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Title

**The Effects of Text Syntactic Complexity on EFL
Learners' Reading Comprehension:**

**The Case of Second-year EFL Learners at Biskra
University**

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Declaration

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Dedications

*"No one walks alone, and when you are walking on the
Journey of life...you have to start to thank those that joined you,
Walked beside you, and helped you along the way." David H. Hooker*

I would to dedicate this works

*To the candle extinguished before I matured to the soul of my
dear mother may she rest in peace.*

To my paradise in the afterlife, the cause of my happiness,

The click of my eye, my father.

To the soul of my father of my brothers and sister

To Mr. Brahim Douida, and Mr. Kamel Harhoura.

To the light that shines my shadow to my dear sisters Faiza, Loubna,

And Aouatif.

To my cindy in life, my brothers Mohamed, Nadji and Oussama.

To my grandmother,

To my sisters in law, and all their families.

To Ilhem and Ahlem.

To my nieces Farah, Siradj and Aya.

To my nephews Abdennour and Samir

To all my nice family members.

To all my relatives, and my lovely friends whom I really love.

To all my teachers and everyone who wished for me success

Thank you all.

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Thank you

Abstract

Most of the Algerian EFL learners are challenged with the syntactic complexity of the given texts during their English class, which is influencing particularly their reading comprehension level. Therefore, the main objective of this accurate study is to explore the effect of the syntactic text complexity on the EFL learners' reading comprehension. Accordingly, it is assumed that if the texts, which are provided to the learners during the English class, are constructed with complex syntactic structures, thus the learners' reading comprehension will be affected. Methodologically, in order to validate the present hypothesis, a qualitative method is administered under this descriptive study for collecting and analyzing the gathered information. Besides, two data collection tools are chosen to verify the validation of this assumption. A students' questionnaire was designed and distributed online on Facebook group to forty L2 EFL volunteers to gather their attitudes and relevant data about their personal experience with reading comprehension difficulties. Moreover, the teachers' questionnaire was distributed to seven teachers at Mohamed Khidher Biskra University to collect their insights and attitudes toward the factors that affect their learners' reading comprehension. Both of the data collecting tools' findings presented (proved) that text complex syntactic structures are affecting EFL students' reading comprehension process. Hence, all the findings that resulted from this study investigated the mentioned hypothesis truth. Thus, the syntactic text complexity affects negatively the EFL learners' reading comprehension.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

CI: Coordination Indices

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learners

SVR: Simple View of Reading

RC: Reading Comprehension

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

e.g.: *exempli gratia* (for example).

Et al.: *et alia* (and others).

Etc: *et cetera* (and so on, and so forth).

i.e.: *id est*. (in other words).

L2: Second Language.

Q: Question.

p: Page.

&: And.

% :Percentage.

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الملخص

General Introduction

Introduction

The English language mastery has become an educational demand for the EFL learners due to its dominance in the world. The language acquisition process cannot be complete without reading skill because it is considered from the basic elements of comprehension and reaching knowledge. That is to say, the good reader is the one who has the ability to understand sentences and structures of a given written material. Exactly as writing, reading is the significant way to decode any language knowledge. Despite that, reading a second language material is different from the first language. Accordingly, comprehending English language texts is demanding its linguistic levels competence or proficiency. Meanwhile, the majority of the Algerian EFL learners are facing a set of challenges that hinder their comprehension of the course sessions' given texts. Especially, their syntactic knowledge which makes them struggle with syntactic text complexity. Hence, this latter may create obstacles for their reading proficiency because simply it hinders their texts' full understanding. Thus, these factors have received the share attention for conducting this research study.

1. Statement of the Problem

Reading is one of the receptive skills that have been growing significantly during the integrating of the printed language in the recent decades. This skill participate in creating the learner's potential to advance the breadth of many academic areas. Reading is a very important skill in second/foreign language acquisition and it is considered to be a priority for foreign language learners to master. Hill (1979, p.4) briefly defines reading as what the reader does to get the meaning he needs from contextual resources. From a longer time Reading comprehension problems have been a popular issue in EFL teaching-learning settings. A number of studies have shown that most EFL students often have difficulties in comprehending English texts. Recently, researchers are focusing mainly on syntactic complexity as a main concern that may affect the readers' ability to understand the reading texts.

Many EFL learners' at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra are facing many difficulties that affect their reading comprehension. First of all, the majority of EFL learners are lacking the syntactic knowledge complexity which is the main concern that may profoundly affect the readers' ability in understanding the reading texts. The text-

based complexity is considered also as a vital factor that extremely makes a written text less readable or hard to comprehend.

2. Significance of the Study

No curriculum can cover all that is necessary or even possible for a student to learn. One of the best ways in which learners expand their knowledge is by reading; therefore, it is vital that EFL learners develop this love for reading. The underlying reason for this investigation is to explore the possible factors that influence EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading ability; more specifically text complexity as it explores the effect of syntactic complexity on the comprehensibility of texts. Therefore, it is hopefully expected that on the basis of the findings of this research, new insights are to be served to teachers and syllabus designers. This will help teachers thus be better equipped to provide guidance to learners in their voluntary reading in order to promote their reading comprehension of the texts. Also it supports them in developing learners' reading comprehension skills.

In the other hand, These insights will be concerned with the nature of texts to be presented in the course sessions or in any other reading material, the type of grammar lessons to be taught, the consideration of the learners' needs, interests, age and motivation in teaching reading, the importance of giving too much interest to the syntax of language to enhance learners' syntactic knowledge.

3. Aim of the Study

The present study aims at shedding light on the effect of text complexities on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Three major objectives lie beneath the aim:

- To explore whether syntactic text complexity creates comprehension problems for second year EFL learners or not.
- To explore the main aspects of syntactic text complexity that cause reading comprehension difficulties for second year EFL learners.
- To ensure that the reading inputs to which EFL learners are exposed to should Suit their comprehension ability.

- To explore the teachers' instructions that help EFL learners to understand complex text.

4. Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

Q1. What are the main reasons that may cause students' reading comprehension difficulties?

Q2. Does syntactic text complexity affect EFL learners' reading comprehension? To what does that extent?

Q3. What are the main aspects of syntactic text complexity that cause reading comprehension difficulties for second year EFL learners?

Q4. What are the relevant instructions that EFL learners need to know how to navigate complex text?

5. Research Hypothesis

Through this study, we attempt to verify one main hypothesis:

We hypothesize that text complexity affect negatively the students' reading Comprehension.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Population and sample

As far as the main aim of the present study is the evaluation of the students' reading comprehension in relation to the syntactic text complexity; the main population that targeted is second year EFL learners at Mohamed KhiedherBiskra because they are studying reading as an essential module in their Educational program.

6.2. The Choice of the method

In order to answer the questions mentioned above and realize the objective of this study, a descriptive study is conducted seeking out the effect of syntactic text complexity

on the EFL learners 'reading comprehension. This study adapts a qualitative method to obtain more reliable answers.

The research tools that will be used in gathering data for the present study are students' questionnaire, and teachers' questionnaire. Both aim at gathering insights, views and opinions about the effect of text complexity on the reading comprehension.

7. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is organized according to the following outline:

Chapter One is an overview of the reading skill, mainly its definitions, types, Models, as well as purposes. More specifically, it focuses on the distinction existing between reading and reading comprehension, the reading comprehension components, mechanisms, difficulties, strategies, and instruction.

Chapter two introduces mainly the notions of L2 complexity, text complexity and syntactic complexity in relation to reading comprehension.

Chapter three deals with the descriptive study and its findings in addition to limitations and pedagogical implications; this chapter is put to end by a general conclusion which summarizes the findings of the present research.

Chapter One:

Reading Comprehension

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CHAPTER ONE : READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

For many years ago, reading has been the tree of the other skills. Consequently, it has become the significant receptive skill in teaching- learning operation in the International Education. Moreover, this complicated process covers considerable elements that will take place in this part of our research study. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents reading concept by different definitions. Then, we will move to discuss reading models such as: The bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive models. After that, we will take its types; mainly skimming, scanning, extensive and intensive readings. However, the second section spots the light on reading comprehension. We state some of its definitions, and discuss the different reading comprehension strategies. We will also conclude by the main processes that are involved in reading comprehension.

