to be an essential skill for English as a second language or foreign language. According to Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988) "for many students, reading is by far the most important of the four macro skills, particularly in English as a second or a foreign language" (p.1), in other words the groundwork of the other skills is supplied by reading. Despite the importance given to reading and the many years of learning, it is noticeable that Algerian students still experience various reading difficulties especially when it comes to comprehension.

According to Johnson (2008), reading can be defined as: "the practice of using text to create meaning. Yet, if no meaning is created no reading takes place." (p.3). In this vein, reading cannot be separated from comprehension. That is why there appear a lot of problems dealing with reading comprehension. Accordingly, many studies have been carried out to investigate EFL learners' reading comprehension difficulties and to look for better strategies to improve their reading comprehension. The current study

seeks to investigate the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by EFL Algerian students and the causes behind them.

## 1. Background of the Study

In 1993, the Algerian educational ministry included English subject into the national curriculum of middle school and secondary school. However, the results of the national examination showed that Algerian students' abilities in English at secondary school are still limited. Numerous studies view that EFL students' inability to comprehend English texts is probably one of the aspects that lead to weaknesses of language competency. Accordingly, reading comprehension problems have been a particular issue in EFL teaching and learning settings for a long time. In spite of the growing interest to investigate ways of improving students' reading comprehension, Arab EFL students' reading comprehension remains under-researched (Raihan & Nezami, 2012).

Relatively, numerous studies have focused on finding out the problems that cause EFL readers not to understand the texts well. According to Eskey (1984), in order to get the meaning from the text, the reader should have two categories of knowledge to interact: Form (recognition of lexical, syntactic/semantic, and rhetorical patterns of language) and substance (cultural, pragmatic, and subject-specific information (Cited in Devine, 1988). Nor and Rashid (2018) investigated the problems that prevented EFL students from comprehending English texts. The results of the study indicated that a great number of EFL students who do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge or effective learning strategies mostly faced reading comprehension difficulties. Additionally, many EFL Arab students claim that reading in English is a difficult task because most of the words are unfamiliar and difficult to understand.

This connection seems logical since vocabulary and reading comprehension can be interrelated in a way that poor vocabulary knowledge limits comprehension.

Other studies have shown that grammatical knowledge plays a vital role in reading comprehension. The insufficient level of grammatical knowledge among EFL learners influences their comprehension of the text in a negative way. Cain (2007) confirmed the relationship between syntactic awareness and reading comprehension. According to the author, this relationship was mediated by vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and memory. Furthermore, Raihan and Nezami (2012) carried out a study on reading comprehension difficulties and the reasons behind the low-level performance of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. A survey was conducted through the teachers' questionnaire, and the students were observed during several reading sessions. The results show that students' difficulties in reading comprehension are due to inadequate knowledge of English syntax, besides a lack of reading comprehension strategies.

Davoudi and Yousefi (2015) have also conducted a study on the factors that may obstruct EFL learners' reading comprehension. Besides deficit in vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, they claimed that lack of background knowledge, text structure, and poor reading strategies also prevent readers' comprehension. Asher (1980) found that the type of the text determines the level of understanding of the text to some extent. Meanwhile, the findings of Nguyen (2007) showed that learners who had prior knowledge comprehend reading materials easily. However, learners who are not exposed to diverse reading materials have many difficulties in understanding them, and they need to read several times to comprehend the texts.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Among the four language skills, reading is probably one of the frequent studied skill in foreign language classes. In spite of its importance, it is observed that most of the Algerian students in secondary school have the ability to read but they fail to comprehend the reading passages. Accordingly, reading comprehension is considered to be a difficult task by many third year Algerian secondary school students. Thus, the motive of this study is the Algerian third-year secondary school pupils' difficulties in reading comprehension.

## 3. Aim of the Study

The present study primarily aims to investigate the reading comprehension problems that third-year students in Algerian secondary school face. It also attempts to discover the causes behind these problems, and to make recommendations and pedagogical implications for improving the quality of learning and teaching reading comprehension.

## 4. Questions of the Study

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following questions have been asked:

1. What are the most prominent reading comprehension problems encountered by the Algerian third-year secondary school students?

2. What are the major causes behind the reading comprehension difficulties faced by the Algerian third-year secondary school students?

3. To what extent does the official English textbook *New Prospects* participate in addressing third-year secondary school students' reading comprehension difficulties?

## 5. Methodology of the study

This study is conducted with third-year students at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school in Constantine. To achieve the aim of the study, and to answer the research questions, two questionnaires were designed and administered to third-year secondary school students and to secondary school teachers. The first sample consists of sixty-four (64) third-year students at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school and thirty-three (33) EFL teachers from different secondary schools in the wilaya of Constantine.

## 6. The Significance of the Study

The present study sheds light on the reading comprehension difficulties faced by third-year secondary school Algerian students, and the causes behind them. The findings may give a contribution to the process of teaching and learning the English language in Algeria. They may also give benefits to the teachers, students, and researchers.

1. To the teachers: the research presents a recommendation for EFL teachers to develop new teaching strategies in order to increase students' reading comprehension abilities.

2. To the students: the research allows the students to be aware of their reading comprehension problems and the causes behind. Additionally, it offers them some suggestions to improve their reading comprehension abilities.

3. To the researchers: other researchers can use this research as a reference in improving EFL learners' reading comprehension.

## 7. The Structure of the Study

The research work is divided into two main phases a theoretical one and a practical one. The first chapter provides an overview of reading comprehension and its difficulties. First, it attempts to give definitions to both concepts; reading and reading

comprehension. It also deals with different reading comprehension strategies, reading comprehension models, and reading purposes. Additionally, it focuses on some of the reading comprehension problems encountered by EFL learners. The second chapter is concerned with the development of teaching English in the Algerian educational system and the various approaches that have emerged. It also tackles the process of teaching reading under the Competency-Based approach. The third chapter provides the data analysis and the interpretation of the obtained results. The research instruments used in this study are questionnaires assigned for both students and teachers of the secondary level. The students' questionnaire is distributed to sixty-four (64) students of third-year Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school. It consists of eighteen (18) questions that take the form of closed-ended questions. The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The teachers' questionnaire is submitted to thirty-three (33) EFL teachers at different secondary schools. It encompasses three main sections and ends up with further suggestions. These sections contain nineteen (19) questions in the form of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Both questionnaires aim at investigating the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by third-year secondary school students.

THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

## CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF READING COMPREHENSION AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

## Introduction

Learning a foreign language includes mastering its four skills: reading, writing; listening, speaking. Out of those four skills, reading represents a fundamental area in the foreign language learning process. Accordingly, it is important to be aware of certain areas for effective comprehension, and the difficulties that may hinder EFL students' comprehension of a text. The present chapter is a brief overview of the reading comprehension and its difficulties. As a matter of fact, it discusses first, the different views of some researchers about reading and reading comprehension. Additionally, it highlights the different reading comprehension strategies related to L2. Moreover, it sheds some light on the three reading comprehension models in relation to its historical development. And most importantly, it deals with some of the reading comprehension problems that EFL learners are likely to face. The last section is devoted to the purposes of reading comprehension.

## 1.1. Definition of Reading

EFL reading is a process that has been investigated for decades by scholars and researchers in the field who have been trying to understand the details of this process. Accordingly, providing a specific definition to the notion of reading is a source of huge debate, because a simple definition cannot appropriately cover all its parts. Besides this, the definition of reading differs from one person to another and from one context to another as Urquhart and Weir (1998) claimed "So it is with some reluctance that we begin this part with an attempt to define reading, to say what we mean by the term. Our excuse is that people do use the term in different ways and that while this may be permissible when everybody is conscious of the differences, on occasions it can cause real confusion and difficulty"(p. 13).

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Generally speaking, reading is "perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p.443). That is to say, reading refers to the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret information appropriately. However, reading skill goes beyond the level of being a simple process of decoding and understanding the meaning of the words. According to Smith (1985) reading has a "multiplicity of meaning" which means that reading the same extract or text does not mean necessarily that the readers build the same meaning. This is due to the fact that there might be as many interpretations as there are people. Therefore, it is difficult to offer one precise definition to the reading concept because this may result in an oversimplification of such a complex process.

Rumptz (2003) explained this in his words "Reading is a complex process. It involves visual action in analyzing printed letters, and then identifying these letters as the components of words, until reaching the interpretation of the meaning of these words" (p. 21). Nutall (1982), another specialist in the field of reading theories, agreed with Rumptz. She categorized reading into three groups:

- ➢ Reading signifies visualizing or vocalizing letters and words.
- ➢ Reading means identifying words and their meanings.
- ➢ Reading involves interpreting or making sense of print.

Furthermore, reading is a very sophisticated action where different cognitive processes and various strategies interfere to interpret the message intended by the writer. It is seen as a complex process of problem-solving, which involves working to build up a sense from a text, and not just a sense from the words and sentences written on the page, but it goes to ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences (Schoenbach, 1999).

## 1.2. Nature of Reading

To narrow down the scope of defining reading there is a need to take into consideration two major areas: reading as a product and reading as a process. Alderson (2000) made a distinction between reading as a product that is interested in the result of reading's task and reading as a process that deals with the activity of perceiving the text.

### 1.2.1. Reading as a Product

When it comes to reading as a product, Alderson (2000) stated that "what matters is not how you reach that understanding (of the text) but the fact you reach it" (p. 4). In other words, what is important is that the reader understands the text regardless of how he reaches that understanding. Moreover, "Reading as "product – or more appropriately "products"- refers to the actual information and insights reached as a result of reading" (Manzo & Manzo, 1995, p.9) i. e. it emphasizes on the final result of reading. However, many researchers by time have lost interest in the approach of reading as a product and they have considered it an old-fashioned one. They have focused more on the process of reading which is more complicated.

### 1.2.2. Reading as a Process

Manzo and Manzo (1995) believed that reading as a "process refers to the functions, or operations, that one go through in deriving meaning" (p.9). In other words, reading as a process is considered with the steps undertaken by a reader while reading to extract meaning from the written material.

Reading is viewed as an interactive process between the doer of the action 'the reader' and the written material. Farell (2009) stated that reading "involves the reader

in active interaction with what is presented in the text in order to make sense of what is written" (p.21). Moreover, Grabe and Stoller (2013) said that reading is an interactive process as various skills and abilities interact together to make the reading process more accurate. It is also due to the interaction between the reader's basic knowledge and knowledge found in the text that enables the reader to interpret the text more effectively. In fact, the task of constructing meaning through interpreting the writer's ideas is built upon the reader's background knowledge and his past experiences. Thus, reading is not passive but rather an active process where the reader applies many strategies to perceive the writer's message.

Grabe (1991) described reading as "{…}active process of comprehending where students need to be taught strategies to read more efficiently e.g. Guess from context, define expectations, make inferences about the text, skim ahead to fill in the text, etc" (P.377). Accordingly, reading requires the reader to use the most appropriate reading strategies to comprehend the written message. While the reader is actively engaged, he may be aware or unaware of what is going on during the reading process since reading according to Mikulecky (2008) is a conscious or unconscious thinking process.

Additionally, the process of reading is dynamic. Anthony, Pearson, and Raphael (1993) asserted that reading is "the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the readers existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language and the context of the reading situation" (cited in Farell, 2009. P.20). In this respect, the reader interacts dynamically with the text using his linguistic knowledge and his knowledge of the world during this process. Thus, reading the same extract does not mean necessarily that the readers extract the same meaning

since the same text can be perceived differently at different times by different readers with different purposes.

## 1.3. Definition of Reading Comprehension

Many researchers emphasize that the main aim of reading is comprehension and getting meaning as what Grabe (2009) stated "reading is centrally a comprehending process" (p. 14).It requires readers to move beyond decoding individual vocabulary and statements to constructing a solid understanding of the entire passage (Woolley, 2011). Doubtless; reading without comprehension is a pointless activity.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2000), comprehension comes from the Latin "comprehensionen" which means "seizing". Hence, to comprehend something means to seize information about it. Coming to comprehension in reading, Seyed (2010) defined it as "the ability to go beyond the words, to understand the ideas conveyed in the entire text" (pp. 376-380). He argued that the main goal is to understand the whole meaning of what is described rather than understand the meaning of every single word. Hence, comprehension is the process of constructing personal meaning as a reader focuses on a particular text (Booth, 2008).

Snow (2002) defined reading comprehension as "the simultaneous ability used by a reader to construct and extract meaning through interaction and involvement with written materials" (P. 11). In other words, it is a technical word refers to the reading activity to grasp the full meaning out of the presented materials. A similar view was given by Maria (1990) who defined reading comprehension as "a holistic process of constructing meaning from written text through the interaction of (1) the knowledge the reader brings to the text i.e. word recognition ability, word knowledge, and knowledge of linguistic conventions; (2) the reader interpretation of the language that

the writer used in constructing the text; and (3) the situation in which the text is read"

(pp. 14-15). Khatib (2012) added that reading comprehension is a mental process;

since the reader is actively interacting with the language used by the author to gain the

meaning of the text. Furthermore, Varita (2017) stated that reading comprehension is

a cognitive process in which background knowledge, knowledge of the text structure,

and the target language codes are needed for the reader to understand new things

while reading. Thus, reading comprehension is a complex activity that involves many

levels of mental processing and cognitive activities.

## 1.3.1. Reading Comprehension Strategies

The term reading strategies became popular in 1970s and early 1980s; meanwhile,

the issue of reading strategies in L2 has been neglected for many years. Reading

strategies refer to the mental processes employed by readers to construct meaning

(Garner 1987). In the context of reading comprehension, Lems, Miller and Soro

(2010) defined reading strategies as follows "deliberate actions that readers take to

establish and enhance their comprehension" (p. 172). Hence, the use of reading

strategies enables the readers to improve their comprehension and to overcome

reading difficulties.

Oxford (2001) defined L2 reading strategies as "specific behaviours or thought

processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning." (p. 362). Those

strategies are consciously chosen by L2 students in order to achieve certain reading

purposes. Alderson (2000) clarified that Strategic learners apply strategies as 'the

conscious actions' that they take to improve their performance in the learning and use

of L2.

Researchers in the domain of L2 reading comprehension strategies are divided into two groups. The first group believes that reading ability is based on the proficiency level of the learners in the foreign language. In other words, the reading comprehension strategies cannot be successfully employed if the learner does not have a good mastery of the target language. August and Shanahan (2006) explained that "strategies of various types are unlikely to help students who do not have the requisite language proficiency to comprehend the text" (cited in Lems et al., 2010, p. 173). As a result, strategies used by native speakers and L2 learners are not the same in most cases. Meanwhile, the other group argues that reading strategies that are used in L1 can be transferred to L2 reading contexts, but this process depends on the readers' experience with effective reading strategies used in L1 reading contexts.

Studies on good L2 readers identify a number of strategies to be highly useful. Grabe and Stoller (2011) proposed a long list of sample reading strategies that can help students read more quickly and effectively in L2. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

➢ Previewing: This strategy allows students to determine the general topic of the reading by reviewing titles, section headings and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection.

➢ Activating background knowledge: In this strategy the readers use the text's information and structure along with their past experiences in order to understand a given text.

➢ Predicting: This strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making predictions. Students use their prior knowledge about a topic, and combine it with the new material in the text i.e. they use what they know before, and relate it to the material at hand.

➤ Scanning: Scanning is a reading technique which implies reading quickly to locate specific information. Thus, the reader does not read to get general information but to get a particular data from the entire text.

➤ Skimming: it is used to get a quick glance through written materials in order to get an overview of the content or, the intention of the writer or, how a material is organized. In that sense, the reader is not required to go through a deep reading process.

➤ Inferring: Inferring is another strategy which requires readers to draw conclusions from a passage. The authors do not always provide explicit information about a topic, setting, character, or event; they often provide clues that readers can use to read between the lines.

➤ Summarizing: This strategy helps readers to make general knowledge about the text through combining information in their own styles.

## 1.4. Reading Comprehension Models

## 1.4.1. Historical Overview

Reading researchers have looked for ways to figure out how reading comprehension works and what processes are involved in comprehension. For this, they have attempted to build up explicit models of the reading process that describe how a reader could be able to construct meaning from printed text. However, this led to a great misunderstanding among model builders who have been divided into three groups.

The first group was affected by the behaviouristic era before the mid-1960s whereas the second group was influenced by the emergence of cognitive psychology after the mid-1960s. Behaviourists view reading as a passive perceptual process.

Readers were merely decoders of symbols printed on the page before they could construct the author's intended meaning (Carrel, Devine & Esky, 1988). In other words, reading is based on visual information such as printed words and word recognition given in the text, which stimulates the reader to construct meaning. This model was referred to as "the bottom-up" model. The other group of model builders developed what is known as "the top-down" model. They tried to explain what goes on within the human mind in the process of reading (Samuels & Kamil, 2002). Here the reader, rather than the text, is at the heart of the reading process. In the 1980s, a third group argued that reading is rather an interactive process that compromises the two previous models. This model is called "the interactive" model.