1.1. Reading skill

1.1. 1 Definition of reading

Based on the available literature, several studies found that making a specific or direct definition to the reading act seems as a difficult matter. However, according to what is known in general, reading is the interaction between the reader and the particular reading material. Furthermore, Dechant (2009) classified reading definitions into two main parts which are: reading as interpretation of experience, and reading as an interpretation of graphic symbols (p. 5).

1.1.1.1 Reading as an interpretation of experience

Reading is a natural activity that is considered as an interpretation of sense stimuli. In this sense, Smith (2004), noted that “reading is the most natural activity in the world” (p.2). Moreover; Spencer (1946) addressed that "in the broader sense, reading is the process of interpreting sense stimuli... reading is performed whenever one experiences sensory stimulation" (as cited in Dechant, 2009, p. 6). Thus, stimulations that come from the external world are the principle factors that shaping readers' ability to make sense.

CHAPTER ONE : READING COMPREHENSION

On the other hand, Smith (2004) states that:

We read the weather, the state of the tides, people's feelings and Intentions, stock market trends, animal tracks, maps, signals, signs, symbols, hands, tea leaves, the law, music, mathematics, minds, body language, between the lines, and above all a point I must come back To we read faces. "Reading," when employed to refer to interpretation of a piece of writing, is just a special use of the term. We have been reading—interpreting experience—constantly since birth and we all continue to do so (p. 2).

In this sense, reading encompasses a vast number of our daily activities. It is not only a process to interpret or decode graphic symbols.

Notably, it is impossible for most of the students to become graphic symbol readers before being experienced readers. According to Dechant (2009, p. 5) , we are readers of experience prior to become readers of graphic symbols and that thanks to our experiences we can give meaning to those graphic symbols; this point leads to the second category of the definitions of reading.

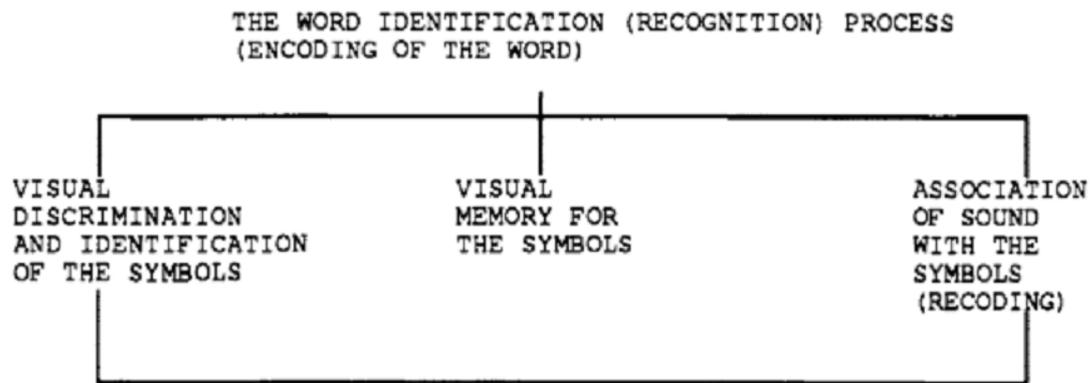
1.1.1.2 Reading as interpretation of graphic symbols

In this scope, reading is limited to be an interpretation of graphic symbols. For that, Harris (1975) indicates that” reading involves the comprehension and interpretation of the signs on the pager” (as cited in Dechant, 1991).In this view, Reading is the word identification; its pronunciation is encoded by using the graphic symbols; according to what Goodman (1988) perceived, “reading is matching sounds to letters” (as cited in Carelle, Devine and Eskey, 1998, p. 11).

We have recognized that reading skill is not a question of word recognition or identification, the focus is more complex than this. For Dechant (2009), reading is deeper than identification of word, pronouncing it on a printed page, or the going from the graphic to the spoken code.

The following figure illustrates the three basic processes of word identification presented by Dechant (2009, p. 7):

CHAPTER ONE : READING COMPREHENSION



**Figure 1.1: The Word Identification ‘Recognition’ Process ‘Encoding of the Word’
adopted from (Dechant, 2009, p. 7)**

As shown in the figure (1.1), Dechant (2009, p. 7) presents three basic processes of word identification which are: Visual discrimination and identification of symbols, visual memory for the symbols and the association of sounds with the symbols.

In this respect, he made a distinction between the two principals of reading, which are: decoding that refers to the ability to construct meaning encoded in graphic symbols, and recording that implies the association of words or letters to their sounds. However, Dechant (1991) summarized all his views on this concern by asserting that reading is the accordance between the relationship of the reader’s experience with what is on the text, and the picture that he is drawing about this.

From what has been highlighted before in the preceding points, we can deduce that reading needs the reader’s connection between the text he/she is currently reading and his/her entire knowledge. Therefore, reading takes place if and only if the intended meaning of the text is generated.

1.1.2 Types of reading

Like any skill, reading is constantly a developing skill that has different types according to the individuals’ reading purposes, and their reading materials; from those mentioning types: skimming, scanning, intensive, and extensive readings.

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1.1.2.1 Skimming versus scanning

Referring to the literature, skimming is a quick reading act in which the reader aims to get look about the general idea of the text, its structure, the text's parts organization, or the topic meaning. Generally, this reading type works on activating the reader's mind to remember, order, and reformulate the given ideas that existing on the text. However, Scanning is a pre-directed reading processes that using to extract a specific relevant piece of information through scanning the reading passage, or through a fast eyes moving over it. Typically, the reader over there is recognizing what he is looking for.

Moreover, skimming and scanning are two different types of reading in which the aim is not the depth comprehension of the present passage content. Therefore, Londale and Lewis (2007) state "when you skimming or scanning you are not trying to read for in-depth comprehension" (p. 40-41).

It is worth mentioning, that both of scanning and skimming are done in a short duration of time, using organizational cues, and key words (Lu, 2013, p.201).

1.1.2.2 Extensive reading versus intensive reading

Extensive and intensive readings are two kinds of reading, which they serve a particular purposes and functions. Extensive reading is a type that focuses on the text content rather than the language; it does not pay attention to details. For that, Grellet (1981) said that extensive reading is "the pleasure reading of long text for one's own pleasure. This fluency activity mainly involves the global understanding" (Grellet, 1981, p. 4). When student feel free on choosing where, when, and what to read; they will like to read, automatically they will engage directly in the reading act. In other word; they are not obliged under a given instruction (as cited in Henouda, 2019, p. 20).

From the other hand, intensive reading is a detailed reading that focuses on reading short texts by applying activities on them to integrate visual and non-visual information. It is characterized by the deep concentration, and the semantic and syntactic analysis of the language to generate the comprehension of the whole text meaning. This is what is clearly illustrated by Palmer (1964), who assumes that "intensive reading implies [taking] a text study it line by line referring at every moment to our dictionary and our grammar, comparing, analyzing, translating, and retaining every expression that it contains" (as cited

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in Day and Bamford, 2012, p. 5). In Intensive reading students know the reading act objectives; in one hand, they have not the right to select the reading materials. For this, most of them will not meet their learning expectation (as cited in Hnouda, 2020, p. 20).

1.1.3 Models of reading

Before engaging with reading models, we should introduce the concept of 'Model' first. Davies (1995) defines the word model as "A formalized, usually visually represented theory of what goes on in the eyes and the mind when readers are comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text"(p.57). That means, that word model describes the contact between the readers' body parts during reading act.

Basically in reading system there are three principal models which are: the Bottom-up model, the Top-down model, and the Interactive model (Harris & Sipay, 1985), (as cited in Manzo& Manzo,1990, p. 22).

1.1.3.1 The bottom-up model

This traditional model comes under the behaviorist research boundaries. Its advocators were influenced by the behaviorist theory that depends on stimulus- response. Gough (1972) suggests five stages to be followed by readers: eye fixation, absorption of visual stimulus, letter identification, phonological representation, and understanding of words serially from left to right. He also believes that the reader is not a guesser. However, he goes on the sentence, its words, and letters. (Gough, 1972), (as cited in Clapham, 1996, p.14). This highlights the printed or the written text, the stimulus is the text's words, and the recognition of these words is the response. The emphasis is the ability of recognizing the graphic stimuli, decoding them to sounds, and advancing the meaning by recognizing words.

Razi (2016) believes that learning to read starts from children learning of the small parts of the language (letters) and move on to understanding the whole text. Clearly, introducing names and letter sounds, progress to pronouncing whole words are the first steps to make a child read before showing him the ways of connecting word meanings to understand texts (As cited in Henouda, 2019, p.21).

The reading process is conducting by words' identification beginning with the smallest and simplest unit to more complex structure of language. According to Konza

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(2003) “Reading is seen as structures hierarchy of sequenced and separate skills, which are build up to create meaning. comprehension is the final step of this somewhat lengthy decoding process.”(p.1). this presents that reading occurs when moving from the specific to the general or from the part to the whole such as: from words, or sentences to paragraphs, etc.

1.1.3.2 The top-down model

The top-down model is a cognitive trend presented as reaction to the bottom-up model that ignored the role of the reader and considered him as passive role in reading process. Alderson (2000, p. 17) argued that "readers in the bottom-up model are passive decoders of sequential graphic-phonemic-syntactic semantic system, in that order". For this reason; scholars such as Goodman (1970) and Smith (1978) came to spot the light on reader's role during the reading act; according to them:

The top-down models of reading process tend to be ‘meaning driven’. The reader is said to begin with prior knowledge and actively to compare what is read to what is already understood. Top-down models tend to deemphasize sub-skills and literal understanding and to focus on building background information and personal responding (as cited in Manzo and Manzo, 1995, p. 16).

In other words, to complete the information of comprehension, the reader should bring his/ her prior knowledge and use it during reading the act to infer the meaning used for the understanding of the text; such as: the linguistic structure or the grammar rules, his/ her vocabulary background or the word meaning according the context of the text, and his knowledge about the topic and the type of the text.

In the same concern, Farrel (2009) made a discussion about the top- down model. He notes that: “After first looking at a passage or a text. Readers guess or predict what it will be about based on their prior knowledge and experience of the topic ... They then continue to read the text seeking confirmation of their understanding of the topic” (p18).

In this regard, Razi (2016), point that most of top-down scholars do not care about the phonics instruction, and they are considering meaning as their fundamental focus. Therefore, Teachers tend to keep their students more motivated, free on choosing their

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reading materials. As well as, they are concentrating more on making learners able to reading full sentences (as cited in Henouda, 2020, p.22).

The two preceded models are well presented in figure bellow:

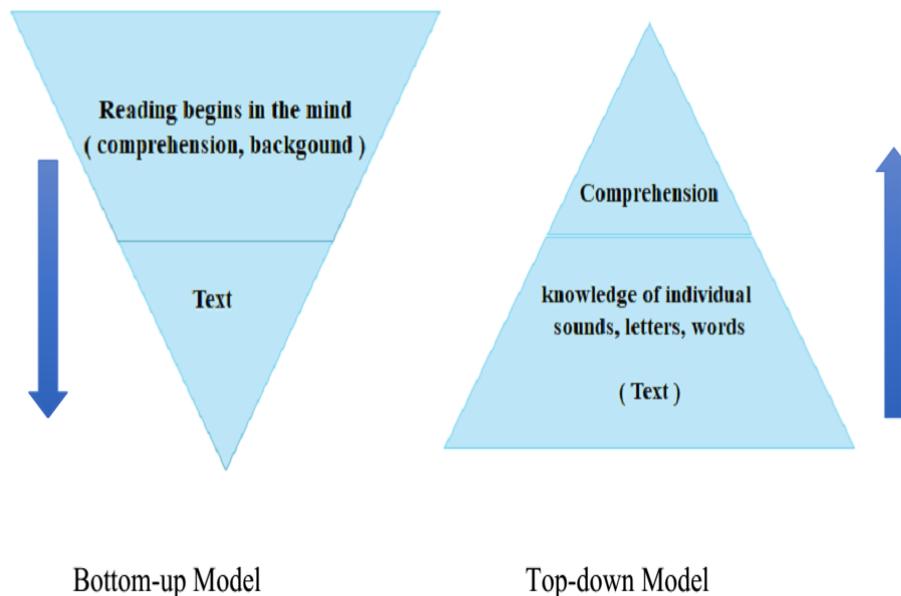


Figure 1.2: Top-down and bottom-up models of reading. Adapted from “Using Technology to Teach Reading Skills”, by C. E. Chen (n.d.). (As cited in Henouda, 2019, p.22).

1.1.3.3 The interactive model

The interactive model is one of the major reading models that include both of the preceding mentioned reading models. It is a constructivist based model that came as a result of the criticisms movements against the Bottom-up and the Top-down models (Leu & Kinzer ,1987). The view of this trend is to combine the use of both models in reading, and emphasize on its strongest points to achieve the understanding. For this, Rumelhart (1977) made the idea of reading’s interactive model because he thought that reading is a combination of both bottom up and top-down processes. These two models are involved on reading act either simultaneously or alternately (as cited in Seddik, 2017, p.49).

Rumelhart (1985) maintained that “Reading occurs through both bottom – up and top- down processes. Information such as letter shape and orthographic, syntactic and semantic knowledge interact within the short term or „working“ memory to contribute to

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comprehension” (as cited in Kona, 2003, p.9). It means that a good reader can make a balance between his lower and higher levels which is decoding letters of the words and connecting it with his/ her prior knowledge to comprehend the text’s content. However, Browne (1998) concludes the interactive model as follows:

In this model readers are seen as approaching texts with the expectation that they are meaningful. They use their familiarity with the subject matter, their previous experience of written material, their knowledge about reading and their expectations of meaning to make predictions about content and words. Simultaneously readers use their knowledge about letters, sounds, words, and syntax, the cues which arise upwards from the page (p. 9).

Furthermore, Yumul (2015) notes that teachers should give their students the chance to share their knowledge in reading class and allow them to use their prior knowledge for the creation of the text’s comprehension. Therefore, students have the right to be independent in choosing their suitable way in reading to realize their ability to comprehend the text general meaning. This model is illustrated clearly in the following figure:

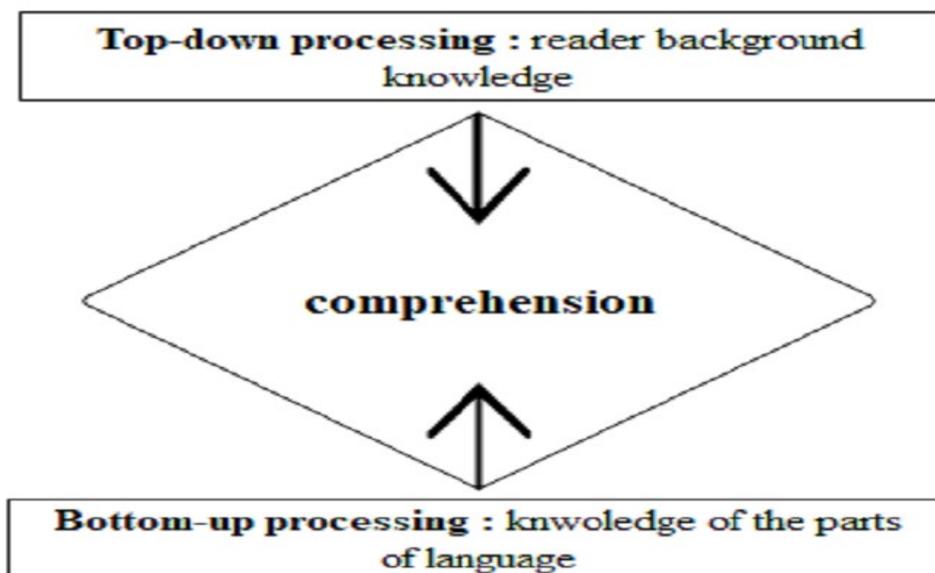


Figure 1.3: Interactive model of reading. Adapted from “Using Technology to Teach Reading Skills”, by C. E. Chen (n.d.), (As cited in Henouda, 2019, p.23)

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1.2. Reading Comprehension

1.2.1. Definitions of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension has several definitions in different books. The literature argues that there is no clear definition achieved yet. Tennent (2015) lists in his book different reading comprehension definitions as follows:

Scholars	Definitions
Harris and Hodges (1995)	“reading comprehension is the construction of meaning of written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text.” (P. 23)
Moyle (1972)	“reading comprehension is the skill to extract knowledge or reading with understanding” (as cited in Tennent, 2015, p. 22).
Williams (1984)	“The process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written” (p.02).
Snow (2002, p. 11)	there are three components of reading comprehension: the first element, the reader who is doing the comprehending acts to construct the meaning of the text. The second, the printed material which is the text to be comprehended, and the third one is the activity of comprehension includes the processes, purposes, and the consequences of the reading act.
Harris and Hodges (1995)	They insisted about the reader and the text in reading comprehension; for that they wrote: "reading comprehension is the construction of meaning of written text through a reciprocal interchange of idea between the reader and the message in a particular text"(as cited in Tennent, 2015, p. 23).
Williams (1984)	“The process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written” (p.02).