The previous issue has led to the raise of three main models of reading comprehension process: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model.

## 1.4.2. The Bottom-up Model

In this reading comprehension process, which is known also as the text-based approach, word recognition takes place before comprehension. The reader first decodes graphic symbols into sounds and words (at the bottom) to build up meaning and sense of texts (at the top) as shown in the figure below:
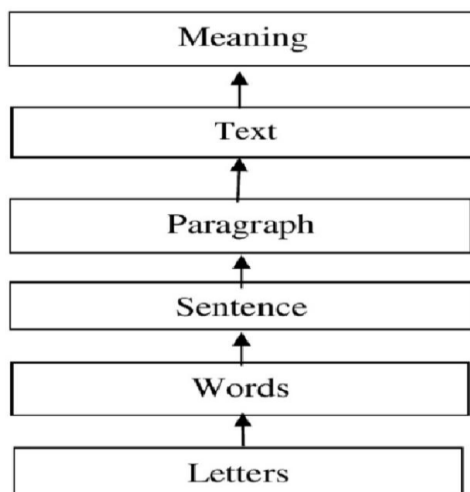
Figure1. The Bottom-up Model. Image based on the inputs from (http://www.powershow.com/view/3c4c4f).

It assumes that a reader moves from one step to another in a linear way. Stanovish (1980) stated that bottom-up models tend to describe information flow in the form of distinct stages. Each stage changes the input and sends it to a higher stage for further transformations (cited in Samuels & Kamil, 1988).

However, the bottom-up model has manifested many noticeable shortcomings. Samuel and Kamil (1988) pointed out the shortcomings of these models as follows: "Because of the lack of feedback loops in the early bottom-up models, it was difficult to account for sentence – context effects and the role of prior knowledge of text topic as facilitating variables in word recognition and comprehension." (p. 31). Thus, this model does not take into account the knowledge the reader brings to the text, his experience of having encountered other texts, and his background knowledge.

## 1.4.3. The Top-Down Model

Unlike the bottom-up model, the top-down model emphasizes the reconstruction of meaning over the graphic forms of the printed pages. Eskey (2005) stated that the top-down model considers reading comprehension as a process that begins "from the brain to text" (p. 564). It takes the reader's background knowledge and past experiences as a starting point without which meaning cannot be reached. Richards (1990) defined the top-down model as "the use of background knowledge in understanding the meaning of a given text that means readers make a connection between their previous knowledge about a topic, situational or contextual knowledge, or knowledge stored in long term memory in the form of "schemata" and "scripts" (pp. 50-51). In other words, the reader builds the meaning of the text by activating

schemata, that is, in Alderson's words, "networks of information stored in the brain which act as filters for incoming information" (Alderson, 2000, p. 17).

The top-down approach is sometimes referred to as the psycholinguistic approach which was proposed by Goodman (cited in Grabe & Stoller, 2002). He has described reading as "a psycholinguistic guessing game" in which the reader starts with making hypotheses and predictions about the text. Then, he verifies these hypotheses by identifying letters, words, and phrases as illustrated below.
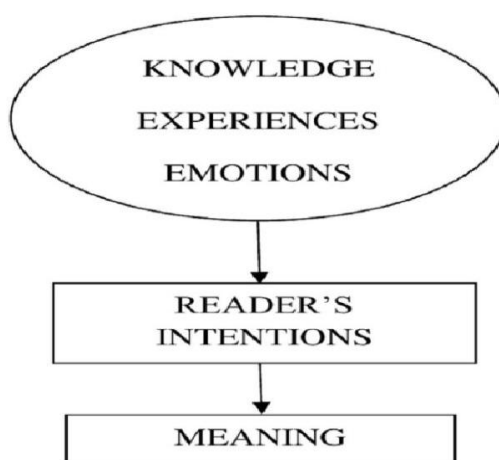


Figure2.  The Top-down Model. Image based on the inputs from
(http://www.powershow.com/view/3c4c4f).

However, the top-down approach has been criticized for many reasons. The readers may have little knowledge about the topic of a text and so they cannot generate hypotheses. Furthermore, the amount of time needed to generate predictions is greater than the amount of time needed to simply recognize the words (Samuels & Kamil, 1988). Due to these limitations, the interactive model of reading comprehension emerged.

## 1.4.4. The Interactive Model

This approach has been proposed by Rumelhart (as cited in Brown, 1988). It refers to the combination of the two previous approaches, i.e. it takes into consideration "phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and discourse knowledge" (Nunan, 1991, p. 67). Subsequently, reading comprehension is influenced by the reader's ability to decode words, phrases, his past experiences, his background knowledge, and his reading abilities. As well as, the interactive process views reading comprehension as a cyclical rather than linear in nature since it does not predetermine the direction for processing. When the reader cannot comprehend a given text using graphic information and lexical meaning, he shifts to use his background knowledge to understand the meaning. Thus, he uses both bottom-up and top-down models simultaneously as shown in the figure below.
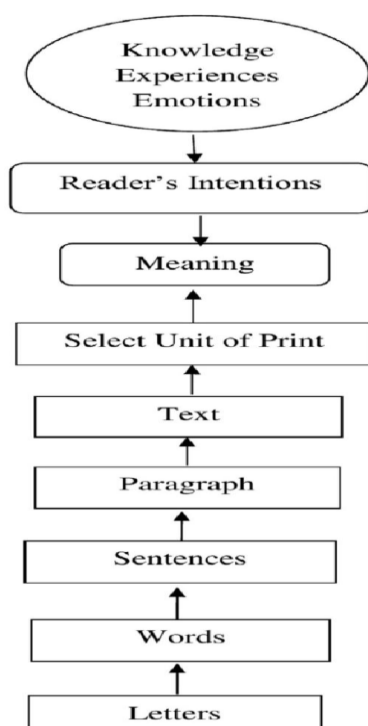


Figure3. The Interactive Model. Image based on the inputs from
(http://www.powershow.com/view/3c4c4f).

## 1.5. Reading Comprehension Problems.

Reading comprehension has been a popular issue in EFL teaching-learning settings for a long time. Numerous studies have shown that most EFL students often have difficulties in understanding English texts due to a number of reading problems. These difficulties may arise from insufficient lexical and syntactic knowledge, language inaccessibility, poor reading strategies and lack of schemata (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Besides these problems there are other ones that may hinder EFL students' comprehension of a text.

## 1.5.1. Linguistic Problems

According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyans (2003) linguistic knowledge is the unconscious knowledge about the linguistic system of sounds, structures, meanings, words, and rules. It is the ability of a reader to create and understand sentences with a set of grammatical rules including sentences they have never heard before (as cited in Kasim & Raisha, 2017). Linguistic competence consists of lexis, syntax, and semantic.

## 1.5.1.1. Syntactic Problems

Syntax represents the ability to recognize and use the grammatical structure of a language. Many EFL learners have problems with reading comprehension and understanding of text organization because they fail to understand the English syntax. Syntactic problems mainly generate from lack of knowledge about acceptable sentence structure and acceptable grammar. For example, students who have difficulties in comprehending long and complex sentences usually fail in understanding the author's main idea of the text. Nuttal (2005) has mentioned that

complex noun groups, nominalizations, co-coordinating conjunctions, participle phrases tend to be the cause of many problems in reading comprehension because those elements make texts more complex to be understood by EFL readers.

## 1.5.1.2. Lexical Problems

Hudson (2007) stated that "vocabulary is a considerable factor in reading ability" (p. 227). Moreover, researches discover that depth of vocabulary knowledge affects foreign language students' reading comprehension more than any other factor "it appears that a large vocabulary can facilitate reading comprehension" (Hudson, 2007, p. 227). Inadequate vocabulary and reading comprehension can be interrelated in a way that poor vocabulary limits comprehension. EFL readers with poor vocabulary knowledge face difficulties in understanding reading materials owing to many factors. Firstly, many students find it hard to commit a massive amount of foreign words to memory. Another reason is that learning vocabulary is not as simple as it seems to be. According to Qian (1999) knowing a word it involves knowing its (a) pronunciation and orthography, (b) its morphological properties, (c) its syntactic properties and collocations, (d) its meaning, (e) its register, and (f) its frequency (cited in Hudson, 2007, p. 233). Furthermore, it seems complicated for many EFL learners to differentiate between the various meanings of the same word e.g. to differentiate between homophones and morphemes.

## 1.5.2. Lack of Background Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge

Background knowledge is an important factor that helps students to better understand a text. Stevens (1980) defined background knowledge as what one already knows about a subject. It is also called schemata which Nuttal (2005) referred to as "a

mental structure. It is abstract because it does not relate to any particular experience, although it derives from all the particular experiences we have had." (p.7)

Background knowledge is another source of reading comprehension difficulties for many EFL learners. Anderson & Pearson (1984) claimed that having background knowledge about the reading material facilitates comprehension by allowing students to make a prediction, set some expectations, make inferences about the reading, guide their attention to the important information, and facilitate recalling the information. Accordingly, it is much easier for a learner to understand a text if he possesses some previous prior knowledge about the topic because while reading, the learner activates his existing schemata and insert new information into them. For this, EFL learners, who are reading a particular topic for the first time without having any prior knowledge about it, may face difficulties in understanding it because they simply cannot activate their prior knowledge.

Cultural knowledge is another source of comprehension problems for many EFL students. Because they have their own attitudes, beliefs, and values, this may affect their reading comprehension. Alderson (2000) demonstrated that when students read culturally familiar texts, they read efficiently with a better understanding than when they read texts that are culturally unfamiliar.

### 1.5.3. Text Structure

One of the factors that may obstruct EFL learners' reading comprehension is text structure. According to Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007) the term text structure refers to "the way a text is organized to guide readers in identifying key information" (p.76). In other words, it is the way an author makes the ideas interrelated and organized to convey the meaning to a reader. Among the different types of text structure, that EFL learners encounter while learning, two types are the

most common ones: expository type and narrative type. The expository text is the type of text that includes new information about a certain topic by providing the reader with examples, facts, graphics, and other details. Meanwhile, the narrative text is written to convey episodic information and to entertain the reader. This latter consists of the following components: setting, characters, events, outcomes, and ending.

Text structure plays a major role in comprehension since it assists learners to connect ideas by being able to differentiate the main ideas and the supporting ones. Thus, the learner can highlight what is important and what is less important in a written passage. Meyer (1984) asserted that learners who are familiar with the text structure, are more able to make predictions about what they will read, to organize information, to judge the relative importance of what they read, to improve their comprehension, and finally to enhance their recall (cited in Klingner et al., 2007). On the contrary, having difficulties in distinguishing the types of text structure may lead to major problems in reading. Hence, EFL learners who are unaware of the ways texts are structured are likely to retail less information about the text in comparison with other readers.

## 1.5.4. Lack of Reading Fluency

Reading fluency has a critical role in facilitating EFL learners' reading comprehension. According to Grabe (2009) reading fluency refers to "the ability to read rapidly with ease and accuracy…and text comprehension is the expected outcome" (p.57). Thus, reading fluency depends mainly on:

➢ The ability to decode and recognize words quickly.

➢ The ability to make a connection between words during reading.

➢ The ability to construct meaning from the recognized words.

Fluency is very important because it is closely related to comprehension as Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) highlighted that "Each aspect of fluency has a clear connection to text comprehension" (p. 703). For that, a lack of fluency is one of the major obstacles to reading comprehension. Readers who tend to read slowly are likely to face many reading comprehension problems. Westwood (2008) explained that in the following words "slow reading tends to restrict cognitive capacity to the low-level of letters and words rather than allowing full attention to be devoted to higher-order ideas and concepts within the text" (p.34). In fact, slow readers put much emphasis on the process of decoding and recognizing words instead of focusing on the content of reading, and how words are connected which by turn prevents them from constructing meaning. As well as, reading slowly places a burden on working memory by constantly trying to recognize words that interrupt understanding.

### 1.5.5. Lack of Reading Strategies

Lack of reading strategies is identified as one of the factors that affect reading comprehension efficiency among EFL students. Reading comprehension strategies are very important since they assist the learners to grasp the meaning of the text and understand the content easily. However, many EFL students often fail to comprehend a text because they are not trained to use reading comprehension strategies. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002) without developing reading comprehension strategies, students will focus on decoding letters and words instead of focusing on meaning. They also will concentrate on the details over the main points and on the structure rather than the content which is by turn time-consuming. Furthermore, EFL learners find it difficult to make inferences that are important for comprehending a text. Students are likely to have problems inferring details that are not explicitly stated in the text which negatively impacts their ability to gain meaning.

## 1.5.6. Materials Selection

Some researchers point out that among the factors that influence EFL readers' reading comprehension is the difficulty of materials. The more the text is complex in terms of vocabulary, structure, sentence length, the more it would be difficult for readers to comprehend. Hence, it is important to select appropriate materials with regard to genres, difficulty, interest and cultural background, and choose topics that suit students' interest as it helps to improve their reading abilities (Harmer, 2002). There are three main areas of reading comprehension problems related to the selection of materials:

1. *Vocabulary:* if the readers have an insufficient vocabulary, they may fail to understand the text. Meaning that the teacher should take into account the proficiency level of his learners before selecting reading material.

2. *Prior knowledge***:** readers with substantial prior knowledge of a subject will be able to use their knowledge to read more difficult texts. Cultural factors are important when choosing materials for foreign language readers. Materials that contain references to situations, objects and experiences that are unfamiliar to EFL readers may hinder their comprehension.

3. *Authentic materials***:** Sanderson (1999) defined them as "materials that we can use in the classroom and that have not been changed in any way for ESL students" (p. 65). They are ordinary texts that not produced specifically for language teaching purposes. These materials are motivating tools since they bring real-life language to EFL students' formal classes. However, authentic materials are cultural biases and may contain complex structures that may not be easily understood by the learners.

## 1.6. Reading Comprehension Purposes

People are engaged in reading for a variety of purposes and reasons. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002) reading comprehension purposes may include:

- ➢ Reading to search for simple information: the reader scans the text for a piece of specific information, word or phrase.

- ➢ Reading to skim: the reader is required to read for general information and the main ideas of the text.

- ➢ Reading to integrate information: it entails the reader to evaluate the text's appropriateness to what he knows.

- ➢ Reading to learn from texts: the reader reads for the sake of understanding the main ideas and the supporting details of the text and to be able to remember them.

Carter (2012) suggested that the majority of people read either by the need to get information or to experience a pleasure. Admittedly, Harmer (2002) divided the reasons for reading into two main categories ''instrumental'' and ''pleasurable''. The former indicates that the reader's main aim could either get information for its sake e.g. reading a restaurant menu or get information for the sake of employ it in a performing task e.g. reading a machine manual to make it works. Unlike reading for an instrumental purpose, reading for pleasure is rather for enjoyment to seeking information.

The purposes of reading can be achieved in different ways according to the reader's level of proficiency. That is to say, first language readers and foreign language readers do not generally read for the same reasons. Nuttal (1982) asserted that the main aim of foreign language readers is to improve the language to be able to

access written materials in the learned foreign language. Accordingly having a goal in mind, while reading, is crucial not only in the first language but also in foreign language reading contexts. Furthermore, "reading ability can be improved by teaching how to read for a particular purpose" as suggested by Anderson (2000) (cited in Grabe, 2009, p. 07).

## Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has covered some important aspects related to reading comprehension. It briefly made some views about the definition of reading and reading comprehension, and how EFL learners need to know the main strategies to be able to achieve comprehension. Furthermore, it discussed the different reading comprehension models that assist a reader to process a given text, and the comprehension issues they may encounter while reading. Finally, it highlighted the different purposes of reading that play an important role in the success of reading comprehension especially in EFL context. The subsequent chapter will explore the status of teaching reading comprehension under the Competency-Based approach.

**CHAPTER TWO: TEACHING READING UNDER THE COMPETENCY-**

**BASED APPROACH**

**Introduction**

The present chapter offers a general review of the Algerian EFL context by referring to ELT (English Language Teaching) in the Algerian schools and its various approaches that have emerged. Additionally, it gives more attention to one of these approaches which is the Competency-Based approach and its main characteristics. This chapter also illustrates the modern role of both teachers and students within the newly implemented approach. Finally, it gives an overview of the status of reading skill under the Competency-Based approach, the challenges of teaching it, and the way the reading skill is introduced and thought within the official textbook *New Prospects.*

## 2.1. ELT in Algeria

Due to the rapid globalisation, English has become a dominant foreign language or second language in the curricula of many educational systems all over the world including Algeria. Since the Algerian independence (1962), much more importance has been given to the teaching of EFL in the Algerian schools mainly in middle and secondary education. Indeed, syllabus designers view that "the study of English must imperatively be conceived with the objective of helping our society to get harmoniously integrated into modernity" (Programme d'Anglais 3 AS, 2006, p. 2). Syllabus designers, language planners, and policymakers have focused their efforts to enable learners to become competent and effective users of English and to meet the needs of the nation. For that reason, many approaches have been adopted for English language teaching in Algeria.