Table 1.1. Reading comprehensions’ definitions (as cited in Tennent, 2015, p. 23)

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To sum up, reading comprehension is concerning the principal objective of reading process. This occurs through connecting the printed material ideas with the reader background knowledge to involve the reader thinking abilities in building the text comprehension of the meaning.

1.2.2. Strategies of reading comprehension

During the reading act readers follow a systematic process to construct the whole text understands. In order to make poor readers avoiding the text troubles while reading complex texts, several studies underlined a number of reading comprehension strategies.

Paris (1996) states that readers have to follow the three systematic stages of reading comprehension during reading act which are: pre-reading, during reading, and after reading (as cited in Hundson, 2007, p.108). Therefore, he suggested the following table to present text –processing strategies for promoting reading comprehension:

Pre- reading	While – reading	Post- reading strategies
1-Establishinga good physical environment. 2-Setting reading purpose. 3-Accessing prior knowledge. 4-Asking questions based on the title. 5-Semantic mapping 6-Skimming for general idea. 7- Previewing the text examining headings, pictures, title, ect. 8- Reviewing Instructions 9- Identifying text structure and genre. 10- Determining what is	1-Checking comprehension throughout the reading activity. 2- Identifying the main idea. 3- Making inferences. 4- Recognizing patterns in the text structure. 5- Looking for discourse markers. 6- Monitoring vocabulary knowledge. 7- Predicting the main idea of each paragraph. 8- Glossing.	1-Appreciation of text and writer. 2- Revisit pre- reading expectations. 3- Review notes, glosses, text markings. 4- Reflect on text understanding. 5- Consolidate and integrate information. 6- Review of information. 7- Elaborate and evaluate. 8- Determine what additional information is needed. 9- Apply new information to the task at hand. 10- Relate the text to own experience. 11- Critique the text.

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known about the topic. 11- Predicting what might be read.	9- Comparing what is read with what is known. 10- Evaluating value of what is being learned. 11- Rereading text or skipping ahead	
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Table 1.2. Reading Comprehension Strategies Hundson (2007, p.108), (As cited in Mimoune, 2015, p.18).

1.2.2.1. The bridging inferences

Readers should have the ability to make inference about the concepts, and linking ideas and the information that does not stated explicitly in the different text's parts to clarify what is presented indirectly in the text (As cited in Seddik, 2017, p. 51). For this, Beck, Mckeown, Sinatra and Loxterman (1991) define the text based inferences strategy as "the ability to link concepts and ideas is especially important when one considers that many texts do not explicitly link related information" (as cited in McNamara,2007, p.478-479). In the same concern, researchers such as Magliano and Millis (2003) explained it as following: "the process of generating bridging inferences plays an integral role in helping the reader build a global representation of the text" (as cited in McNamara, 2007, p.479).

From the preceding points, making inference is the reader's combination of his/ her prior knowledge with the presented ideas in the printed material to explicit the indirect information. That means, a good reader can notice the text pieces that is relating to his/ her past experience.

1.2.2.2. Visualization

Visualization is one of the reading comprehension strategies in what the readers are using their imagination and their mental pictures to understanding what are they reading. Pressley (1976) demonstrates that good readers create mental images about their reading text to understand it. It is better for poor readers to use their senses to connect the printed material events, characters, or ideas to comprehend clearly. Visualized readers are

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considered more successful readers than who are not visualize (Center, Freeman, Robertson & Outhred, 1999, McCallum & Moore, 1999, Oakhill & Patel, 1991, as cited in McNamara, 2007, p. 484).

Visualizing is an experiment or a process' steps in expository text that can help the reader to memorize or remind the key concepts, or the important names of the text subject. The same issue with narrative text readers is able to develop their understanding of what is happening in the story when they visualize the plot's setting, characters, or actions (Bales and Gambrell, 1986).

1.2.2.3. Prediction

Prediction is one of the necessary reading comprehension strategies during reading act. This process is based on connecting the reader's background knowledge about a particular topic and the new existing ideas that constructed from reading the printed material.

According to Laing and Kamhi (2002) "a predictive inference directs the reader's attention by speculating about events or actions that may occur base(d) on what the reader already knows" (as cited in Woolley, 2011, p. 108). In other words, it can be said that prediction refers to the readers' ability of hypothesizing what will be read a head basic on what is they already known and they know before in order to create new interpretation or information.

Furthermore, Gillet and Temple (1994) asserts that prediction strategy is the good readers' way to get the whole text meaning by using their new and prior knowledge in one hand. However, During the reading act, important points such as text title which make the reader conclude the text content, or the readers' background information about the author that helping them to predict the text type, its structure, writer style...etc.

1.2.2.4. Comprehension monitoring

Comprehension monitoring is a vital reading comprehension strategy, which is the reader's ability to use the appropriate strategies to comprehend the text meaning. Moreover, Blerkam (2009) defined it as the strategies that "allow us to monitor or keep tabs on our learning. They help us monitor our progress in mastering the material and allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies that we use to gain that mastery"

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(p.109).in this sense, readers should know when they understand, and why they do not to improve their blocked understanding by using the appropriate strategies that enable them to use their background knowledge of the text. Additionally, Comprehension monitoring is a metacognitive form of strategies in which good readers' awareness monitoring their thought process in reading. However, less proficient ones who is "just do it.", (Dole et al, 1991).

Notably, before reading act monitoring process present to make readers think about their background and what they know about the text topic that will be read. As far as, they concentrate on the text structure that helps them to progress the topic and the text type they will deal with. During reading, readers check their prediction and their prior knowledge that goes with the printed materiel they read (McNamara, 2007, p. 471).

To conclude, comprehension monitoring strategies have a significant influence in reading comprehension process because good readers ask questions before, during, and after reading to better understand the author and the meaning of the text. In addition, it helps them to regulate and evaluate their general comprehension of the written materiel they are dealing with.

1.2.3. The processes involved in comprehension

Comprehension is a complicated cognitive process that covers sub-process operating in real time, which they imply simultaneously an interaction between the reader and a given text; however, reading the text and connecting its ideas comprehension processes spontaneously take place to think about what is reading and trying to construct the target meaning materiel on the written text (As cited in Seddik, 2017, p.53). Irwin (1991) stated a number of process that involved in comprehension which are: Microprocesses (understanding sentences), integrative processes (connecting segments of the text), macroprocesses (understanding narrative and expository text structures), elaborative processes (working beyond the text to make meaningful connections) and metacognitive processes (monitoring comprehension and retaining information for future use). For Schumm (2006), each one of these process are completing each other to be useful for the comprehension process; however, any defiance in one of them may affect comprehension (p. 226-227).

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1.2.3.1. Micro processes

Micro processes are cognitive comprehension processes that are focusing on obtaining the sentence meaning through interpreting a selective chunks from individuals such us: phrases, words, or clusters in one individual sentence. In one hand; Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007) maintain that "micro-processing refers to the reader's initial chunking of idea units within individual sentences. 'Chunking' involves grouping words into phrases or clusters of words that carry meaning, and requires an understanding of syntax as well as vocabulary" (p.9). Thus, achieving the whole understanding for proficient readers is based on interpreting connected words to form a unique meaning, and more significant than interpreting each signal word in the sentence.