## 2.2. ELT Approaches

English learning and teaching in the Algerian schools have witnessed the emergence of different approaches since independence. The first one is the Grammar-Translation Method, then the audio-lingual method, followed by the Communicative Language Teaching, and finally the Competency-Based Approach. This shift among these approaches has been raising as a reaction to the drawbacks of one another.

### 2.2.1. The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation method was adopted in the Algerian schools during the 1960s. This approach had been used in teaching classical languages such as Greek and Latin in the 19th century before applying it in teaching modern languages. Within this approach, teaching and learning a foreign language is viewed as a key to cultural discovery and literacy development. The main features of GTM are the following:

➢ Teaching a foreign language is based on explaining and memorizing its grammatical structures and rules then applying them in translation tasks in the native language. Rivers and Temperly (1978) viewed that "written translation into English may be used to test application of the rules of grammar" (p. 326).

➢ Grammar is taught deductively since grammar rules are explicitly and directly presented to learners.

➢ Reading and writing are the major focus meanwhile no attention is paid to listening and speaking.

➢ Accuracy is emphasized over fluency. Accurate translations are proof that students master the grammatical rules.

➢ In this method, reading skill is taught through written texts accompanied by a list of vocabulary items with a clear translation into the mother tongue.

## 2.2.2. The Audio-Lingual Method

This approach featured English teaching in the Algerian schools in the 1970s and early 1980s. The Audio-lingual method is based upon the combination of both Constructivist and Behaviorist theories of learning. It believes that language is speech as a result oral skills are primary. The characteristics of this approach are the following:

➢ Teaching the language skills in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and finally writing.

➢ Language learning is a habit formation which is based on imitating the teacher's drills.

➢ Teaching reading under this method was based on dialogues that contain daily used expressions. Learners are supposed to memorize and learn by heart these expressions.

The Grammar-Translation method and Audio-Lingual method were highly criticized for their mechanical nature because they focus more on drilling and repetition rather than using the language to communicate.

## 2.2.3. The Communicative Approach

The Algerian schools implemented the Communicative approach in the 1980s because of the drawbacks of the previous approaches. The approach emphasized that language mastery should be measured by how well a learner can use the language to communicate rather than how much he knows about the language. The approach is characterized by:

➢ Promoting fluency in language use besides accuracy.

➤ Developing communicative competence i.e. learners will be able to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately.

➤ Engaging learners in comprehensible communicative situations where they interact with each other through pair and group work.

However, CLT was challenged by new demands of globalization which paved the way for a new approach which is the Competency-Based approach.

## 2.3. The Competency-Based Approach

This new educational system has been adopted by the Ministry of National Education as a reaction to the shortcomings of the Communicative approach. It has been launched in the Algerian educational system since 2002 for the teaching of different school subjects including the English language as a second foreign language. CBA refers to an educational movement that emphasizes the integration of knowledge, skills, and behavior a student should possess by the end of a course. This course should be organized into explicit and measurable learning objectives that are shared with students, and these objectives should empower the students' performance.

The competency based approach focuses on the outcomes of learning. It addresses on what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. The CBA advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviors that students should possess at the end of a course of study. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 202).

The Competency-Based Approach means 'learner-centered learning', as it shows that the learner is responsible for his learning. Consequently, he will find himself

involved in a process of 'learning how to learn', i.e. the learner will be provided with opportunities to rely on himself rather than on his teacher.

Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) is an application of the principles of CBA to language teaching. It is concerned with the outcomes of language learning (Ming & Alias, 2007) According to Docking (1994) the Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) "is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it."(p.16). Accordingly, CBA is based upon the concept of competency which is defined as: "the student's ability to apply different kinds of basic skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 94). In other words, this approach develops in the students the ability to use English employing different skills and knowledge in various real-life situations. Thus, it helps the learners to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world by developing competencies related to the real-life world.

## 2.4. The Rational Behind the Implementation of CBA

The main objectives behind implementing the Competency-Based Approach in teaching English in the Algerian educational system is to integrate the Algerian society with the modern world and to fit learners' needs inside and outside the school as stated in the Programme of English as a Foreign Language (2006): "...making him (the pupil) acquire, as efficiently as possible, functional knowledge of English corresponding to his needs within and outside school" (p4). Accordingly, teaching and learning English under the CBA approach aims to enhance learners' skills and competencies to communicate effectively in daily life situations and professional situations later. Furthermore, CBA develops learner autonomy, responsibility, and

critical thinking a view asserted by Roegiers (2006) "….the mission of education is to instill such values as autonomy and learning to learn" (p. 03).

## 2.5.    Characteristics of the Competency-Based Approach

The Competency-Based Approach is distinguished by its numerous characteristics. It enables learners to be autonomous and responsible individuals capable of dealing with real-life situations successfully. The features involved in the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) programs in language teaching are the following:

- ➢ **The CBA is an action-oriented approach**: What matters is what the student can do as a result of the acquisition of certain skills and functions. In other words, the emphasis shifts from what he knows about the language to what he can do with it. This allows the learner to be an effective and competent language user in real-life situations outside the classroom.

- ➢ **The CBA is a problem-situation approach:** it suggests a problem- situation that is related to an obstacle to overcome or a problem to solve. The teachers place their learners in front of a problem to reflect on instead of requiring them to restore information presented by them i.e. learners will be more involved in the learning process.  They use their previously acquired knowledge to find a solution; henceforth, to construct a piece of new knowledge. The problems to solve the need to be challenging yet within learners' capacities.

- ➢ **The CBA is a social constructivist approach:** learning is not a passive transmission of information; it rather occurs through social interaction with other people which develops awareness and opportunities for reflection (Chelli, 2012). In the sense that the learners will advance beyond their present

level of development to a higher one if they interact with more competent peers, teachers, and parents.

➢ **The CBA is a cognitive approach:** it is indebted to Bloom's Taxonomy. Blooms' Taxonomy shows the different stages through which learners go to construct their knowledge by developing the ability to be creative, reflective, and solve problems they encounter.

One of the most distinctive features of the Competency-Based Approach is project work. It is a teaching device that allows interaction, collaboration, and teamwork skills among the learners under the guidance of the teacher.

To sum up, these features reveal a tendency towards learner-centeredness that aims to develop a kind of autonomy, creativity, and responsibility in the learner. Thus, CBA has reshaped the roles of both teachers and learners by providing concrete opportunities for pupils to be active participants in the learning process.

## 2.6.    Teacher's Role in the Competency-Based Approach

The Competency-Based Approach is a teaching approach that gives much emphasis to learners as opposed to the traditional teacher-centered approach. CBLT requires the teacher to be a facilitator who would help his students to acquire the language through the development of appropriate learning strategies, as Murdoch (1990) stated that the teacher: "is no longer expected to tightly orchestrate and dominate all work in the classroom. His role is defined more in terms of a facilitator who sets up conditions and activities that will make it possible for students to operate with language" (cited in Kral, 1994, p. 48).

## 2.7.    Learner's Role in the Competency-Based Approach

CBLT gives new roles for the student to play in the classroom. In this approach, the learner is no more a passive recipient of a transmitted knowledge but rather an

active agent in the learning process. According to the Algerian Partnership School Programs (2005) "Learners obtain and retain language best when the topic accumulates their interests and when they are active participants in their learning" (cited in Boudouda & Khelkhal, 2012, p. 20). Moreover, the learner is considered to be self-reliant, and responsible for his learning. He has control over his learning by knowing what he has acquired and what he needs to acquire. Edwards (1998) argued that "… when students are compelled to assume greater responsibility for directing their learning, they will gradually learn to see themselves as the controllers of their own learning. Learning is seen as self-initiated and no other-initiate." (p. 68)

## 2.8. Teaching the Reading Skill under the CBA

The CBA is based on the integration of the four skills and one of these skills is reading. Teaching reading through the Competency-Based Approach is an activity with a purpose. It seeks to help learners to acquire a good command of the reading skill and strategies, and to develop the communicative abilities of interaction, interpretation, and production. A point that is asserted by Eskey (1983) who noted "The point of the reading course should be reading, not a reinforcement of oral skills, not grammatical or discourse analysis and not the acquisition of new vocabulary" (p.130).

Likewise, the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA is learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. Since CBA perceives learners as active participants in the learning process, they are no more passive receivers of knowledge "A pedagogy that does not involve learner participation is not likely to be as effective as one that does" (Widdowson, 1983, p. 76). Hence, reading is no more monopolized by the teacher and the text context. The teacher stops being an authoritarian, and he becomes

a facilitator who assists his students in their reading process by making them aware of what they are doing. Additionally, he plays a crucial role in training learners to use a variety of reading strategies, and provide them with feedback about their performances to keep them motivated. In other words, learners are no more guided in reading; it is the teacher's reading tasks that show them how to cope with the readings.

## 2.9. Challenges of Teaching Reading through the CBA

Among the objectives of English language teaching in Algerian secondary school is reading ability and comprehension, since without comprehension reading is just an activity of decoding printed material without understanding. Despite this importance, students' reading ability and comprehension is still poor. This is evidence that teaching reading skills within the Competency-Based approach are not successful yet. Learners and some teachers consider reading skills as a complex process and a difficult task. Many problems are responsible for ineffective teaching of reading which includes:

- ➢ **Large and crowded classroom**: classes in the Algerian secondary school are large with only three to four English sessions a week. Furthermore, teachers need to overcome other topics besides reading. Consequently, finding time to provide adequate reading practice is difficult.

- ➢ **Traditional views about the reading skill**: English teachers are confused to apply the CBA teaching strategies in the classroom. The knowledge and experience the teachers acquired from the previous approaches are irrelevant and contradict with the new approach. Even though the government provides teachers with training to improve their methods, some teachers prefer to go

with the normal teaching methods they previously implemented in their classrooms.

➢ **Students and teachers' weak performance**: on the one hand, learners' comprehension in English in general and in reading in particular is insufficient. Students do not know what reading is or how to read to achieve comprehension. For this, teachers are required to overcome students' drawbacks. On the other hand, students' performance in reading is affected by the teachers' weak performance in teaching the reading skill. The teaching reading strategies implemented in the classroom contradict with the newly acquired teaching approach. Furthermore, it is difficult for some teachers to properly manage reading when they struggle to understand a text.

➢ **No reading culture**: Students do not have the habit of reading outside the classroom, a fact that negatively affects their reading ability and lead to low comprehension in reading.

## 2.10. ELT in the Algerian Secondary School

In the educational reforms, Algeria has adopted recently, English has become a compulsory subject-matter in the curriculum of secondary school. According to Ourghi (2002) "It (English) is part of the curriculum regardless of the learners' stream (literary, scientific or technological) and represents an additional facet to the general learning and instruction of pupils" (p24).

Teaching English in secondary education is compulsory in three years, during these three years pupils are expected to develop a certain level of English knowledge that will enable them to (1) pass the baccalaureate examination (2) express themselves in various language situations in their real life. (3) pursuit their higher education. These objectives and others will be illustrated with more details in the following section.

### 2.10.1. ELT Objectives in the Secondary School

The objectives stated for teaching English in the Algerian secondary school generally and the third year particularly are put under the following headings (Programme d'Anglais 3AS, 2006)

**A. Linguistic and communicative objectives:**

➤ Provide the pupil with a solid linguistic platform (grammar, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, mastery of written and spoken language).

➤ Permit the pupil to comprehend and communicate easily using the foreign language.

➤ Permit him (the pupil) to follow his studies with success at university or in the professional life.

**B. Methodological/ technological objectives:**

➤ Develop pupils' intellectual capacities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation through a set of pertinent activities.

➤ Provide the learner with learning strategies and self-evaluation strategies which permit him to enlarge his competences.

**C. Socio-cultural and socio-professional objectives:**

➤ Stimulate pupil's curiosity and contribute to his open-mindedness by exposing him to a variety of contexts of English culture (English, American, African, Indian, Australian, etc.).

➤ Permit the pupil to be an active participant in life at the end of his studies.

## 2.10.2. Teaching Reading in Secondary School

## 2.10.2.1. Textbook Design *New Prospects*

The ELT textbook *New Prospects* is the last of series of three preceded textbooks designed for secondary school education: '*At the Cross Road', 'Getting Through', and 'New Prospects'. New Prospects* is mainly addressed to third-year secondary school pupils and completely aligned with the syllabus laid out by the National Committee of the Ministry of National Education in March 2006. The major aim of this teaching tool is to enhance in learners the three main competencies: interpreting, interacting, and producing.

*'New Prospects'* encompasses six units covering different themes. Each stream is expected to deal with four mandatory units, and each unit has its objective, theme, and project to be fulfilled at the end. All the units are made up of the same structure. Each unit contains two parts, language outcomes, and skills and strategies outcomes, and each part of them is composed of two sequences designed in the same way.

➢ **Part One: Language Outcomes**

This part is divided into two sequences, 'Listen and consider' and 'Read and consider' that focus on teaching grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Both sequences have a common rubric called 'Think, pair, share' that aims at "getting the students to re-invest in speaking or writing, the thematic and language elements acquire throughout the sequence by foregrounding a particular function" (as cited in New Prospects, 2017, P.5 )

➢ **Part Two: Skills and Strategies Outcomes**

The second part encompasses two sequences 'Listening and speaking' and 'Reading and writing' which concentrate on developing compositional skills and

communication strategies. Those skills are embodied in rubrics entitled 'Say it in writing' and 'Writing Development.'

Each unit is ended with a section entitles 'Project outcomes' that is related to the theme of the unit. This section contains guidelines that help the pupils to work on the project assigned. The last section concerns 'Assessment' and it contains some activities for learners to assess their outcomes and achievements.

## 2.10.2.2. Teaching Reading in *New Prospects*

Drawing from the objective of the present study, it is necessary to shed light on the reading skill in the *New Prospects* textbook. Reading skill is tackled in both the first part 'Language outcomes' within the 'read and consider' sequence, and the second part 'Skills and strategies outcomes' in the sequence of 'Reading and writing'.

## 2.10.2.2.1. Read and Consider

This sequence deals much more with the study of grammar structures, vocabulary building, pronunciation, and spelling. It consists of the following rubrics: 'Getting Started', 'Taking a closer Look', 'Around the Text', 'think, pair, and share'. Reading in this sequence is introduced in the following rubrics:

➢ **Getting started:** this rubric aims to introduce the topic of the text for the pupils by activating their background knowledge. The pupils are required to interact with pictures and to answer a set of questions to guess the main topic of the text.

➢ **Taking a Closer Look:** the pupils, in this rubric, are asked to answer some questions of comprehension (true/false, comprehension questions, etc.)

➢ **Around the Text:** the focus in this rubric is on grammar features, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. The pupils here are asked to reread the text to pick some grammar items, find synonyms antonyms, etc.

## 2.10.2.2.2. Reading and Writing

The sequence of Reading and Writing is subdivided into the following rubrics: 'Before reading', 'As you read' and, 'After reading'. Reading is not isolated from other communication skills in this sequence, since it ends up with a 'Written development' rubric wherein pupils are requested to produce a piece of writing. Reading is presented through a set of activities put under the following three phases:

➢ **Pre-reading:** it consists of a set of pre-reading tasks aimed at making pupils use prediction and previewing strategies through answering a set of questions, reviewing photo caption to predict the main topic of the text.

➢ **As you read:** in this phase, the pupils first check their predictions in the first rubric by reading the text silently. Then, they are asked to answer the questions found at the end of the text by using skimming and scanning strategies.

➢ **Post-reading:** the pupils are asked to identify the text structure. It also prepares them for the next rubric through the use of writing activities that require the use of other reading strategies such as summarizing.

## Conclusion

There are constant changes and developments of teaching methods and approaches within the field of language teaching. Each approach is built on the limitations of the preceding one. The current chapter cast light upon the English language teaching situations in the Algerian secondary schools, and the different approaches of language teaching and learning that has been adopted. One of these approaches is the Competency-Based Approach. It has been introduced in the Algerian educational system in 2002. This approach focuses on the learner as an active agent in the learning process and helps to diminish the gap between school and society. The current chapter provided an overview of the CBA, its characteristics, and principles that govern it. Furthermore, it described the teachers' roles as well as learners' roles within this approach. Finally, a particular focus was laid on reading under the CBA, and within the official textbook *New Prospects*. The subsequent chapter will be devoted to the practical side of the research work.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALSIS

**Introduction**

The present chapter is the practical part of the dissertation. It includes the analyses of data that has been gathered through the use of two questionnaires and the interpretation of the obtained results achieved from them. Besides, the researcher seeks to offer some suggestions and recommendations about teaching reading comprehension to EFL learners.

## 3.1. Methodology of the Research

This research work is an investigation of reading comprehension difficulties that EFL Algerian secondary school students encounter. To conduct this study, and provide an answer to the research questions, a short research plan has been conducted. This plan includes the research design, the instrumentation, and the sample population to be investigated.