1.2.3.2. Integrative processes

Based on what are Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007), stated about micro processes and its function in obtaining the sentence meaning, integrative processes are the next processes which are working on joining the written text sentences to comprehend its related ideas (p.10). They further explain, readers' text comprehension does not fulfills only on interpreting the sentences' unites, or chunks. However, constructing the text meaning is being through connecting segments of the text, or combining the ideas of each single sentence on the text, and relating them with each other to get the reader progress (Klinger, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007, p.10).

1.2.3.3. Macro processes

To put it clearly, macro processes are used to understanding narrative and expository text structures. For achieving the whole text understanding, these processes imply the reader ability to summarize, organize the ideas and build their full meaning. These last ones make the readers extract only the more important information to simplify their comprehension. This is well delineated by Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007), when they claim:

Ideas are better understood and more easily remembered when the reader is able to organize them in a coherent way. The reader does this by summarizing the key ideas read. He or she may either automatically or deliberately (i.e., subconsciously or consciously)

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select the most important information to remember and delete relatively less important details (p. 11).

1.2.3.4. Elaborative processes

An elaborative process is the basics that working beyond the text lines to give meaningful connections between the text unique parts or unites. In which the readers use it for making inferences of what they are reading, and making clear understanding. Furthermore; there are two types of these inferences: the first one is forward inference or called “prediction”; for constructing comprehension reader may using his or her experience or prior knowledge. While, the second is called bridging inference in which the reader use the earlier mentioned information by the author in the text.

In other point, reading for such researches is deeper than what the authors are writing or intending, and reader comprehension. In the view of Wolf (1993),reading is “a constructive and active process that entails relating new and incoming information to information already stored in memory” (as cited in Wu,2016 , p. 13). Thus, Readers prior knowledge may influence their correspondent with the writer intended written thoughts.

Smith (1971) clarifies that a good reader need, to know what reading is or what exactly happens among the text, the eyes, and the brain, for the same reason, he determines that "what the brain tells the eye is more than what the eye tells the brain" (as cited in Alderson, 2000, p. 4). That clearly shows, the influence of readers prior knowledge on the reading text; readers’ comprehension based on the connection or the contacting between both what is eyes notice in printed text, and the brain’s interpretation.

1.2.3..5. Metacognitive processes

As it is known, metacognition is thinking about thinking, while, in reading comprehension metacognitive process is retaining ideas, monitoring reader’s comprehension to use it in future, or it is considered as the readers’ awareness to their cognitive processes(As cited in Seddik, 2017, p.56). However, Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007), declared that "metacognition is the reader’s conscious awareness or control of cognitive processes. The metacognitive processes the reader uses are those involved in monitoring understanding, selecting what to remember, and regulating the

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strategies used when reading" (p. 11). The below figure highlights the various processes involved in comprehension:

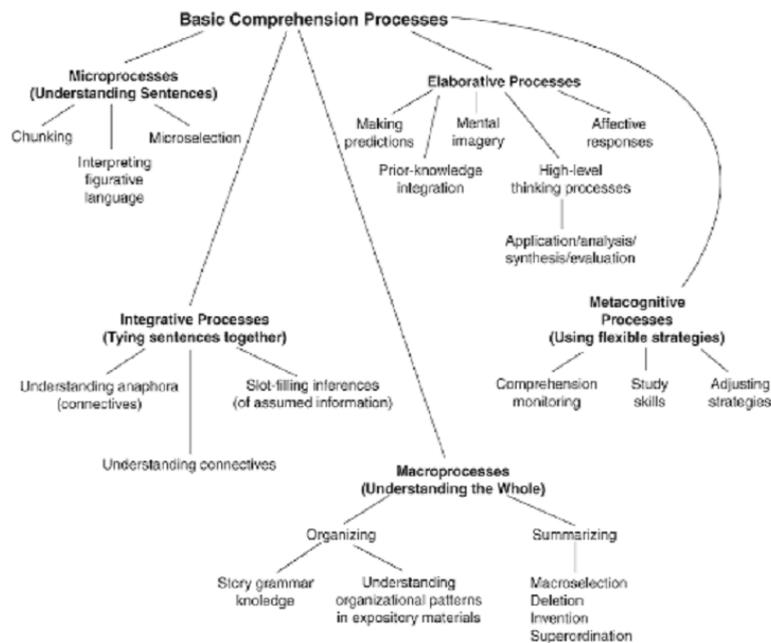


Figure 1.4: Irwin and Baker’s Model of Reading Comprehension (Adapted from Schumm, 2006, p. 226).

To further explain, Irwin (1991) indicates that “metacognitive processes of comprehension monitoring. This is the act of consciously checking what is read makes sense" (as cited in Tennent, 2015, p.31). Thus, metacognitive processes use flexible strategies to monitor the readers’ cognitive processes that allow them to check their comprehension of what they get from the reading text.

Conclusion

The present chapter discussed some of the reading skill generalities such as definitions, types and its principal models. Additionally, it is mainly talked about reading comprehension in particular way. However, we highlighted significant definitions, and the reading comprehension strategies. For instance, bridging inferences, visualization, prediction, and finally comprehension monitoring. Then, we have concluded by reading comprehension vital processes that are involved in this cognitive act. In the forthcoming chapter will focus more on the factors that affect the learner’s reading comprehension of texts.

Chapter Two
Factors Affecting Reading
Comprehension

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CHAPTER TWO: FACTORS AFFECTING READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

A vast number of EFL learners are facing certain challenges in reading class that affect their ability to understand the printed material they are read. From these challenges, a large part of them are suffering from text syntactic complexity. They also consider it as problem which can impact their reading comprehension. Following that, the present chapter is devoted to discuss this concern. We will open the first section by illustrate the main factors that affecting the readers' comprehension. After that, we will move to show what a text is, and identify the term of complexity. Then, what is text complexity in quantitative, qualitative, and the reader and task consideration. In addition, the elements that makes a text more complex. While, in the second section will highlight syntactic complexity definition, its masseurs, their developments, and such insights from studies on measures of syntactic complexity. Moreover, we will discuss the problem of syntactic complexity in reading and comprehension. At the end, we will conclude by presenting such of teachers' instructions that help EFL learners to understand complex text, and what do students need to know to navigate syntactical complex text.

2.1. Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension

Naturally not all EFL readers have one comprehension level of the same reading materiel. Levels of reading comprehension are distinguishing from one to another due to such particular factors that affecting the reader text understands for instance, the reader himself, or it can be the text factor.

2.1.1. The reader-based factors

Notably, Readers themselves can be a principle cause that affects their reading comprehension process. However, reader-based factors involve four major elements which are: reader's background knowledge, text knowledge, metacognitive strategy knowledge and affective characteristics (Brown et al., 1986, Flavell, 1985, Garner, 1987, as cited in McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010, p. 14).

2.1.1.1. The reader's prior knowledge

To put it clearly, readers' prior knowledge plays a significant role on reading comprehension process. It is worth noting that, too often during reading readers use their background information they have about the reading text's topic, and the related

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vocabulary to help them interpreting the ideas, connecting them well, and starting to build the text objective meaning. For that, Allington and Cunningham (2006) claimed that readers' knowledge level about the topic in a given text has an influence on their reading comprehension (as cited in Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016, p.193). The same view stated by Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2001), when they mentioned that:

Having sufficient prior knowledge of the topic to be read and the related vocabulary knowledge are essential for successful reading comprehension. The more the reader knows about the author, the vocabulary, and the concepts, the better they are able to construct meaning from the text (p. 96).

From what is above one can say that, reader's background knowledge is typically highly interrelated with reading comprehension which is also has a tight link with the vocabulary knowledge of the reader in exploring text comprehension.

Additionally, readers who are familiar with such texts' topics will have the chance to be more capable in getting new information when they read about it.; repeated reading comprehension creates a significant interaction between the pre-existing knowledge and derived textual information (Koda, 2010, p.188).