### 3.1.1. The Research Design

In conducting any research, the investigator should follow a research design. The research design is "the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data" (Khotari, 2004, p. 31). Furthermore, it aims at providing valid and accurate answers to research questions.

The present study follows a descriptive method that is designed to determine the facts of a situation by providing as many details and descriptions as possible. Additionally, it makes no predictions but simply reports what has been found (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Such a study will be used to identify, analyze, and describe factors related to pupils' reading comprehension problems, the strategies they use, and their

attitudes towards reading in general. Thus, the raw data collected have been analyzed quantitatively for further understanding of the research problem, and to ensure the validity of the findings.

### 3.1.2. Research Population and Sample

The population is the total group of people whom the study is about meanwhile sampling is the subgroup of the population the researcher wants to conduct his study on. Dornyei (2007) defined sampling as being "the group of participants or informants whom the researcher actually examines in his empirical investigation" (p.96)

The present research was conducted in the form of a case study. To carry out this study, data were collected from two different sources. The samples are 3rd-year pupils and EFL teachers from different secondary schools.

### 3.1.2.1 Learners' Profile

The informants representing the sample of the study are 3rd-year pupils at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school in Constantine. Sixty-four (64) of them are selected to participate in responding to the questionnaire. Their age is between 17 and 20.

### 3.1.2.2. Teachers' Profile

The research work involves thirty-three (33) EFL teachers from different secondary schools to represent the sample of the study. They vary in terms of age, gender, and English teaching experiences. Their teaching experience varies from less than 5 years to more than 15 years in teaching English at secondary school and from 1 year to 30 years in teaching 3rd-year classes.

### 3.1.3. Research Procedure

The main research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. Brown (2001) defined the questionnaire as: "Any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their

answers or selecting from among existing answers" (p. 6). The aim beyond choosing the questionnaire as a research tool is that it helps to gather data from a large sample of the population in a short time as Dornyei (2007) asserted: "the popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily accessible" (p. 101).

The main objective of both questionnaires is to investigate the reading comprehension problems and difficulties third-year secondary school pupils encounter in reading comprehension.

### 3.1.3.1. Pupils' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administrated to third-year pupils at Saadi Tahar Harat secondary school in Constantine. The total number of informants is sixty-four (64) (ten males and fifty-four females). The questionnaire consists of eighteen (18) questions written in English, and all of them are close-ended questions. Most of them are in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), and others take the form of Likert scale. This questionnaire aims to investigate pupils' attitudes and perceptions towards English reading comprehension difficulties. After a small introduction concerning the aim of the work, the questionnaire starts with some informative questions about pupils' gender, age, the branch of study, and their level in English. The questionnaire is composed of four sections. (See appendix A)

➤ *Section one (items 5-8) Reading Skill:* the first section deals with pupils' attitudes towards reading in general. The aim of this section is to discover whether pupils read in English, what materials they read, and what for. It consists of four questions.

➤ *Section two (item9) New Prospects Textbook:* the aim of this section is to find out pupils' opinions about the texts offered in their official textbook *'New Prospects'*. It

is composed of one question in the form of Likert scale. This question contains six statements to grade them according to the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

➢ *Section three (items 10-14) Reading Comprehension:* in this section, the researcher attempts to explore how pupils use reading comprehension strategies to understand what they read, and the different teaching methods used by their teachers. It is composed of five questions.

➢ *Section four (items 15-18) Reading Comprehension difficulties and Causes:* this is the most important section in the work. It aims at identifying pupils' reading comprehension difficulties and the causes behind them. This rubric embodies four questions.

## 3.1.3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to thirty-three (33) EFL teachers at different secondary schools. It consists of nineteen (19) questions taking the form of both close-ended and open-ended questions. Most of them are in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), others contain gaps in which teachers justify their answers or give suggestions and proposals, and one question takes the form of Likert scale. The aim of the questionnaire is to explore teachers' awareness of the main reasons and obstacles that cause reading comprehension failures to 3rd-year secondary school pupils. The following questionnaire contains an introductory paragraph that provides the informants with a general idea about the investigated topic. It starts with some informative questions about teachers' age, gender, and teaching experiences. The questionnaire is divided into three sections comparatively related to those found in the pupils' questionnaire. The aim here is to consolidate the data obtained from the pupils. (See appendix C)

➢ *Section One: (items 5-8) The Competency-Based Approach in New Prospects Textbook:* This section deals with the implementation of the CBA in teaching the reading skill besides teachers' opinions about the texts offered in *New Prospects.* It contains four questions.

➢ *Section two: (items 9-13) Reading Comprehension:* This rubric attempts to explore the way teachers proceed in teaching reading comprehension and whether they teach their learners to use reading comprehension strategies while reading. It is composed of five questions.

➢ *Section three (14-19) Reading Comprehension Difficulties and Causes:* This section consists of six questions. It examines teachers' opinions about their pupils' reading comprehension difficulties and causes and the way through which they assess their reading comprehension. The section ends up with an open question for further proposals suggested by the teachers to improve their learners' reading comprehension.

## 3.2. Analysis and Results of the Questionnaires.

The following section aims at analyzing and interpreting the data obtained from the questionnaires used in the present study.

## 3.2.1. Analysis and Results of Pupils' Questionnaires

This section deals mainly with reporting and interpreting the results collected from the students' questionnaire. This questionnaire aims to identify the main difficulties encountered by 3rd-year secondary school pupils in reading comprehension and the reasons behind these difficulties. The discussion of the results comes at the end of this section.

*General Information*

1- Sex: male or female

**Table 3.1:** *Learners' Gender.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Male | 54 | 84.40% |
| Female | 10 | 15.60% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The first question was about learners' gender. According to the results obtained, the majority of the informants are females (84.40%) and only (15.60%) males. This indicates that female students outnumber males in our research population.

2- Age

**Table 3.2:** *Learners' Age.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| 17 | 11 | 17.18% |
| 18 | 33 | 51.56% |
| 19 | 15 | 23.43% |
| 20 | 5 | 7.81% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to the table above, the largest number of participants (51.56%) aged 18, while (23.43%) aged 19. (17.18%) of the respondents aged 17 and only (7.81%) aged 20.

3- *Stream of the study*

**Table 3.3:** *Learners' stream of Study*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Foreign Languages | 12 | 18.75% |
| Literature and Philosophy | 8 | 12.50% |
| Scientific streams | 44 | 68.75% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The above table shows the percentage of respondents in each stream. It is noticeable that most participants (68.75%) belong to the scientific streams (Exp.Sc / Math/ TM/ GE), and (18.75%) belong to foreign languages stream and only (12.50%) belong to the literature and philosophy stream.

4- How would you evaluate your level in English?

**Table 3.4:** *Learners' Attitudes toward English.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Very Good | 13 | 20.30 % |
| Good | 25 | 39.10 % |
| Average | 17 | 26.60 % |
| Poor | 9 | 14.10 % |
| Total | 64 | 100%% |

This question aimed to make learners judge their level in English. According to the table above, the results reveal that learners' levels in English vary in degree. The majority of them (39.10%) considered their English language level as being good. (26.60%) of them said that it was average, and (20.30%) regarded it as very good. The rest (14.10%) said that they had a poor level. These results indicate that the majority of students are satisfied with their level in English.

**Section One: Reading Skill**

5- Do you like reading in English?

**Table 3.5:** *Learners' Appreciation of Reading*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 56 | 87.50% |
| No | 8 | 12.50% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

This question aimed to seek learners' attitudes towards reading in English. According to the table, the majority of the informants' answers are positive (87.50%). On the other hand, only (12.50%) claimed that they did not like reading in English. The result indicates that the majority of students are giving high importance to reading.

6- If yes, how often do you read?

**Table 3.6:** *The Frequency of Students' Reading*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Always | 3 | 5 % |
| Sometimes | 25 | 41.70% |
| Rarely | 29 | 48.30% |
| never | 3 | 5 % |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

This question was about the learners' reading frequency. As obtained from students' answers, the majority (48.30%) said that they rarely read, and (41.70%) reported that they sometimes practiced reading. While few of them (5%) claimed that they always read, and the same percentage (5%) indicated that they never read. This may reveal that the majority of the examined sample does not read a lot; which contradicts the results of the previous question and then makes us assume that they may not have enough time to practice reading.

7- What type of materials do you read?

**Table 3.7:** *Learners' Preferred Reading Materials*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Newspaper | 1 | 2% |
| Magazines | 12 | 23.50% |
| Books | 38 | 74.50% |

| Total | 64 | 100% |
|-------|-----|------|

The purpose of asking this question was to know what kind of materials the target sample was interested in. Most of the learners (74.50%) said that they preferred reading storybooks, whereas (23.50%) read magazines. Only (2%) of the participants showed interest in reading newspapers. Some informants (20.31%) stated other options than those that had been mentioned in the provided list. These options were English texts found on Facebook posts, proverbs, memes, and comic books. This entails that the majority of students prefer reading materials that are not related to the academic context that is, they prefer extensive reading.

8- What is your purpose in reading in English?

**Table 3.8:** *Learners' Reading Purposes.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| a. | 36 | 56.30% |
| b. | 11 | 17.20% |
| c. | 20 | 31.30% |
| d. | 21 | 32.80% |
| e. | 15 | 23.40% |
| f.   All of them | 16 | 25% |

a. To improve your level in English
b. To read for pleasure
c. For academic purposes
d. To enrich your vocabulary knowledge
e. To learn a new culture

The aim behind this question is to figure out whether the learners are extensive readers or intensive readers, and for what reason they read. Most of the learners

(56.30%) asserted that they read to improve their level in English. (32.80%) of them said that their purpose of reading was to enrich their vocabulary knowledge, while (31.30%) read purely for academic purposes. (23.40%) of the learners claimed that they read to enlarge their knowledge about other cultures, and (17.20%) read for pleasure. The rest of the informants indicated that they read for all the purposes that had been mentioned before. Learners in this question have stated different purposes behind reading, however, this result confirms to some extent the result of the previous question that the majority of learners prefer to read storybooks, which may be mainly for pleasure.

### Section two: New prospects textbook

9. Below are statements about the official textbook *'New Prospects'*. Put a cross (×) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

This section aims to find out pupils' opinions and attitudes towards the texts included in their textbook of English language *New Prospects*. The participants were presented with statements that described their official textbook and asked to grade them according to the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

a. *The textbook of English 'New Prospects' is convenient.*

**Table 3.9:** *Learners' Attitudes towards the New Prospects Textbook Appropriateness.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 | 1.60% |
| Agree | 21 | 32.80% |
| Neutral | 20 | 31.30% |
| Disagree | 16 | 25 % |
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 9.40% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

This statement was about the appropriateness of the New Prospects textbook. According to the results, the majority of the participants (32.80%) agree, and (1.60%) strongly agree that the texts are appropriate and convenient. Whereas, (25%) and (9.40%) are against this statement. whilst (31.30%) of the participants are neutral.

b. *The New Prospects textbook's reading texts are easy to understand.*

**Table 3.10:** *Learners' attitudes towards the Level of the Difficulty of the Texts Included in their Textbook*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 3 | 4.70% |
| Agree | 25 | 39.10% |
| Neutral | 23 | 35.90% |
| Disagree | 10 | 15.60% |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 4.70% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The researcher wanted to know how the learners perceived the reading materials in terms of difficulty. In the above table, it is clear that the majority of the respondents considered the texts as easy to understand, in the sense that (39.10%) agreed and (4.70%) strongly agreed with the above-mentioned statement. In contrast, the rest of the students either strongly disagreed (4.70%) or disagreed (15.60%) with the statement. However, (35.90%) opted for neutral.

c. *The topics of the reading texts in 'New Prospects' textbook are interesting.*

**Table 3.11:** *Learners' Attitudes towards the Interestedness of the Topics of the Reading Texts in New Prospects.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 1 | 1.60% |
| Agree | 22 | 23.40% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Neutral | 22 | 23.40% |
| Disagree | 15 | 34.40% |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 6.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

In order to discover learners' attitudes towards the interestedness of the topics discussed by the texts, they were asked to give their opinions about the above-mentioned statement. The majority (34.40%) asserted that they disagreed that the topics were interesting, and (6.30%) strongly disagreed with this. On the other hand, (23.40%) and (1.60%) of the participants opted for either agree or strongly agree. A considerable percentage (34.40%) of the respondents stated that they were neutral.

d. *The New Prospects textbook's reading texts help you to enrich your vocabulary*.

**Table 3.12:** *Learners' Attitudes towards the Vocabulary Used in their Textbook*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 6 | 9.40% |
| Agree | 34 | 53.10% |
| Neutral | 13 | 20.30% |
| Disagree | 7 | 10.90% |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 6.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

To know how the pupils perceived the vocabulary included in their textbook texts, the above-mentioned statement was introduced. The results obtained reveal that the majority of the learners (53.10%) agree that the textbook reading texts help them to enrich their vocabulary knowledge, and (9.40%) strongly agree with that too. Few learners either strongly disagree (6.30%) or disagree (10.90%) with the above statement. Whereas (20.30%) of the learners are neutral.

e. *The New Prospects textbook's reading texts enable you to use your prior knowledge.*

**Table 3.13:** *Learners' Attitudes toward the Textbook s' Texts and Learners' Prior Knowledge*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 4 | 6.30% |
| Agree | 28 | 43.80% |
| Neutral | 17 | 26.60% |
| Disagree | 12 | 18.80% |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 4.70% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The aim behind the following statement was to figure out whether the reading texts used in The *New Prospect* textbook enabled the learners to activate their prior knowledge. The results attained from the table reveal that the majority agree, in the sense that (43.80%) agree and (6.30%) strongly agree with the statement mentioned above. On the other hand, (18.80%) are against the previous statement, and (4.70%) strongly disagree with it. (26.60%) are neutral.

f. *The 'New Prospects' texts reflect what you want to learn.*

**Table 3.14:** *The New Prospects' Texts and the Learners' Needs*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 4 | 6.30% |
| Agree | 18 | 28.10% |
| Neutral | 15 | 23.40% |
| Disagree | 23 | 35.90% |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 6.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

To discover whether the reading materials used in *New Prospects* meet the learners' needs, the following statement was presented 'The *New Prospects* texts reflect what you want to learn'. The results attained reveal that the majority of the sample learners (35.90%) are against, and (6.30%) strongly disagree with this statement. Meanwhile, the rest of the participants either agree (28.10%) or strongly agree (6.30%) that the reading materials reflect what they want to learn. (23.40%) of the participants, however, are neutral.

### *Section three Reading Comprehension*

10. Do you think that reading comprehension is important for developing your language competence?

**Table 3.15:** *Learners' Attitudes towards Reading Comprehension.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 62 | 96.90% |
| No | 2 | 3.10% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

Since reading comprehension is the focus of this research, it was necessary to ask learners this question to know their opinions and perceptions about the importance of reading comprehension in developing their language competence. The overwhelming majority of the sample (96.90%) asserted that reading comprehension was a necessary skill for them to develop. Only (3.10%) of the participants indicated that reading comprehension was not necessary. This means that the majority of students are aware of the importance of reading comprehension and its benefits.

11. During the process of reading, do you understand every single word?

**Table 3.16:** *Learners' Understanding of the Text.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 9 | 14.10% |
| No | 55 | 85.90% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 64 | 100% |

This question was asked to find out learners' understanding level while Reading. Understanding every single word of a passage is impossible, especially for intermediate EFL students. Therefore, the majority of them (85.90%) answered by 'No'. The rest of them (14.10%) said 'Yes' they understood every single word; which may represent those who read a lot and then have a rich vocabulary.

12. How does your teacher help you, when you do not understand the text?

**Table 3.17:** *Learners' Attitudes towards Teachers' Teaching Strategies.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| a | 41 | 64.10% |
| b | 15 | 23.40% |
| c | 13 | 20.30% |
| d | 8 | 12.50% |
| e | 28 | 43.80% |

a. Using L1 for explanation
b. Using only L2 for explanation
c. Asking you to use dictionaries
d. Asking you to reread the text to make sense
e. Encouraging you to guess the meaning by using contextual clues

This question was asked to find out learners' opinions about the way their teachers helped them to understand a text, and to check the teaching strategies used by their teachers to enhance reading comprehension. The question was accompanied by five suggestions. According to the obtained answers, (64.10%) of the participants stated that their teachers used the mother tongue for the explanation, while (23.40%) used

only English for the explanation which might indicate that the learners have difficulty in listening comprehension. (43.80%) claimed that their teachers encouraged them to guess the meaning by using contextual clues, and (20.30%) asked them to use dictionaries. Only (12.50%) said that their teachers demanded from them to reread the text. Even though using Arabic helps teachers to support slow learners, its excessive use may lower learners' proficiency level.

13. While reading, what kind of reading comprehension strategies do you follow?

**Table 3.18:** *Reading Strategies Used by Learners.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| A | 28 | 43.80% |
| b | 15 | 23.40% |
| c | 27 | 42.20% |
| d | 10 | 15.60% |
| e | 21 | 32.80% |
| f | 3 | 4.70% |
| g | 32 | 50% |
| h | 8 | 12.50% |
| i. None of them | 6 | 9.40% |

a.  Before I read the text, I use the title and the illustrations to predict the content

b.  I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.

c.  I read slowly but carefully for details.

d.  I link the content of the text with what I know.

e.  I skip unknown words that I could not clarify if I understand the gist.

f.   Pay attention to indirectly stated ideas and try to make inferences about them.

g.  I try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph.

h.  I write summarizes to reflect on key ideas in the text.

The question aimed to investigate the various strategies the respondents use when trying to understand written English materials. According to the results displayed in

the table, only (9.40%) of the participants claimed that they did not use strategies while reading, whilst (90.62%) of them used reading comprehension strategies. (30.58%) of the sample depended on only one reading comprehension strategy to overcome difficulties, while (55.17%) tended to combine different strategies at the same time.

It is also noticeable that half of the learners (50%) indicated that they relied on the main ideas of each paragraph to grasp the meaning of the reading material. (43.80%), however, used the title and the illustrations to achieve the same goal. (42.20%) of the sample adopted reading carefully for details to facilitate the process of understanding, whereas (32.80%) skipped unknown words to understand the gist. (23.40%) stated that they used the skimming strategy to comprehend the text, and (15.60%) relied on their background knowledge for the same reason. Only (12.50%) depended on summarization, and (4.70%) on inferring strategies for better understanding.

The finding indicates that reading strategies such as previewing, reading for gist, and details are the most used strategies since they do not need much time and effort unlike summarizing and inferring.

14. Does your teacher train you to use reading comprehension strategies?

**Table 3.19:** *Training Learners to Use Reading Comprehension Strategies*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 37 | 57.80% |
| No | 27 | 42.20% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

This question aimed to discover whether teachers trained their learners to use reading comprehension strategies while reading. More than half of the participants (57.80%) affirmed that their teachers trained them to use reading comprehension

strategies, while (42.20%) of them claimed the opposite. This is maybe related to the teachers' expectation that students at that level are aware of these reading strategies, thus they do not need to be trained.

*Section four Reading Comprehension difficulties and Causes:*

15. Below are statements about problems faced by leaners while reading. Please, put a cross (x) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on how often you face a given problem in your reading (always, sometimes, rarely, never).

The informants were asked to identify at which level they found difficulty to understand a text. They were given an inventory composed of a list of reading comprehension difficulties, and they were asked to tick an answer according to their frequency of facing these problems. The results obtained are summarized in the tables below:

a. I find problems with unfamiliar vocabulary in the text.

**Table 3.20:***Learners'Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Always | 32 | 50% |
| Sometimes | 24 | 37.50% |
| Rarely | 7 | 10.90% |
| never | 1 | 1.60% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to the table, half of the learners (50%) claimed that they always found difficulties in understanding the text due to its unfamiliar vocabulary. Others (37.50%) chose sometimes, and (10.90%) for rarely. Only (1.60%) said that they never found difficulties with ambiguous words.

b. Comprehending what I read becomes difficult because of long and complex sentences.

**Table3.21:** *Learners' Syntactic Difficulties*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 16 | 25% |
| Sometimes | 34 | 53.10% |
| Rarely | 10 | 15.60% |
| never | 4 | 6.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to the revealed results; (53.10%) of the sample learners stated that they sometimes found difficulties in understanding the texts because of syntactic problems. (25%) chose always, while (15.60%) rarely. Only (6.30%) claimed that long and complex sentences did not impact their understanding of the text. Learners' obstacles in decoding complex and long sentences can be related to the nature and the difficulty of the written material.

From what has been found from statements (A) and (B), one can conclude that learners' lack of lexical and syntactic competences prevent them from interpreting the written material effectively.

c. I do not comprehend what I read because of lack of background knowledge about the subject.

**Table 3.22:** *Learners' Lack of Background Knowledge*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 13 | 20.30% |
| Sometimes | 23 | 36.20% |
| Rarely | 16 | 30% |
| never | 8 | 13.50% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The table above reveals that most of the learners (36.20%) sometimes face difficulties in comprehending texts because of lack of prior knowledge related to the text, while (30%) rarely do. Furthermore, (20.30%) said that they always had difficulties to grasp the meaning of the text because of lack of background knowledge. Only (13.50%) opted for never.

d. *I* do not understand cultural items in the text.

**Table 3.23:** *Learners' Syntactic Lack of cultural knowledge*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 11 | 17.20% |
| Sometimes | 23 | 35.40% |
| Rarely | 18 | 28.40% |
| never | 12 | 19% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to learners' answers represented in the table above, (17.20%) of them reported that they always had troubles in understanding the text because of cultural items. (19%) declared that they never encountered this problem. (35.40%) affirmed that cultural knowledge was another source of comprehension problems while (28.40%) rarely faced this problem.

According to the results obtained from statements (c) and (d), it is noticeable that learners cannot relate to a given material because of lack of prior knowledge or because of cultural barriers.

e. I do not recognize the text structure (e.g. description, narrative, expository…)

**Table 3.24:** *Learners' Awareness of Text Structure*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 23 | 35.10% |
| Sometimes | 17 | 27.20% |
| Rarely | 11 | 17.20% |
| never | 13 | 20.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The results clearly show that the majority of the participants (35.10%) always find problems in distinguishing the types of text structure and (27.20%) sometimes do. Meanwhile (17.20%) claimed that they rarely faced difficulties when it came to the ways the texts were organized. (20.30%) declared that they never had such a problem.

f. I do not comprehend a text because I do not know how to use reading comprehension strategies.

**Table 3.25:** *Learners' Awareness of Reading Comprehension Strategies*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 18 | 28.30% |
| Sometimes | 20 | 31.30% |
| Rarely | 10 | 15.60% |
| never | 16 | 24.80% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to the results, (24.80%) of the learners reported that they never faced difficulties in using reading comprehension strategies. (28.30%) responded that they were always incapable of understanding a text due to the lack of reading comprehension strategies. while (31.30%) opted for sometimes, and (15.60%) chose rarely.

According to the results derived from statements (e) and (g), the learners may encounter problems in indicating the text structure because of their poor reading comprehension strategies.

g. I take a lot of time to finish what I read.

**Table 3.26:** *Learners' Reading Fluency*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Always | 10 | 16.20% |
| Sometimes | 16 | 25.30% |
| Rarely | 23 | 35.50% |
| never | 15 | 23.20% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

According to the table, most of the respondents (35.50%) said that they rarely took a long time to finish reading, and (23.20%) confirmed that. (25.30%) opted for sometimes and only (16.20%) selected always. This problem might be due to poor word recognition and lack of reading strategies which cause slow reading.

h. I do not understand what I read because the reading texts are complicated.

**Table 3.27:** *Learners' Attitudes towards Reading the Materials*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Always | 13 | 21 % |
| Sometimes | 20 | 30.60% |
| Rarely | 19 | 30.10% |
| never | 12 | 18.30% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

Most of the respondents (30.60%) reported that they sometimes found difficulties to grasp the meaning of a reading material due to its complexity, while (30.10%) rarely did. (21%) said that they always found problems in handling difficult texts.

(18.30%) of the participants denied that. This result reflects that many learners of the sample find the materials difficult either because they may lack the appropriate reading comprehension strategies, inadequate vocabulary knowledge, or simply the texts are inappropriate in terms of difficulty and topic choice and do not suit the learners' level and interest.

16. What are the causes behind your reading comprehension difficulties?

**Table 3.28:** *Causes of Reading Comprehension Failure*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| A | 26 | 40.60% |
| b | 7 | 11.10% |
| c | 19 | 29.70% |
| d | 15 | 24% |
| e | 30 | 46.90% |
| f | 9 | 15.00% |
| g | 15 | 23.40% |
| h.**All of them** | 7 | 10.90% |

a. Lack of reading habits.
b. Lack of motivation for reading.
c. Lack of time to practice reading.
d. Lack of reading comprehension strategies.
e. Lack of vocabulary knowledge.
f. Difficulty of reading materials.
g. The teaching method adopted by your teacher.

The question aimed to identify the reasons behind pupils' difficulties in reading comprehension. When the sample learners were asked about the main reasons behind their reading comprehension difficulties, most of them said (46.90%) it was mainly because of their inadequate vocabulary. (40.60%) claimed that their reading comprehension problems were due to lack of reading habits since they did not have

enough time to practice reading, a fact that was confirmed by (29.70%) of the participants. (24%) responded that the lack of reading strategies impacted negatively their comprehension of the text. (23.40%) of the learners stated that the teaching methods adopted by their teachers were another barrier, while (15.00%) related reading problems to the difficulty of the texts they read. Only (11.10%) said that they were not motivated to read.

Consequently, it can be assumed that vocabulary knowledge is very important in reading comprehension lessons. Therefore, teachers are required to bring solutions to increase the vocabulary knowledge of their learners.

*17. Does your teacher assess your reading comprehension?*

**Table 3.29:** *Teachers' Assessment.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 30 | 46.90% |
| No | 34 | 53.10% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

The majority of participants' answers were negative. (53.10%) of the respondents stated that the teacher did not assess their reading comprehension whereas (46.90%) answered 'Yes'. Assessment is supposed to enhance learners' capacities in reading comprehension, for this, teachers should take into consideration its effectiveness.

18. Is the time advocated to reading sessions in the classroom is sufficient to improve your reading comprehension?

**Table 3.30:** *Learners' Attitudes toward Time of Reading Sessions.*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 13 | 20.30% |
| No | 51 | 79.70% |

| Total | 64 | 100% |
|---|---|---|

This question aimed to discover learners' perceptions about the time allocated for reading courses. A significant number of students (79.70%) viewed that the time devoted to the reading session was insufficient, and only (20.30%) stated that this time was enough to develop their reading comprehension. The stated results reveal that the learners do not practice enough intensive reading inside the classroom which may impact their comprehension of the texts.

### 3.2.1.1. Summary of the Results of the Questionnaires

The objective of this questionnaire was to identify reading comprehension difficulties faced by third-year secondary school learners and the causes behind them. The findings indicate that the major difficulties faced by the examined sample of this study are the lack of lexical and syntactic knowledge and inability to recognize the text structure they read. Other difficulties met by the participants are related to factors such as lack of reading comprehension strategies, lack of prior and cultural knowledge, and reading materials' complexity. Meanwhile, the problem that is the least encountered by them is the lack of reading fluency. The results show that the most scored frequency of the problems that limit the sample's comprehension was 'sometimes' which indicates that the learners are likely to face one of these problems whenever they read a text. Furthermore, the main sources of these obstacles, as reported by the informants, were inadequate vocabulary, poor reading habits, and lack of time for practicing reading.

The first section of the questionnaire was devoted to reading skill. The results reveal that most of the participants had a positive attitude towards reading in English.

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

The learners are aware of the importance of reading in enriching their language knowledge in general and their vocabulary knowledge in particular, as it is noticed in question eight. Yet most of them rarely read outside the classroom which is one of the main sources of reading comprehension difficulties.

The second section dealt with the learners' views concerning the official English textbook *'New Prospects'*. The results show that a greater part of the respondents gives a positive attitude towards the textbook in general. They pointed out that the texts were easy since they helped them to activate their existing schemata, and enriched their vocabulary which by turn facilitated comprehension. However, these texts do not truly reflect the needs and the interests of the learners as they have mentioned in the question nine (f). This factor may negatively influence their comprehension of the text since (39.10%) of the participants claimed that reading materials are one of the obstacles that block their understanding which in turn demotivated them. As a result, syllabus designers and teachers should have taken into consideration the different needs of the learners.

Since the questionnaire was used to investigate participants' reading comprehension problems, it was advisable to examine the reading comprehension strategies used by the learners in the three-phases of reading. The tenth question tended to discover learners' opinions concerning reading comprehension. Indeed most of the subjects show their consciousness about the importance of reading comprehension in their language development although they still encounter comprehension difficulties regarding vocabulary. This is mainly due to a lack of reading outside the classroom, and a lack of reading inside the classroom. This is the reason why most of the participants, in question eighteen (18), reported that the time allocated to reading was insufficient to develop their reading comprehension. The

results also imply that most of the teachers; according to the examined sample, are restricted to the use of L1 for explaining the text instead of promoting the use of reading strategies in their learners. When teachers use Arabic instead of English in different situations, students lose the chances of improving their language abilities. Whereas few teachers try to encourage them to infer the meaning from the context, use dictionaries, or reread the text. This is maybe because some teachers are unaware of the importance of teaching reading strategies which in turn leads to poor reading comprehension among the learners. This assumption was derived from the informants' answers to the question fourteen (14) which shows that a considerable percent of teachers do not train their learners on how to use reading strategies. In addition to this, (23.40%) of the learners considered that their teachers' teaching strategies and methods were other factors that constrained their understanding. Besides, (53.10%) of the participants claimed that their teachers did not assess their reading inside the classroom despite its importance.

Regarding reading strategies, the respondents' answers varied and showed a lack of awareness of some important reading strategies such as: summarizing, inferring, and activating background knowledge. Meanwhile, they were aware of other strategies that do not take much effort and time, such as previewing, reading for details, and gist. Generally, learners who are able to give a summary of a text are those who have got a full understanding, whereas those who are not able to do so may have problems of comprehension. Furthermore, the findings show that (30.58%) of the sample depended on only one reading comprehension strategy to understand a text which is not sufficient. Thus, it can be said that the majority of the subjects lack the capacity to use the reading strategies effectively which leads to poor comprehension.

## 3.2.2. Analysis and Results of Teachers Questionnaires

This section reports and analyzes the different results gathered from the teachers' questionnaire. The questionnaire aims to explore teachers' awareness of the main reasons and obstacles that cause reading comprehension failure to third-year secondary school pupils. The results are presented in the tables below.

*General Information:*

1- Gender: male or female

**Table 3.31:** *Teachers' Gender*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Male   | 26                | 78.80%       |
| Female | 7                 | 21.20%       |
| Total  | 33                | 100%         |

The first question was about teachers' gender. Because the teaching profession is becoming more and more gender imbalanced, a female predominance (78.80%) characterizes the surveyed sample.

2- Age

**Table 3.32:** *Teachers' Age*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| Less than 30 years | 10 | 30.30% |
| 30-50 years | 20 | 60.60% |
| 51 and above | 3 | 9.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

According to the table above, the largest number of participants (60.60%) their age is limited between thirty (30) and fifty (50) years, while (30.30%) is less than 30 years. (9.10%) of the respondents' age is more than fifty (50) years old.

3- How long have you been teaching?

**Table 3.33:** *Teachers' Experiences*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Less than 5 years | 8 | 24.20% |
| between 5-10 years | 14 | 42.40% |
| between 10-15 years | 8 | 24.20% |
| more than 15 years | 3 | 9.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

The results obtained show that (42.40%) of the participants have been teaching English between five and ten (10) years. (24.20%) stated that their teaching experience varied between ten (10) and fifteen (15) years, while the same percent (24.20%) said they had been teaching English for less than five years. Only (9.10%) of the informants have teaching experiences of more than fifteen (15) years. As it is noticed that teachers' teaching experience average is between five and ten years which means that the chosen sample has enough experience in the teaching field.

4- Have you been teaching third year secondary school learners?

**Table 3.34:** *Teachers' years of experience in teaching third year classes*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 29 | 87.90% |
| No | 4 | 12.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

According to the table above, most of the participants (87.90%) claimed that they had been teaching third-year secondary schools, and (12.10%) did not.

Continuing with the previous question, the teachers were asked about their years of experience in teaching third-year secondary classes. The results are displayed in the table below. They show that (48.27%) of the participants have been teaching 3rd-year classes between five and ten years. (27.58%) said they had been teaching them for less than five years, while (13.97%) stated that their teaching experience varied between ten (10) and fifteen (15) years. Only (10.34%) of the informants have teaching experiences of more than fifteen (15) years. As it is noticed that teachers' teaching experience average is between five and ten years which means that the chosen sample has enough experience in teaching the examined sample.

**Table 3.35:** *Teachers' years of experience in teaching third year classes*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 years | 8 | 27.58% |
| between 5-10 years | 14 | 48.27% |
| between 10-15 years | 4 | 13.79% |
| more than 15 years | 3 | 10.34% |
| Total | 29 | 100% |

*Section One: The Competency Based -Approach in New Prospects Textbook*

5-  How do you find the Competency- Based Approach?

**Table 3.36:** *Teachers' Opinions about CBA*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Convenient | 19 | 57.60% |
| Complicated | 12 | 36.40% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Inconvenient | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

This question aimed to point out the informants' opinion about the CBA approach. According to the teachers' answers, (57.60%) of them viewed that the CBA was a convenient approach, while (36.40%) stated that it was complicated, and just (6%) of them believed that it was an inconvenient approach.

6- Do you actually apply this approach in your class?