2.1.1.2. Text Knowledge

According to the available literature, text knowledge considers as another factor that affects the reader's comprehension of the text. Text knowledge refers to the existing ideas on the reading material, or the knowledge that readers already know about the text. Garner (1987) noted that "text knowledge includes what readers already know about text features, linguistic structures, and text structures. It also includes what readers expect when they read different types of text" (as cited in McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010, p. 114). In the same focus, in distinct text type readers' comprehension is influenced by the text structure, especially on detecting significant text main ideas in isolation because content information is organized in different structures in the variety types of text (Koda, 2010, p.188).

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2.1.1.3. The metacognitive strategy knowledge

It is widely acknowledged that metacognitive strategy knowledge is a crucial factor that most readers encounter it in their reading. In this sense, Alfassi (1988) indicated that metacognitive strategies are working on regulating, planning, and monitoring each reader's text comprehension (as cited in Woolley, 2011, p.148). Similarly, Reed et al., (2002), demonstrate that the effective metacognitive strategy is the one that making readers obtain the reading material's meaning successfully through engaging them in the reading act (as cited in Woolley, 2011, p.148). Metacognitive strategy knowledge actually participates on given the readers the ability to get a better understanding, as well as, it regulates and fulfills their reading comprehension.

2.1.1.4. Affective characteristics

Although, the role of affective characteristics in reading comprehension is quite essential, probably reader's characteristics as interest, attitude, the purpose of reading, and motivation about reading act are the most vital factors that influence their reading comprehension (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). As was asserted by Alexander and Jetton (2000):

Learning from text is inevitably a synthesis of skill, will, and thrill. Few would argue with the premise that readers need to be skilled. Yet, learning from text cannot take place in any deep or meaningful fashion without the learners' commitment (i.e., will). Nor will the pursuit of knowledge continue unless the reader realizes some personal gratification or internal reward from this engagement (As cited in McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010, p. 114).

To be skilled reader, it is not sufficient to be considered as an active reader. During reading class, learners who are interested and self motivated about the reading task will be engage on it easily and they will tend to show their best abilities to fulfill their comprehension. In contrary, with the others who are less motivated or uninterested about the reading material content (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

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2.1.2. The text-based factors

Notably, the text-based factors are often the affective reading comprehension's factors that related to the linguistic text knowledge and its structure (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

2.1.2.1. Linguistic complexity

According to what is known in the literature, Linguistic complexity has two text features which are syntax and semantics (As cited in Seddik, 2017, p.60).

2.1.2.1.1. Syntax

There are a considerable number of studies that demonstrate the initial relationship between the syntactic complexity and text reading comprehension. As it is known, in any given language, syntax refers on the sentence structure rules. However, in text complicated language reading or complex sentences structures can affect the readers' comprehension of written materials. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), show that reading comprehension of most texts is contributing basically on their characteristics (textual markers, vocabulary, text structure, syntax, and text genre). Therefore, syntactic complexity can make comprehension more difficult; for that, McCormack and Pasquarelli (2010) state that "the complexity of the syntax affects the readers' overall comprehension task" (p.112).

Moreover, rich syntactic knowledge enables readers to avoid the dilemma of reading comprehension difficulty. Knowing a variety of different genres help them interpret text sentences, and extract the significant ideas easily.

2.1.2.1.2. Semantics

Semantics is a linguistic element that is dealing with meanings. In other words, it is one of the linguistic complexity factors that impact the reading comprehension activity, in that sense, McCormack and Pasquarelli (2010) demonstrate that "whereas syntax has to do with form, semantics has to do with meaning. The term semantics refers to the vocabulary in the text and its applied meanings: both denotative and connotative" (p.112).

Over time, readers become more challenging with texts which have a highly semantic complexity as the rigorous texts, or detailed texts. Those types of text are characterized by connotative meanings more than denotative one and it can only be

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inferred from the context. Readers need to be pragmatically competent to comprehend those texts (As cited in Seddik, 2017, p.60).

2.1.2.2. Text structure

We have long recognized that reading comprehension is affected by vital text based factor, which is text structure. However, this type of factors is dealing with surface text characteristics or with the structure of the whole text, chapters, or chunks of connected text. In other word, it focuses on the way they are organized (As cited in Seddik, 2017, p.61). They have been summarized and organized in the bellow figure:

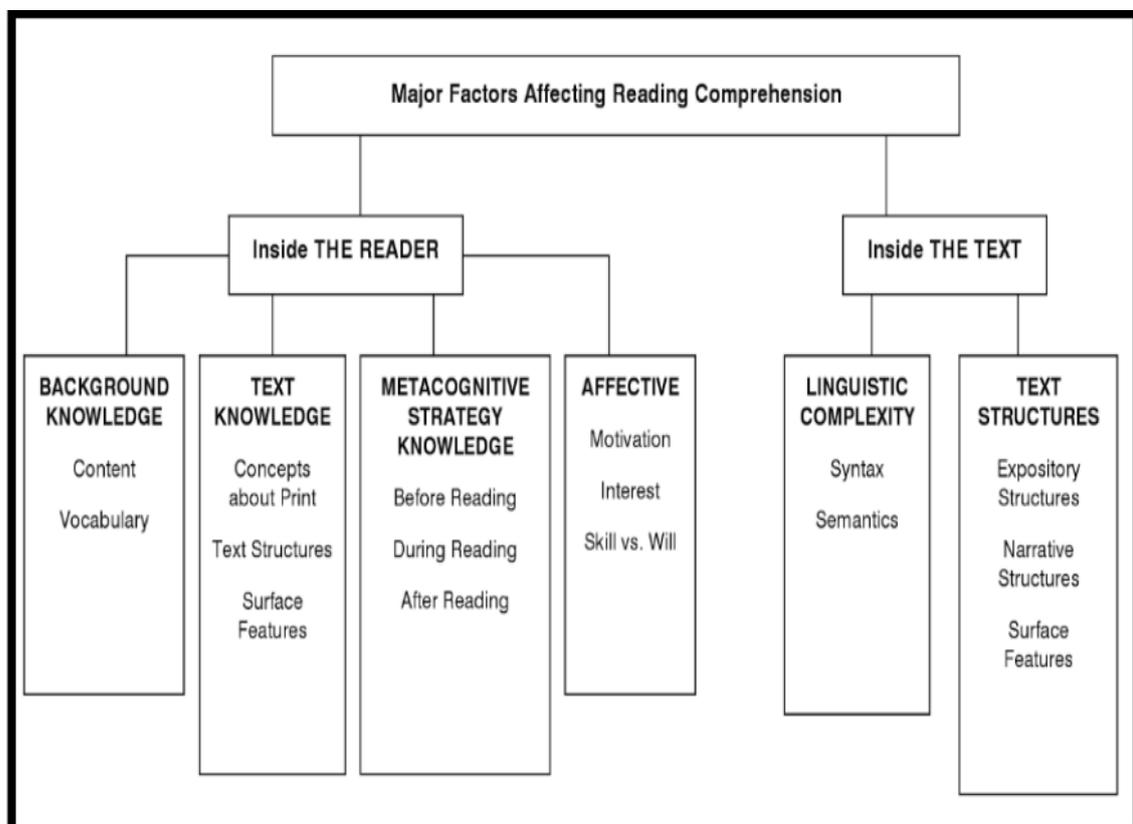


Figure 2.1: Major Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension: A Concept Map- Based on Samuels (1983), Flavell (1985), Garner (1987), Brown, Arbruster and Baker, and Alexander and Jetten (2002). (Adapted from MaCarmack & Pasquarelli, 2010, p. 111).

2.2. Text Complexity

Based on the available researches, text complexity is encountered as a major problem that challenge learners' reading comprehension (National Governors Association

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Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010b).

2.2.1. What is a text?

Generally, text is a material that is used to make particular message. However, it is also a communicative event which conveyed by a verbal record; it can either a spoken one such as conversations, speeches...etc, or written one as articles, books, and newspapers...etc (Brown & Yule, 1983, p.190). In same sense, Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that:

A text is any written or spoken passage that shapes the unit in full. They further assert that a text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence; and it is not defined by its size. A text is not something that is like a sentence, only bigger; it is something that differs from a sentence in kind. Text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning (p.1).

As it is clearly shown, text is a combination of related ideas or set of sentences that create a meaningful unity to convey a specific message.