**Table 3.37:** *Teachers' Implementation of the CBA*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 27 | 81.80% |
| No | 6 | 18.20% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Following the previous question, teachers were asked about the implementation of the CBA approach within their classes. According to the findings, the overwhelming majority (57.60%) confirmed that thy applied this approach, whilst (18.20%) of them admitted that they could not perfectly implement it in their classes. According to the informants, the causes that impede the application of the CBA are various and different. Among these causes, they pointed overcrowded classrooms, different levels of the learners, lack of aids and materials, and the lack of training sessions for teachers on the way of applying the CBA approach.

7- Below are statements about the official textbook 'New Prospects'. Put a cross (×) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

This question aims to find out teachers' attitudes towards the texts included in the official textbook of English language *'New Prospects.'* The participants were presented with statements that described the textbook and asked to grade them using the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

a.  The principles of the CBA are reflected in the reading tasks of *'New Prospects'*.

**Table 3.38***: Teachers' Attitudes towards the CBA Principles Implementation in New Prospects' Reading Tasks*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Agree | 17 | 51.50% |
| Neutral | 7 | 21.20% |
| Disagree | 7 | 21.20 % |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 00% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

According to the results displayed in the table above, the majority of the participants believed that the reading texts of the *'New Prospects'* reflected the principles of the CBA approach. However, (21.10%) disagreed with the statement, and the same percent (21.10%) were neutral.

b.  The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3rd- year learners' level in terms of difficulty.

**Table 3.39:** *Teachers' Attitudes towards the Level of the Difficulty of the Texts Included in the Textbook*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 0 | 0% |
| Agree | 15 | 45.50% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Neutral | 4 | 12.10% |
| Disagree | 11 | 33.30% |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 9.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

In this question, the researcher wants to discover teachers' perceptions concerning the level of the difficulty of the reading texts presented in the textbook. According to the results, most of the subjects (45.50%) believed that these texts suited the level of the learners in terms of difficulty. Unlike this, the rest of them either disagreed (33.30%) or strongly disagreed (9.10%) with the above-mentioned statement, while (9.10%) of the participants selected neutral.

c. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3$^{rd}$ year learners' level in terms of topics choice.

**Table 3.40:** *Teachers' Attitudes toward the convenienceof the Topics of the Reading Texts in New Prospects*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Agree | 9 | 27.30% |
| Neutral | 8 | 24.20% |
| Disagree | 13 | 39.40% |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

This statement is about the interestedness of the topics discussed in the reading texts of the *'New Prospects'* textbook. The obtained results show that many of the informants (39.40%) were against this statement, in the same way, (3%) opted for strongly disagree. As a result, we can say that both teachers and students believed that

the topics were not suitable. However, the rest claimed that they either agreed (27.30%) or strongly agreed (6.10%) while (24.20%) of the informants picked out neutral.

d. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3$^{rd}$ -year learners' level in terms of vocabulary choice.

**Table 3.41:** *Teachers' Attitudes towards the Vocabulary Used in the Textbook*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Agree | 15 | 45.50% |
| Neutral | 7 | 21.20% |
| Disagree | 8 | 24.0% |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

To discover how the teachers perceived the vocabulary included in the textbook's texts, the above-mentioned statement was introduced. From the table above, a large part of the participants (45.50%) agreed that the textbook texts were convenient to the learners' level in terms of vocabulary choice, and (6.10%) strongly agreed too. On the other hand, (24%) and (3%) of the participants opted for either disagree or strongly disagree. A considerable percent (21.20%) of the respondents stated that they were neutral.

e. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook enable 3$^{rd}$ year learners to use their prior knowledge.

**Table 3.42:** *Teachers' Attitudes toward he Textbook' Texts and Learners' Prior Knowledge*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 5 | 15.20% |
| Agree | 15 | 45.50% |
| Neutral | 5 | 15.20% |
| Disagree | 6 | 18.20% |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

The aim behind the following statement was to figure out whether the reading texts used in *New Prospects* textbook enabled the learners to activate their prior knowledge. The results attained from the table reveal that the majority of the teachers give a positive attitude, in the sense that (45.50%) agree and (15.20%) strongly agree with the statement above. On the contrary, (18.20%) are against, and (6.10%) strongly disagree with it. (15.20%) are neutral.

f. The *New Prospects'* texts meet the learners' needs.

**Table 3.43:** *The New Prospects' Texts and the Learners' Needs*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 00 | 00% |
| Agree | 5 | 15.20% |
| Neutral | 9 | 27.30% |
| Disagree | 17 | 51.50% |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

To discover whether the reading materials used in *'New Prospects'* meet the learners' needs, the following statement was introduced *New Prospects'* texts meet the learners' needs. The results attained reveal that the majority of the sample teachers (51.50%) are against, and (6.10%) strongly disagree with this statement. Meanwhile, the rest of the participants either agree (15.20%) or neutral (27.30%).

g.  The *New Prospects'* texts meet the teachers' expectations

**Table 3.44:** *The New Prospects' Texts and the Teachers' Expectations*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 1 | 3% |
| Agree | 2 | 6.10% |
| Neutral | 6 | 18.20% |
| Disagree | 21 | 63.60% |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 9.10% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

The aim behind the following statement was to figure out whether the reading texts used in The *New Prospects* textbook reflected teachers' expectations. The results attained from the table reveal that the overwhelming majority are against, in the sense that (63.60%) disagree and (9.10%) strongly disagree. On the other hand, the rest of the subjects either agree (6.10%) or strongly agree (3%) with it. (18.20%) are neutral.

8-  What kind of teaching materials do you use in teaching reading?

**Table 3.45:** *Teaching Materials used in Reading Comprehension*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| New Prospects textbook | 2 | 6.10% |
| Adapted materials | 6 | 18.20% |
| Both | 28 | 84.80% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 33 | 100% |

This question was asked to figure out the most used teaching materials by teachers. According to the results displayed above, (6.10%) of the teachers rely only on the official textbook *'New Prospects'*, while (18.20%) prefer to neglect the textbook and suggest adapted materials. However, the overwhelming majority of the sample (84.80%) asserted that they used both the textbook and the adapted materials for teaching reading comprehension.

***Section two: Reading Comprehension***

9- Do you think that reading comprehension is important for developing EFL learners' language competence?

**Table 3.46:** *Teachers' Opinions toward Reading Comprehension*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 33 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 00% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

The question aimed to discover teachers' attitudes toward the importance of reading comprehension. All the teachers (100%) confirmed that reading comprehension was important for developing EFL learners' language competence. Depending on this result, we can say that both students and teachers agree that reading comprehension is a beneficial skill in improving learners' general language competence.

10- How do you proceed in the reading comprehension session?

**Table 3.47:** *Teacher's Procedure in Reading Comprehension Session*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| a. | 25 | 75.80% |
| b. | 25 | 75.80% |
| c. | 18 | 54.50% |
| d. | 17 | 51.50% |

a. Leading questions.
b. Using picture interaction.
c. Using pre-teaching vocabulary.
d. Identifying text structure and type.

This question was asked to figure out what activities employed by the teachers during the pre-reading stage. The results reveal that the procedures used by the sample do not vary a lot, since (28.12%) of the participants claimed that they tended to use all the above-mentioned strategies in their classrooms, and (21.87%) relied at least at one of them. According to the results obtained the most common used strategies to start a reading session with are picture interaction (75.80%), and leading questions (75.80%). (54.50%) of the participants reported that they preferred to use pre-teaching vocabulary to proceed in the reading comprehension session, while (51.50%) of them encouraged their students to identify text structure and type to predict the topic of the text. Other strategies mentioned by the teachers were activating their learners' background knowledge, and using real life examples. Pre-reading stage is very effective in ameliorating learners' reading comprehension since it aims at familiarizing students with the topic of the text. The present results indicate that teachers are aware of the pre-reading stage and its benefits.

11- When you teach reading comprehension, what teaching strategies do you use to help your learners understand the text?

**Table 3.48:** *Teachers' Help for Reading Comprehension*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| a. | 9 | 27.30% |
| b. | 10 | 30.30% |
| c. | 16 | 48.50% |
| d. | 16 | 48.50% |
| e. | 31 | 93.90% |

a. Using L1 for explanation.
b. Using only L2 for explanation.
c. Asking students to use dictionaries.
d. Asking students to reread the text to make sense.
e. Encouraging students to guess the meaning by using contextual clues.

This question is about the techniques that the informants usually use to help their learners understand a text. The question was accompanied by five suggestions. The results show that most teachers help students to improve their comprehension by applying different teaching strategies. According to their responses, the overwhelming majority of the informants (93.90%) emphasized on encouraging learners to use the context so that to guess the meaning. (48.50%) of them claimed that they asked their learners to reread the text to grasp the meaning. The same percent (48.50%) responded that they encouraged their learners to use the dictionary whenever they encountered unclear words. (30.30%) stated that they used only English to help their learners in understanding the reading material, while (27.30%) relied on translation for a better understanding. As can be noticed from these results, teachers rely on a

variety of teaching strategies to help their learners in the reading task mainly depending on their learners 'needs.

12- Do your learners use reading comprehension strategies when they are reading a text?

**Table 3.49:** *Learners' Use of Reading Comprehension Strategies*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 24 | 72.70% |
| No | 9 | 27.30% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Teachers' answers to this question were approximately all positive. (72.70%) affirmed that their pupils used reading comprehension strategies while reading a text, while (27.30%) said they did not.

13- Do you teach them how to use reading comprehension strategies when they read texts?

**Table 3.50:** *Training Learners to Use Reading Comprehension Strategies*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 25 | 75.80% |
| No | 8 | 24.20% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

As a consolidation to the preceding question, teachers were asked whether they taught their students to use reading comprehension strategies. The majority of them (75.80%) stated that they trained their learners to use reading comprehension strategies while reading. (24.20%) reported that they did not teach their students to

use them. This indicates that teachers try to encourage their students to read and to facilitate this task by teaching them different strategies of reading.

The teachers, who responded positively to this question, were further asked to state the strategies their learners used. Their responses show that most of the participants teach their learners to skim and scan the text, to activate their prior knowledge, to read for details, and to guess the meaning by using inferential clues. The least trained strategy is summarizing. Meanwhile, the respondents who reported that they did not teach their students to use strategies when reading a text related this mainly to class size (80%) learners' level (70%), and lack of time (60%). Still, none of the respondents picked out the option of 'lack of teachers' knowledge'. The table below displays the results.

**Table 3.51:** *The Reasons behind not Teaching Reading Strategies*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| a. | 8 | 80% |
| b. | 6 | 60% |
| c. | 7 | 70% |
| d. | 0 | 00% |
| e.   All of them | 1 | 10% |

a. Class size
b. Lack of time
c. Learners' level
d. Lack of teacher's knowledge

The results show that both learners and teachers are aware that reading comprehension strategies are effective and important in understanding a text. Most teachers affirmed that they trained their learners' to use reading strategies and insisted

that the majority of their learners were able to use them. Some of the sample learners denied this, although the majority of them (90.62%) claimed that they used these strategies while reading. This reflects that the informants are teaching their learners to use reading strategies inductively. However, the results also claim that most of the teachers train their learners to use global reading strategies that are commonly used in the first two reading stages (pre-reading and while-reading), neglecting other strategies, such as summarizing, that should be used in the final reading stage (post-reading) which may affect the learners' comprehension.

***Section three: Reading Comprehension Difficulties and Causes***

14- What are the difficulties your learners face when they are reading?

**Table 3.52:** *Teachers' Answers Regarding Learners' Reading Comprehension Difficulties*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| a. | 9 | 27.30% |
| b. | 15 | 45.50% |
| c. | 12 | 36.40% |
| d. | 12 | 36.40% |
| e. | 6 | 18.20% |
| f. | 5 | 15.20% |
| g. | 9 | 27.30% |
| h. | 3 | 9.10% |
| i.  All of them | 14 | 42.40% |

a.Syntactic problems.

b. Lexical problems.

c. Lack of background knowledge.

d. Lack of cultural knowledge.

e. Lack of reading comprehension strategies.

f. Lack of reading fluency

g. Text structure (e.g. description, narrative, expository…)

h. Difficulty of reading materials in the official textbook.

The question aimed to discover teachers' views concerning learners' difficulties in reading comprehension. According to the table above, most of the teachers (45.50%) reported that their learners were suffering from lexical problems. (36.40%) of them said that students' problems in comprehension were due to lack of prior knowledge and cultural knowledge. (27.30%) opted for syntactic problems and text structure. Meanwhile, (18.20%) of the participants stated that one of the issues that caused learners' poor comprehension was inadequate usage of reading strategies. (15.20%) of them, related reading comprehension' obstacles to the lack of reading fluency, whilst (9.10%) opted for the difficulty of reading materials. (42.40%) of the sample teachers, however, claimed that the learners faced all the problems mentioned before.

15- According to you, what are the causes of reading comprehension difficulties among the learners?

**Table 3.53:** *Causes of Reading Comprehension Failure*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| a. | 19 | 57.60% |
| b. | 13 | 27.30% |
| c. | 16 | 39.40% |
| d. | 9 | 18.20% |
| e. | 6 | 48.50% |
| f. | 6 | 3% |
| g. | 1 | 18.20% |
| h.   All of them | 12 | 36.40% |

a. Lack of reading habits.

   b. Lack of motivation for reading.

   c. Lack of time to provide an adequate reading practice

   d. Lack of reading comprehension strategies.

   e. Lack of vocabulary knowledge.

   f. Difficulty of reading materials.

   g. The shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach

The question aimed to identify the reasons behind pupils' difficulties in reading comprehension. According to the results, most of the teachers (57.60%) believed that not-reading culture was the main reason behind reading comprehension deficiency. (48.50%) related it to lack of vocabulary knowledge, while (39.40%) said it was because of lack of time to practice it inside the classroom. However; (27.30%) claimed that learners' reading comprehension problems were due of a lack of motivation to read. (18.20%) believed it was their fault because their teaching strategies were another obstacle for the learners to understand a text. The same percent (18.20%) stated that reading comprehension strategies used by the learners were inefficient which in turn affected their understanding. Only (3%) of the participants blamed the reading materials for learners' poor comprehension. (36.40%) of the teachers claimed that learners were facing reading comprehension problems because of all the factors that had been mentioned above.

16- As a teacher according to which of the following factors you assess your learners' reading comprehension?

**Table 3.54:** *Teachers' Assessment of Reading Comprehension*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|
| a. | 17 | 51.50% |
| b. | 18 | 54.50% |
| c. | 13 | 39.40% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| d. | 18 | 54.50% |
| e. | 10 | 30.30% |
| f. | 15 | 45.50% |
| g.  All of them | 11 | 33.30% |

a.  Understanding new vocabulary.

b.  Scanning and skimming the reading material

c.  Being able to infer according to the context expressed in the material.

d.  Being able to answer teacher's questions

e.  Being able to make a summary.

f.  Being able to answer textbook reading tasks appropriately.

The purpose of this question is to discover the techniques used by the teachers to assess their learners' reading comprehension. As for teachers' responses to this question, many of them (33.30%) indicated that they relied on all the factors mentioned-above to assess their learners. According to their answers, the frequently observed factors are learners' ability to scan and skim the text, and to answer the teacher's questions (54.50%). (51.50%) of the participants selected 'being able to Understand new vocabulary', (45.50%) opted for 'Being able to answer textbook reading tasks appropriately'. Additionally, (39.40%) of the informants stated that they relied on the ability of the learners to infer, and (33.30%) on their ability to make a summary of the text.  This means that teachers are aware of the importance of assessment in keeping the learners motivated.

17- Is the time advocated for reading sessions in the classroom is sufficient to develop learners' reading comprehension?

**Table 3.55:** *Teachers' Attitudes toward Time of Reading Sessions*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 4 | 12.10% |
| No | 29 | 87.90% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

The table above states that the majority of teachers (87.90%) said that the time devoted to teaching reading was not sufficient. Only (12.10%) of them claimed that it was enough. These results reveal that intensive reading inside the classroom is not practiced in an appropriate way which may impact negatively the learners' comprehension of the texts. As a result, the educational system needs to pay much attention to this issue to develop students' levels in English in general and in reading comprehension in particular.

18- Do you think that EFL teachers need more training on how to teach reading comprehension?

**Table 3.56:** *Teachers' Attitudes towards Training*

| Option | Number of answers | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 32 | 97% |
| No | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

Almost all teachers (97%) agreed on the fact that EFL teachers required more training and support to cope with the new teaching methods and strategies so that to improve the learnability and teachability of reading comprehension.

19- What are your solutions to improve learners' reading comprehension and overcome any difficulties?

The last question is purposely open in order to elicit teachers' proposals and suggestions that can be used to improve learners' reading comprehension proficiency. Thus, the results obtained fall into the following main points.

➢ Most of the teachers spot the light on the importance of developing reading habits. According to them, the more students read, the more they develop their reading comprehension proficiency. That is why a large part of the participants encourage extensive reading from early childhood.