2.1.2. What is complexity?

According to Mitchel (2009), there is no absolute definition of complexity, and the only consensus among researchers is that there is no agreement about the specific definition of complexity. Studies that addressed the topic of complexity in language provide only general and obscure definitions. For example, Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) consider language complexity as the employment of tough and difficult language. On the other hand, Skehan (2003) refer to language complexity as the quality of the language system developed.

Complexity is a multidimensional construct, which consists of various levels and components (Norris & Ortega, 2006). However, Bulté and Housen (2012) provided a taxonomy which illustrate the multilayered nature of complexity as it is shown in the following figure:

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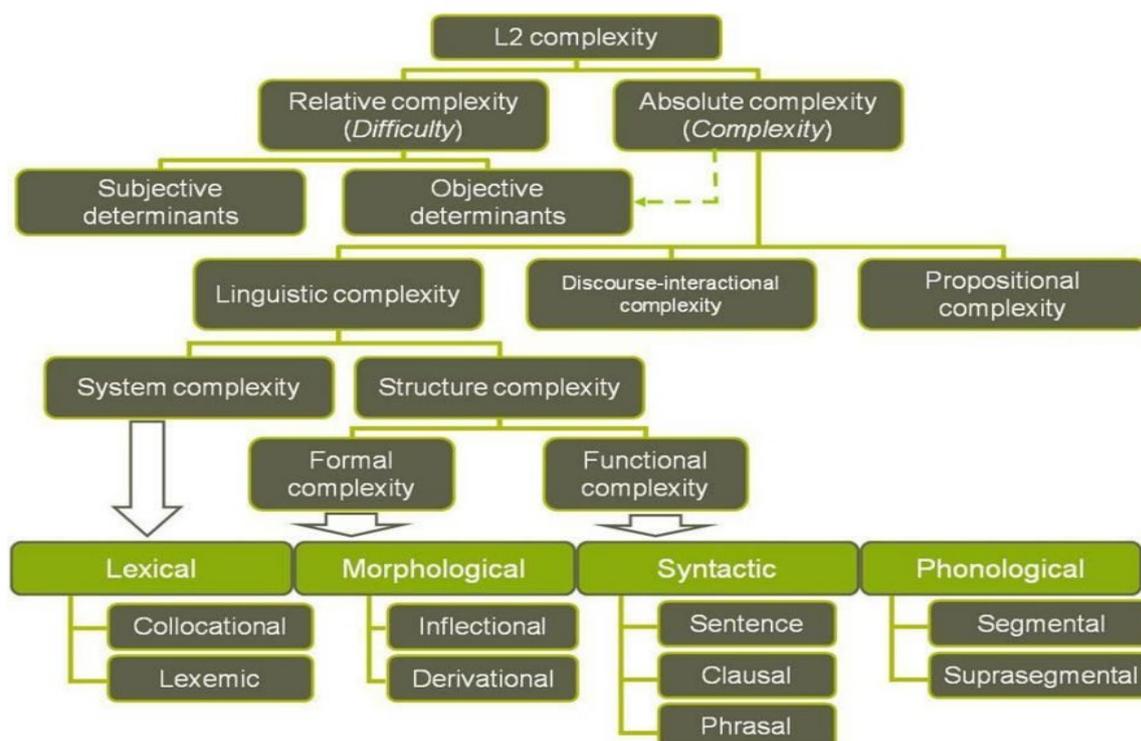


Figure 2.2: Taxonomic Model of L2 Complexity (Bulté & Housen, 2012), (As cited in Noui, 2020, p.22).

As it is shown by the above figure, the first distinction is made between relative and absolute complexity. The relative approach considers a language feature to be complex if it is costly for the language user in terms of mental effort and the resources used to learn this feature (Hulstijn & De Graff, 1994).

Absolute complexity is related to the nature of the problem itself as Aguiar et al (2015) states that absolute complexity comes from objective inherent properties of linguistic systems. That is to say, absolute complexity in language concerns the language system and mostly linguistic domains such as morphosyntax, phonology and lexicon (Nichols, 2009).

The present study focuses on linguistic complexity, which comes under absolute complexity alongside propositional complexity and discourse interactive complexity. However, more specifically the study focuses on structural complexity.

According to Bulté and Housen (2012), linguistic complexity is interpreted as either having dynamic properties (global complexity) or more stable properties (Local

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complexity). This refers to the size or the richness of the learner's L2 system and the different structures and items he/she knows or uses for example: whether he/she masters a wide range of grammatical structures and words or controls a few sound systems.

Structure complexity has to do more with depth than with range, and it is further subdivided into formal and functional complexity. Functional complexity refers to the number of meanings and functions of a linguistic structure and the degree of transparency between the meaning and the form (Bulté and Housen, 2012).

There have been numerous interrelations of the construct of complexity and has been characterized differently throughout various studies and the following figure demonstrates the different constructs that has been confused with complexity:

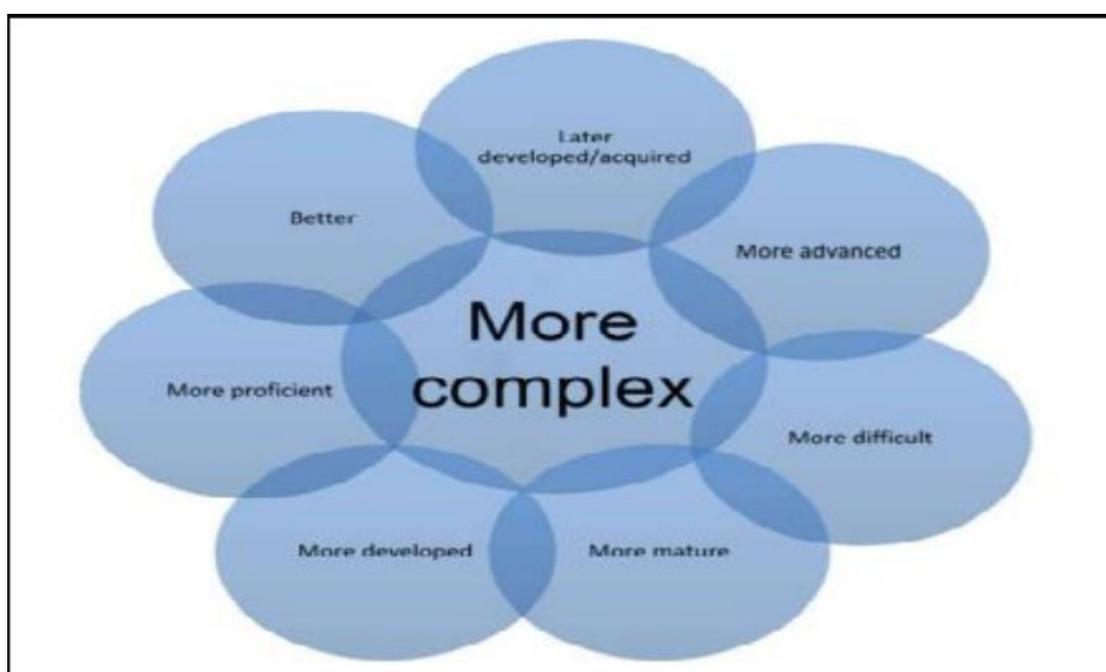


Figure 2.3: L2 complexity and related constructs (Bulté and Housen, 2014).

2.2.3. What is meant by text complexity?

It is widely accepted that all texts involve a certain level of complexity that affects the readers' understand. A number of scholars as Karin Hess and Sue Biggam (2004) claimed that:

Students learn to apply and practice a variety of reading strategies, for different purposes and with different text types. Over time, students who are exposed to a

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variety of text types with increasing complexity also learn how text features differ by genre, and they gain confidence in peeling back the layers of complexity for a deeper understanding of what is read” (p. 1).

To put it clearly, each kind of printed materials contains a considerable number of complexities, which are suitable for certain grade or learning level. However, The Common Core State Standards stated that text complexity build on three main connective components which are clearly stated on the following figure (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010b).