➢ The majority of the teachers emphasize on the importance of adapting the teaching techniques. They suggest that teachers need more training on how to teach reading comprehension and reading strategies effectively. Furthermore, they need to update their teaching methods to go hand in hand with the principles of the CBA approach.

➢ The official textbook's themes and texts, according to many informants, needed to be adapted in a way that meets learners' needs and interests.

➢ The participants claim that the time allocated for teaching reading comprehension is not sufficient and it needs to be augmented in order to enable the learners to practice reading. In that way they would also be able to train their learners on other important reading strategies like summarizing.

The suggestions above show that EFL students can develop their reading comprehension through many ways under the help and guidance of their teachers.

### 3.2.2.1. Summary of the Results of the Teachers' Questionnaires

The findings of the present questionnaire indicate that the majority of the target teachers have spent between five to ten years in teaching third years secondary school classes i.e. they have enough experience in the teaching field. Therefore, this can help the researcher to gain insightful answers. Somewhat similarly to the results obtained

from the pupils' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire results reveal that learners' main struggle in reading comprehension is due to inadequate vocabulary and grammar knowledge, lack of prior and cultural knowledge, and the inability of recognizing text structure. These matters also come along with a lack of reading strategies, a lack of reading fluency, and the complexity of reading materials. Most of the participants relate their pupils' inadequate reading comprehension mainly to lack of reading habits, lack of vocabulary knowledge, and lack of time. Since many of them blame the educational system for not allotting sufficient sessions to teach reading. Additionally, some of the subjects blame themselves that their teaching techniques are not good enough for improving students' reading comprehension, while others blame the learners for not being motivated enough to read.

The first section of the questionnaire was devoted to teachers' views towards the Competency-Based approach that is applied in teaching English, and the official *'New Prospects'* textbook. Most of the participants believe that the CBA is a convenient approach. However, for some of them, implementing it inside their classes is not an easy task. (18.20%) of the participants' answers gotten from question (6) claim that some problems prevent its adequate implementation such as lack of time, lack of training for teachers, the large number of pupils per class, and students' different levels. Concerning the *'New Prospects'* textbook, the results show that the majority of informants express a generally positive attitude towards it. The teachers believe that the principles of the CBA are reflected in the reading tasks found in *'New Prospects'*, in the sense that, the reading tasks show the learners how to cope with the reading passages. They also state that these reading texts are appropriate to learners' levels in terms of difficulty and vocabulary choice; furthermore they enable the learners to activate their prior knowledge. However, they collectively said that the textbook does

not translate the interests and the needs of students and the expectations of the teachers in teaching reading which in a way or another impacts learners' motivation to read. This may also explain why the majority of the informants (84.80%) prefer not to rely entirely on the textbook. Lack of adequate teaching materials may lead teachers to traditionally teach and students to passively receive which in turn affects the learners' reading comprehension. For this reason, it is preferable to take into account the level, the capacities, and the needs of learners when designing a textbook.

Based on the results of the second section, all teachers agree that reading comprehension is very important in ameliorating learners' language competence, but at the same time, it is challenging for many of them. It is also noticeable that the pre-reading stage is strongly present in the teachers' answers. This means that respondents are aware of the importance of this stage in making the next stages more easily adaptable by the students. Moreover, the teachers tend to rely on a variety of teaching strategies to help the learners when they do not understand a text. According to the results, the overwhelming majority of them emphasize on encouraging the learners to guess the meaning by using inferential clues, a fact that is confirmed by many of the sample leaners (43.90%). Nevertheless, inferring is considered to be one of the least used strategies by them. In addition to this, most of the teachers confirm that they train their learners to use global reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, reading for details, and predicting, and tend to neglect other effective strategies such as summarizing which has a quite positive effect on learners' comprehension. Some of the teachers relate this to factors like large and crowded classrooms, learners' levels and lack of time since (79.70%) of them states that reading sessions are not enough. Concerning assessment, it is noticeable that no one of the teachers relies on one single technique in assessing learners' reading comprehension because they are

conscious that the application of multiple strategies results in better teaching achievements. The researcher can conclude from these claims that teachers tell their learners about the strategies and how to use them instead of giving them concrete training in a practical way. This in turn makes reading strategies another barrier of reading comprehension. In the same line of thought, (97%) of the participants believe in the need of extra training on how to teach reading comprehension under the CBA approach since (27.30%) think that the shift from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach is one of the reasons of reading comprehension deficiency. As a result, teachers' methods of teaching and the materials presented in the textbook may be one of the factors that influence learners' motivation to read. For this reason, training and workshops are highly needed and recommended to cope with the difficulties teachers may face while teaching reading. Concerning the proposals suggested by the teachers to develop the students' reading comprehension, they propose encouraging reading habits, organizing more seminars for teachers, adapting the official textbook, and finally assigning extra teaching hours to teach reading.

## 3.3. Recommendations

Based on the results obtained from the two previous questionnaires of the present study, here are some pedagogical recommendations concerning techniques for teaching reading comprehension in EFL classrooms to help both teachers and third-year Algerian secondary school.

### 3.3.1. Teaching Reading Comprehension for EFL Learners

Reading comprehension is an important skill in language teaching and learning. It enables the learners to develop the knowledge of the language, and the structure of different written texts in English. This section offers some suggestions that may help EFL teachers to improve their learners' reading comprehension.

➢ **Motivation:** One of the factors that contribute to reading comprehension is motivation. According to Guthie (1996) a learner who is instantly motivated, builds knowledge, uses comprehension strategies, and interacts socially to learn from the text. Henceforth, effective teachers should support their learners' motivation in reading. One reason to do so is that motivated students want to understand text content fully; therefore they process information deeply and gain proficiency in reading comprehension. Since teachers are the only ones who know their pupils' needs, abilities, and interests, they should be creative, and selective in seeking interesting topics, and different types of texts that increase learners' motivation. In other words, they should not apply the official syllabus blindly.

➢ **Activities Used to Teach Reading Comprehension:** besides developing learners' reading skills, teachers should provide them with a series of reading comprehension strategies that are related to their learning styles and needs. Hence, they need to use suitable activities that help learners to apply these strategies. Unlike the traditional materials, reading tasks within CBA involves three stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stage.

a. **Pre-reading stage:** this stage aims at familiarizing students with the topic of the text. Graves, Juel, & Graves (2004) summarized pre-reading activities as a motivation for reading, activation and construction of background knowledge, relation to the lives, and a preview of the vocabulary. In this stage, teachers may create discussions about the titles, pictures, identifying text structure, and type to predict the topic of the text.

b. **While- reading stage:** this phase is the most active among the three phases. Its purpose is to enhance learners' linguistic and cognitive competence. Learners would be able, for instance, to differentiate between main ideas and

supporting details, to infer the meaning of the unknown words. Teachers may use the activities of true/false, table filling, reference and inference questions.

c. **Post-reading stage:** Rivas (1999) indicated post-reading activities assist readers to reinforce what they have read and how readers internalize the text. There is a number of post-reading activities that enhance learning comprehension through the use of writing summarizes, fill in the gaps, or imagining a different ending.

Furthermore, reading is among the skills that can be easily maintained after having left school. Thus, teachers should raise their students' awareness of reading skill and its importance. They can make a small change in their classroom routine by organizing brief reading sessions, setting up a book reading club, and providing them with a reading list to do. Designing a magazine can keep students interested in reading and learning more vocabulary.

## 3.3.2. Developing Learners' Awareness of Reading Comprehension

Teachers should make their learners understand that reading is very important for their educational achievements, and in their lives in so many aspects. One of these educational achievements is reading comprehension. Therefore, the more students read, the more their reading comprehension would be fostered and developed. This section offers some suggestions that may help EFL learners to improve their reading comprehension. For this, EFL learners should:

➢ **Develop a purpose for reading:** for a better understanding and comprehension, EFL learners should have a certain motivation and purpose to read. They need to ask themselves why they are reading, what they want to learn from it, and what they have learned. According to Schiefele (1999) focusing more specifically on

the concept of reader interest is a significant predictor of comprehension and learning from texts.

➢ **Promote extensive reading:** the best way to improve reading is by reading. Thus, EFL learners need to strengthen their reading comprehension through external factors other than those taking place in the classroom. One of these factors is extensive reading. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002) extensive reading is reading "large quantities of materials that are within learners' linguistic competence" (p. 21). It helps the learners to keep interested and motivated by reading either in the classroom or at home. Additionally, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) stated that the pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2.

➢ **Enrich vocabulary knowledge**: the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has been demonstrated in second language contexts. Learners can acquire new vocabulary through reading different materials such as books, magazines, and novels, or through consulting dictionaries wherever they doubt a word.

It is also highly recommended to rise time allocated for teaching reading and to devote extra sessions to deal with extensive reading. Additionally, teachers must receive training on exactly how to teach reading comprehension strategies. In conclusion, further researches are recommended in order to investigate other techniques and strategies that can help EFL learners improve their reading comprehension.

## 3.4. Limitations of the Study

The present study has encountered some problems which limited the research findings and prevent a deep investigation. One of these limitations is the use of questionnaires for data collection. The study relies on the attitudes and viewpoints of both teachers and pupils of third-year secondary school. Since questionnaires are self-reported, the participants' answers may not reflect reality. Consequently, observation could have been more effective in investigating pupils' reading comprehension difficulties, and how reading comprehension is taught and learned. Additionally, the sample used in this study may be judged to be insignificant which is mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Difficulties in collecting back data and leaving some questions without being answered by the pupils' part is another problem.

Further studies to overcome these limitations are recommended. By investigating accurately the reading comprehension difficulties and causes, methods of teaching reading comprehension in the EFL classroom, and approaches to improve pupils' performance; the present research problem would stand as a spring-board for new research and completion of this research.

**Conclusion**

The present chapter has been designed to include and describe the empirical phase of this study. It described the research design, and the research instruments that were the basis of the study. Moreover, it was dedicated to analyze the data gathered by the pupils' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire and to interpret the responses, views, and opinions of both. The researcher also provided some suggestions and recommendations to enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension skills.

## General Conclusion

Teaching English remains a challenging goal in Algerian context. With that stated, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate and identify the major reading comprehension difficulties encountered by Algerian EFL students with a particular reference to Algerian third-year secondary school students at Saadi Tahar Harat school in Constantine .Moreover, it probed the extent to which the official English textbook *New Prospects* addresses third-year secondary school students' reading comprehension difficulties

In order to undertake the current investigation, the researcher presented first a relevant theoretical background. The first chapter dealt with the different aspects related to reading comprehension. The second chapter provided an overview of the Competency-Based approach, and the most commonly used approaches methods of language teaching. It also tackles the process of teaching reading under the CBA. The third chapter, which is the practical part of the study, dealt with data analysis and interpretation of teachers and students questionnaires.

The results gathered from students questionnaire proved that vocabulary is among the major obstacles to successful reading comprehension since (50%) of the examined population always faced this problem while reading English texts. The students' answers also claim that they lack the appropriate linguistic package needed to study English at secondary school level which in turn limits their comprehension. Moreover, (35.10%) of the subjects acknowledged that they did not have a clear idea about how the texts are structured. Accordingly, it seems that the difficulties they encounter while reading do not result from the information they rather result from the organization of the information in the text. Concerning the answers obtained from the

teachers, the researcher notices a mismatch between pupils' claims and what the teachers provided in the questionnaire. According to the teachers, the major difficulties faced by their third-year students are inadequate vocabulary knowledge, insufficient prior knowledge, and cultural knowledge which indicates teachers' lack of awareness in addressing their learners' reading comprehension difficulties which is a problem in itself.

Moreover, both samples reported that the major factors behind reading comprehension deficiency were attributed to students' lack of vocabulary knowledge which was mainly due to not-reading or not-wanting to read culture. Another factor, according to them, is the insufficient time devoted for intensive and extensive reading. (79.70%) of the students indicated that the time devoted to the reading sessions was not enough. In the same way, (87.90%) of the teachers confirmed this fact.

In addition to that , both of the research samples' answers in section one illustrate that the reading texts introduced in the official textbook *New Prospects* are not adequate to suit neither the students' needs and interests nor the teachers' objectives and expectations. (39.10%) of the examined students claimed that reading texts were one of the obstacles that hindered their understanding. For this reason, it is high time curriculum designers and syllabus designers thought about selecting themes and reading materials that suit third-year students' needs and promote their cognitive abilities.

The data analysis further revealed that both students and teachers are aware of the importance of using reading comprehension strategies for comprehending the text since (90.62%) of the learners pointed out that they employed them, and (72.70%) of

the teachers affirmed this. However, it is noticed that only global strategies such as previewing are used quite extensively by the students. The majority of the students appear to be unable to make logical inferences or to summarize reading texts.

Furthermore, teachers' questionnaire findings show that some teachers do not teach their learners how to use reading strategies while others neglect very important strategies such as summarizing. Only one teacher indicated that he trained his learners to use summarizing as a strategy to understand the text. For this reason, explicit teaching of reading strategies can bring effective solutions to reading comprehension failure. To sum up, students need to repair their comprehension and this would not be accomplished unless they have the ability to be strategic in their learning process.

Finally, it should be stated that this research work is a tentative and modest contribution which needs much elaboration. Indeed, more research needs to be done to find out the reading comprehension difficulties faced by the Algerian EFL learners and ways to improve their reading comprehension competences.

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**Appendices**

## Appendix A

## Questionnaire for Secondary School Students

Dear pupils,

   You are kindly invited to take part in this research through filling in the questionnaire below. The present questionnaire aims at identifying the problems that pupils of third year secondary school classes face while reading in English. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a master degree in applied linguistics. Please note that the information you provide here will remain confidential and used only to achieve the aims of the present research. All what is required from you is to respond sincerely to each item.

Please, tick the appropriate box/boxes, and make full statements when necessary.

                                        Thank you in advance for your cooperation.


*General Information*

1. *Gender*:          ☐ Male                    ☐      Female

2. *Age*:

3. *Branch of your study in secondary school education:*

Foreign Languages  ☐      Literature and Philosophy  ☐   Exp.Sc / Math/ TM/ GE      ☐

4.  How would you evaluate your level in English?

  Very good      ☐ Good            ☐        Average          ☐      Poor        ☐

*Section One: Reading Skill*

*5.*  Do you like reading in English?

Yes          ☐              No          ☐

6.  If yes, how often do you read?

Always          ☐      Sometimes      ☐   Rarely      ☐          Never  ☐

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

7. What type of materials do you read?

Newspapers ☐          Magazines ☐          Storybooks ☐

Others, mention please: …………………………………………………………..

*8.* What is your purpose in reading in English? (You can tick more than one answer).

**a.** To improve your level in English. ☐

**b.** To read for pleasure. ☐

**c.** For academic purposes ☐

**d.** To enrich your vocabulary knowledge. ☐

**e.** To learn a new culture. ☐

**f.** All of them ☐

### *Section Two: "New Prospects" Textbook*

9. Below are statements about the official textbook *'New Prospects'*. Put a cross (×) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

f. The textbook of English *'New Prospects'* is convenient.

Strongly agree ☐          Agree ☐ Neutral ☐          Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

g. The *New Prospects* textbook's reading texts are easy to understand.

Strongly agree ☐          Agree ☐ Neutral ☐          Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

h. The topics of the reading texts in *'New Prospects'* textbook are interesting.

Strongly agree ☐          Agree ☐ Neutral ☐          Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

i. The *New Prospects* textbook's reading texts help you to enrich your vocabulary.
Strongly agree ☐          Agree ☐ Neutral ☐          Disagree ☐
Strongly disagree ☐

j.  The *New Prospects* textbook's reading texts enable you to use your prior knowledge.

Strongly agree ☐    Agree    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐    Strongly disagree ☐

k.  The *'New Prospects'* texts reflect what you want to learn.

Strongly agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

***Section Three: Reading Comprehension***

**10.** Do you think that reading comprehension is important for developing your language competence?

Yes ☐    No ☐

11. During the process of reading, do you understand every single word?

Yes ☐    No ☐

12. How does your teacher help you, when you do not understand the text? (You can tick more than one answer)

a.  Using L1 for explanation. ☐

b.  Using only L2 for explanation. ☐

c.  Asking you to use dictionaries ☐

d.  Asking you to reread the text to make sense. ☐

e.  Encouraging you to guess the meaning by using contextual clues. ☐

13. While reading, what kind of reading comprehension strategies do you follow? (You can tick more than one answer)

**a.**  Before I read the text, I use the title and the illustrations to predict the content. ☐

**b.**  I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization. ☐

**c.**  I read slowly but carefully for details. ☐

**d.**  I link the content of the text with what I know. ☐

**e.**  I skip unknown words that I could not clarify if I understand the gist. ☐

**f.** Pay attention to indirectly stated ideas and try to make inferences about them. ☐

**g.** I try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph. ☐

☐

**h.** I write summarizes to reflect on key ideas in the text.

☐

**i.** None of them

14. Does your teacher train you to use reading comprehension strategies?

Yes ☐          No ☐

*Section four: Reading Comprehension Difficulties and Causes*

15. Below are statements about problems faced by leaners while reading. Please, put a cross (×) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on how often you face a given problem in your reading (always, sometimes, rarely, never).

f. I find problems with unfamiliar vocabulary in the text.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

g. Comprehending what I read becomes difficult because of long and complex sentences.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

h. I do not comprehend what I read because of lack of background knowledge about the subject.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

i. I do not understand cultural items in the text.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

j. I do not recognize the text structure (e.g. description, narrative, expository…)

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

k. I do not comprehend a text because I do not know how to use reading comprehension strategies.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐ Rarely          ☐ Never          ☐

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

l.  I take a lot of time to finish what I read.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐          Rarely ☐          Never ☐

m. I do not understand what I read because the reading texts are complicated.

Always ☐          Sometimes ☐          Rarely ☐          Never ☐

16. What are the causes behind your reading comprehension difficulties? (You can tick more than one answer)

a.  Lack of reading habits.                    ☐

b.  Lack of motivation for reading.            ☐

c.  Lack of time to practice reading.          ☐

d.  Lack of reading comprehension strategies.  ☐

e.  Lack of vocabulary knowledge.              ☐

f.  Difficulty of reading materials.           ☐

g.  The teaching method adopted by your teacher. ☐

h.  All of them.                               ☐

17.  Does your teacher assess your reading comprehension?

Yes ☐          No ☐

18. Is the time advocated to reading sessions in the classroom is sufficient to improve your reading comprehension?

Yes ☐          No ☐

**Thank You for Your Cooperation.**

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

## استبيان لتلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي

أعزائي التلاميذ، أنتم مدعوون للمشاركة في هذا البحث عن طريق ملء الاستبيان الموجود في الأسفل. الهدف الرئيسي لهذا الاستبيان هو تحديد المشاكل التي يواجهها تلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي في فهم النصوص بالإنجليزية. أنوه أن المعلومات التي ستقدمونها ستبقى سرية و سيتم استعمالها من أجل هذه الدراسة فقط. المطلوب منكم هو الاجابة عن الأسئلة بصدق و موضوعية.

من فضلكم اختاروا الخانة أو الخانات المناسبة.

### *معلومات عامة*

1. .الجنس: ذكر ☐ أنثى ☐

2. السن: ..............

3. الشعبة: لغات اجنبية ☐ آداب وفلسفة ☐ علوم تجريبية/ رياضيات/ تقني رياضي/ تسيير واقتصاد ☐

4. ما هو تقييمك لمستواك في اللغة الانجليزية؟ جيد ☐ حسن ☐ متوسط ☐ ضعيف ☐

### *الجزء الاول: مهارة القراءة*

5. هل تحب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐

6. اذا كانت اجابتك نعم، كم من الوقت تقضي في القراءة؟ دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

7. ما هو نوع النصوص التي تحب مطالعتها؟ جرائد ☐ مجالات ☐ قصص ☐

أنواع أخرى أذكرها من فضلك...............................

8. ما هو هدفك من القراءة باللغة الانجليزية؟
   أ. لرفع مستواك في اللغة الانجليزية. ☐
   ب. من اجل الترفيه. ☐
   ت. من أجل التحصيل المدرسي. ☐
   ث. اثراء رصيدك من المفردات. ☐
   ج. الاطلاع على ثقافة مغايرة. ☐
   ح. جميع ما ذكر سابقا. ☐

### الجزء الثاني: الكتاب المدرسي*'New Prospects'*

9. العبارات التالية حول الكتاب المدرسي. اختر الخانة/الخانات التي تناسبك أكثر.
   أ. الكتاب المدرسي'*New Prospects* مناسب.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐ غير موافق و بشدة ☐

ب. النصوص في الكتاب المدرسي'New Prospects' سهلة الفهم.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐

غير موافق و بشدة ☐

ت. مواضيع النصوص في الكتاب المدرسي'New Prospects' مثيرة للاهتمام.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐

غير موافق و بشدة ☐

ث. النصوص الموجودة في الكتاب المدرسي'New Prospects' تساعدني في اثراء المفردات اللغوية.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐

غير موافق و بشدة ☐

ج. النصوص الموجودة في الكتاب المدرسي'New Prospects' تمكنني من استرجاع و استعمال معلوماتي القبلية.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐

غير موافق و بشدة ☐

ح. النصوص الموجودة في الكتاب المدرسي'New Prospects' تعكس ماذا أريد أن أتعلم.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐

غير موافق و بشدة ☐

**الجزء الثالث: فهم النص (اختر الخانة/الخانات التي تناسبك أكثر)**

10. هل تعتقد أن عملية القراءة مهارة مهمة لتطوير قدراتك اللغوية؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

11. أثناء عملية القراءة، هل تستطيع فهم كل الكلمات الموجودة في النص؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

12. كيف يقوم الأستاذ بمساعدتك عندما لا تستطيع فهم النص؟

أ. يستعمل اللغة العربية للشرح ☐

ب. يستعمل اللغة الإنجليزية فقط للشرح ☐

ت. يطلب منك استعمال القاموس ☐

ث. يطلب منك إعادة قراءة النص لفهمه ☐

ج. يشجعك على تخمين المعنى العام ☐

13. أثناء عملية القراءة ، ماهي الاستراتيجيات التي تتبعها لفهم النص؟

أ. قبل أن أقرأ النص، أستعمل العنوان و الصور لأتوقع محتوى النص. ☐

ب. أقرأ النص بسرعة لأخد فكرة عن خصائص النص كطول النص و تنظيم الفقرات ☐

ت. أقرأ النص ببطء و دقة وأركز على التفاصيل. ☐

ث. أربط محتوى النص بمعلوماتي القبلية حول موضوع النص. ☐

ج. أتخطى الكلمات الصعبة إذا استطعت فهم الفكرة الأساسية. ☐

ح. أنتبه للأفكار غير المباشرة في النص للوصول الى المعنى ☐

خ. أحاول أن أفهم الفكرة العامة لكل فقرة في النص ☐

د. أكتب ملخص حول الأفكار الأساسية للنص. ☐

ذ. لا أستعمل أي استراتيجية. ☐

14. هل يقوم أستاذك بتدريبك على استعمال استراتيجيات فهم النص؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

**الجزء الرابع: صعوبات فهم النص و أسبابها (اختر الخانة/الخانات التي تناسبك أكثر)**

15. أثناء قراءتك للنص، كم من مرة تواجهك الصعوبات التالية في فهم النص؟

أ. أجد صعوبات في فهم الكلمات الغير مألوفة الموجودة في النص.

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

ب. فهم النص يصبح أصعب بسبب الجمل الطويلة و الجمل المركبة.

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

ت. لا أستطيع فهم النص لعدم امتلاكي لمعلومات قبلية حول موضوع النص.

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

ث. لا أستطيع فهم النص لعدم امتلاك خلفية ثقافية حول الموضوع.

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

ج. لا أستطيع تمييز نمط النص(حجاجي/ تفسيري...).

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

ح. لا أستطيع فهم النص لأني لا أعرف كيفية استعمال استراتيجيات فهم النص.

دائما ☐ احيانا ☐ نادرا ☐ أبدا ☐

خ. آخذ وقتا طويلا لإنهاء قراءة النص.

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

أبدا ☐          نادرا ☐          احيانا ☐          دائما ☐

د.   لا أستطيع فهم ما أقرأ لأن مواضيع النصوص معقدة و صعبة.

أبدا ☐          نادرا ☐          احيانا ☐          دائما ☐

16. ما هي الأسباب التي تؤدي لعدم فهمك للنص؟

أ.   قلة المطالعة و القراءة   ☐

ب.  عدم وجوددافع للقراءة   ☐

ت.  عدم وجود وقت كاف لممارسة القراءة ☐

ث.  عدم معرفة استعمال استراتيجيات فهم النص ☐

ج.  نقص في قاموس اللغوي( المفردات)   ☐

ح.  صعوبة مواضيع النصوص   ☐

خ.  طريقة التدريس المتبعة من طرف الأستاذ   ☐

د.   جميع ما ذكر سابقا   ☐

17. هل يقوم أستاذك بتقييم فهمك للنص؟

نعم   ☐          لا   ☐

18. هل تعتبر الوقت المحدد لدراسة النصوص في القسم كاف لتطوير مهاراتك في فهم النصوص؟

نعم   ☐          لا   ☐

**شكرا لتعاونكم.**

## Appendix C

## Questionnaire for Secondary School Teachers

Dear colleagues,

You are kindly invited to take part in this research by filling in the questionnaire below. The present questionnaire aims at identifying the problems that pupils of third-year secondary school classes face while reading in English. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a master's degree in applied linguistics. Please note that the information you provide here will remain confidential and used only to achieve the aims of the present research. All that is required from you is to respond sincerely to each item.

Please, tick the appropriate box/boxes, and make full statements when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

*General Information:*

1. *Gender*:       Male       ☐       Female.       ☐

2. *Age*:

Less than 30 years ☐                30-50 years ☐                51 and above ☐

*Teaching experience*:

3. How long have you been teaching?

Less than 5 years ☐        between 5-10 years ☐        between 10-15 years ☐

more than 15 years        ☐

4. Have you been teaching third year secondary school learners?

☐ Yes                ☐ No

If yes, for how many years?

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

Less than 5 years ☐        between 5-10 years ☐        between 10-15 years ☐

more than 15 years ☐

*Section One: The Competency Based -Approach in 'New Prospects' Textbook*

5. How do you find the Competency- Based Approach?

Convenient ☐        Complicated ☐        Inconvenient ☐

6. Do you actually apply this approach in your class?

Yes ☐        No ☐

If no, please justify: …………………………………………………………...

7. Below are statements about the official textbook *'New Prospects'*. Put a cross (×) in one of the boxes following each statement depending on the agreement scale (strongly agree- strongly disagree).

a. The principles of the CBA are reflected in the reading tasks of the *'New Prospects'*.

Strongly agree ☐        Agree ☐        Neutral ☐        Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

b. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3rd year learners' level in terms of difficulty.

Strongly agree ☐        Agree ☐        Neutral ☐        Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

c. The texts provided by the '*New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3rd year learners' level in terms of topics choice.

Strongly agree ☐        Agree ☐ Neutral ☐        Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

d. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook are convenient to 3rd year learners' level in terms of vocabulary choice.

Strongly agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

e. The texts provided by the *'New Prospects'* textbook enable 3$^{rd}$ year learners to use their prior knowledge.

Strongly agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

f. The *'New Prospects'* texts meet the learners' needs.

Strongly agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

g. The *'New Prospects'* texts meet the teachers' expectations

Strongly agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

8. What kind of teaching materials do you use in teaching reading?

*'New Prospects'* Textbook ☐    Adapted materials ☐    Both ☐

***Section two: Reading Comprehension***

9. Do you think that reading comprehension is important for developing EFL learners' language competence?

Yes ☐    No ☐

10. How do you proceed in the reading comprehension session?

a. Leading questions. ☐

b. Using picture interaction. ☐

c. Using pre-teaching vocabulary. ☐

d. Identifying text structure and type. ☐

11. When you teach reading comprehension, what teaching strategies do you use to help your learners understand the text?

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

a. Using L1 for explanation. ☐

b. Using only L2 for explanation. ☐

c. Asking students to use dictionaries. ☐

d. Asking students to reread the text to make sense. ☐

e. Encouraging students to guess the meaning by using contextual clues. ☐

12. Do your learners use reading comprehension strategies when they are reading a text?

Yes ☐          No ☐

13. Do you teach them how to use reading comprehension strategies when they read texts?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

If yes, state any: ……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

If no, explain why.

a. Class size ☐

b. Lack of time ☐

c. Learners' level ☐

d. Lack of teacher's knowledge ☐

e. All of them ☐

*Section three: Reading Comprehension Difficulties and Causes*

14. What are the difficulties your learners face when they are reading?

a. Syntactic problems. ☐

b. Lexical problems. ☐

c. Lack of background knowledge. ☐

d. Lack of cultural knowledge. ☐

e.  Lack of reading comprehension strategies.     ☐

f.  Lack of reading fluency     ☐

g.  Text structure (e.g. description, narrative, expository…)     ☐

h.  Difficulty of reading materials in the official textbook.     ☐

All of them     ☐

15. According to you, what are the causes of reading comprehension difficulties among the learners?

a.  Lack of reading habits.     ☐

b.  Lack of motivation for reading.     ☐

c.  Lack of time to provide an adequate reading practice     ☐

d.  Lack of reading comprehension strategies.     ☐

e.  Lack of vocabulary knowledge.     ☐

f.  Difficulty of reading materials.     ☐

g.  The shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach     ☐

All of them     ☐

16. As a teacher according to which of the following factors you assess your learners' reading comprehension?

a.  Understanding new vocabulary.     ☐

b.  Scanning and skimming the reading material.     ☐

c.  Being able to infer according to the context expressed in the material.     ☐

d.  Being able to answer teacher's questions     ☐

e.  Being able to make a summary.     ☐

f.  Being able to answer textbook reading tasks appropriately.     ☐

g.  All of them.     ☐

17. Is the time advocated for reading sessions in the classroom is sufficient to develop learners' reading comprehension?

Yes ☐          No          ☐

18. Do you think that EFL teachers need more training on how to teach reading comprehension?

☐          Yes          ☐          No

19. What are your solutions to improve learners' reading comprehension and overcome any difficulties?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

**Thank You for Your Cooperation.**

# THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

## Résumé

La présente étude a été effectuée pour souligner les différentes difficultés relatives à la compréhension des textes que rencontrent les élèves des classes terminales, et aussi les différents facteurs qui y contribuent. Pour cela, le chercheur a choisi le Lycée Saadi Tahar Harrat -Constantine- pour réaliser ses recherches. Les études portent aussi sur l'importance du manuel scolaire dans la remédiation aux différentes lacunes chez les apprenants, qui les empêchent à bien comprendre les textes. Pour répondre à toutes ces interrogations, un questionnaire était proposé aux élèves et aux enseignants. Le premier est adressé à soixante-quatre élèves du même lycée susmentionné. Quant au deuxième, il est destiné à vingt-trois enseignants de différents établissements. Les résultats de ce travail indique que les lacunes les plus répandues dans la compréhension des textes sont relatives non seulement à des insuffisances lexicales et grammaticales, mais aussi à l'incapacité à distinguer les différents types des textes. D'autre part, ces résultats révèlent que le problème de la compréhension des textes trouve son explication dans plusieurs causes dont le manque de lecture, l'insuffisance du bagage linguistique et le manque de temps consacré à la lecture en classe. Les résultats montrent, en outre, que les textes proposés dans le manuel scolaire et les différentes stratégies d'enseignement basées sur l'approche par les compétences ont un impact négatif sur les compétences de la lecture /compréhension des textes chez les apprenants. Finalement, la présente étude comporte certaines propositions, voire conseils et orientations afin d'expliquer comment enseigner l'anglais comme une langue étrangère.

**Mots Clés :** la compréhension des textes, les problèmes de la compréhension des textes, les facteurs, l'anglais comme une langue étrangère, les élèves des classes terminales.

# ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد المشاكل التي يواجهها تلاميذ السنوات النهائية في فهم النصوص و الأسباب المؤدية لها. و قد اختار الباحث مؤسسة سعدي الطاهر حراث بقسنطينة كوسيلة للدراسة. كما تضمنت الدراسة بحثا حول فعالية الكتاب المدرسي في مواجهة الصعوبات التي يواجهها التلاميذ في فهم النصوص. للإجابة عن هذه التساؤلات تم الاستعانة باستبيان وجه للتلاميذ و آخر وجه للأساتذة. استبيان التلاميذ شمل أربعة و ستون تلميذ من ثانوية سعدي طاهر حرات بقسنطينة كعينة بحث فيحين سلم الاستبيان الثاني لثلاثة و عشرون أستاذ من ثانويات مختلفة بقسنطينة. النتائج أظهرت أن المشاكل الأكثر شيوعا في فهم النصوص هي المشاكل المرتبطة بنقص المعرفة المعجمية و المعرفة النحوية و عدم قدرة التلاميذ على تمييز أنواع النصوص. من ناحية أخرى كشفت النتائج أن الأسباب الرئيسية في مشاكل التلاميذ في فهم النصوص هي قلة المطالعة، نقص في القاموس اللغوي و عدم وجود وقت كاف لممارسة القراءة داخل القسم. كما توصلت النتائج أن النصوص المقدمة في الكتاب المدرسي و طريقة التدريس المتبعة من طرف الأساتذة عن طريق المقاربة بالكفاءات تؤثر سلبيا على مهارات التلميذ في فهم النص. |أخيرا تضمنت هذه الدراسة بعض من الاقتراحات و التوصيات حول كيفية تدريس القراءة لمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

*الكلمات المفتاحية*: فهم النص، صعوبات فهم النص، الأسباب، متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، السنوات النهائية.