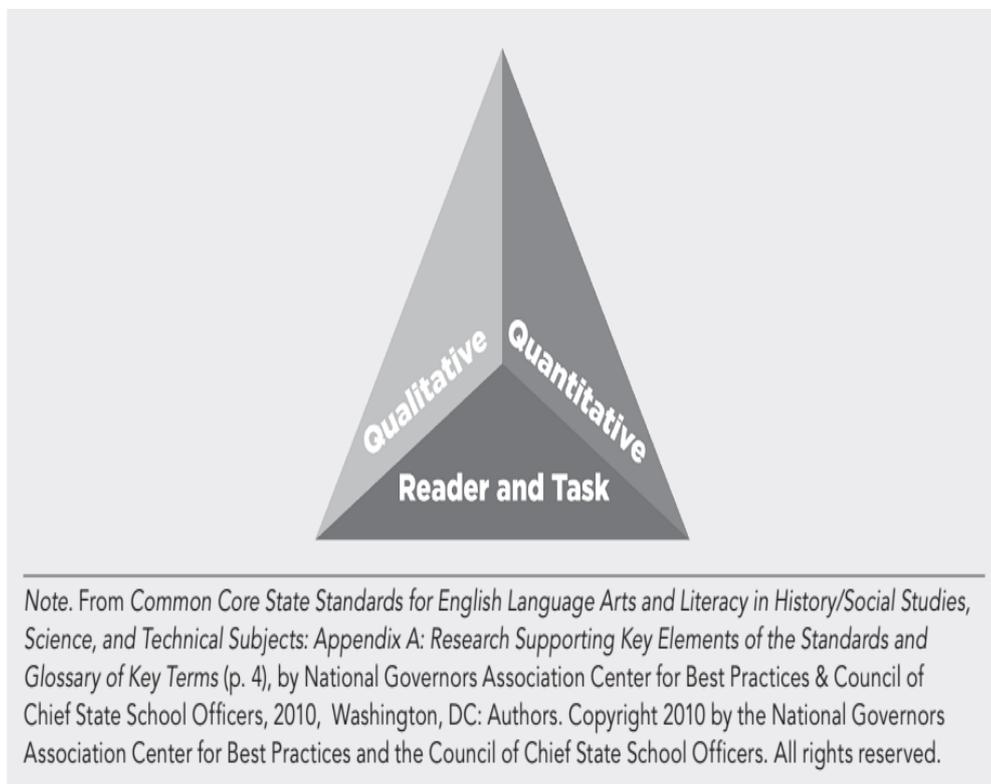


Figure 2.4: Dimensions of Text Complexity (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010b).

2.2.3.1. Qualitative dimensions of text complexity

Built on what is determined in prior research, the Common Core State Standards (2010b), assert that qualitative dimensions of text complexity based on measuring the text complexity aspects that involves levels of meaning (literary texts) or purpose

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(informational texts), structure, knowledge demands including (content/discipline knowledge, cultural/literary knowledge, and life experiences). In addition, to the language conventionality and clarity (the Common Core State Standards, 2010b).

2.2.3.2. Quantitative dimensions of text complexity

As pointed out by the Common Core State Standards' researches (2010b), that all aspects of text complexity are included for stating the quantitative dimensions of text complexity. Those aspects are difficult for readers to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and they are today typically measured by computer software, for instance, text cohesion, word length, or frequency, and sentence length, etc. (CCSSI Appendix A, 2010, p.4).

2.2.3.3. Reader and task considerations

According to (CCSS, 2010, p. 4) both qualitative and quantitative dimensions are implied by the standards' approach to balance the text complexity assessment under the consideration of using a proficiently instructions by the educators to link texts with students and tasks. In this light, The Common Core State Standards scholars cross their attention on a set specific reader's variables (such as Personal experiences, motivation, knowledge, in addition to the reading level and other cognitive abilities) that must be highlighted when determining the appropriateness of tasks and questions asked for a given readers level (2010b, p.04).

2.2.4. What makes a text complex?

Scholars such as Shanahan, Fisher and Frey (2012) indicate that vocabulary, sentence structure, coherence, background knowledge are the major elements that affect the text's readability and complicate the readers' comprehension of certain reading texts.

2.2.4.1. Vocabulary

According to Shanahan et al. (2012), vocabulary plays a significant role in text complexity. Mostly, authors use new vocabulary to express their thoughts in the printed texts. However, the majority of readers are facing difficulties when they are dealing with unfamiliar words or concepts while reading certain texts. This final one can complicate the readers' understanding of the text's topic meaning (Shanahan et al., 2012, p.58-62).

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2.2.4.2. Sentence structure

Sentence structure is the operating of words together in form of one unity. In other hand, sentence structure is a fluent factor that may complicate the text comprehension. For this, Shanahan, Fisher and Frey (2012), indicate that comprehending a sentence is getting its idea through the combination of its related words together, more than identifying its single units (p.58-62).

2.2.4.3. Coherence

Complex coherence connections between the text ideas may reduce the readers' text comprehension, and affect their reading abilities towards unfamiliar texts. Therefore, complex cohesive links are considered as vital factor of text complexity. In other word, readers in that case often challenge with relating the existing sentence's thoughts to each other for forming a connected cohesive meaning of a new text topic (Shanahan et al., 2012, p.58-62).

2.2.4.4. Background knowledge

Background knowledge is another factor that should be highlighted on. Accordingly, Shanahan, Fisher, and Frey (2012), assert that reader' developmental cognitive factors are working to affect their reading comprehension of the text features. The evidence suggests that readers with poor background knowledge about the text topic will struggle in understanding the text meaning; evidently, sufficient background knowledge can make text comprehension easier to the readers (Shanahan et al., 2012).

2.2.5. What is syntactic complexity?

Based on the available linguistic science studies, syntactic is the word order or the structure of words organization in a particular sentence or clause. However, prior researches clarified that syntactic complexity refers to the language forms or structures that create less readable texts. In other words, this sub-linguistic complexity element is considered as a set of forms that range in the degree of forms' sophistication and the production of language which is participating in the difficulty of text comprehension (Ortega, 2003, cited in Lu, 2008).

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Following that, in other reference, Bulte and Housen (2012) emphasize that syntactic complexity is the processing and the learning of such linguistic patterns according to their simple mental degree or their difficulty (p.32).

2.2.6. A closer look at syntactic complexity measures

Built on a number of language researches studies, syntactic complexity based on particular measures, which characterize by such strengths points, and struggle with others in the same time at readability, comprehensions, and the validity levels (Norris & Ortega, 2009).

2.2.6.1. Syntactic complexity measures

It is clearly stated by Bulte and Housen (2012), that syntactic complexity measures are a hybrid and fuzzy measures which are capturing a vast groups of complexity. Typically, they are working to measure structural complexities' degree, the type of embedding, subordination, coordination. and their amount, the syntactic structures' range, in addition to measure one or more of the lengths of the unit (Bulte & Housen 2012). Following this, the most of syntactic subordination measures are hybrid measures, however, length measures capture the mean length of particular units at the level of words, and morphemes in measuring syntactic complexity at the level of compositionality; oppositely, subordination measures control complexity, compositionality, and syntactic diversity (As cited in Noui, 2020, p.27).

In this regard, one can say that measurement of syntactic complexity took the enough important space of study because, cognitively, it is difficult to handle compared with other types of syntactic joining (Lord, 2002).

2.2.7. The Development of the two most common types of syntactic complexity measures

It is worth mentioning that there are two main developed syntactic complexity measures' types which are: length measures, and subordination measures (Bulte and Housen, 2012).

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2.2.7.1. Length measures

Research studies such as the ones undertaken by Dewaele (2000), as well as Unsworth (2008) indicate that “such results follow from circular argumentation where mean length units are included in how different proficiency levels are defined” (as cited in Bulte and Housen, 2012, p.19). that means, length units and the level of proficiency almost they are interrelated for the accuracy and validity of their results; to further explain, the linearly development with proficiency level can prove the length measures’ validity (Larsen-Freeman, 1977).

According to Miles and Ratner (2001), length units can rise beyond 4.0 words’ score because it has the validity to develop with a wide range in L1 (as cited in Bulte and Housen, 2012, p.19). Similarly, length units in L2 development can have the same rises of L1 or more, this regard refers to L2 learners’ production ability of multi morpheme or multi-word utterances (Larsen –Freeman & Strom, 1977, p.124).

2.2.7.2. Subordination measures

The available linguistic studies by Bulte and Housen (2012), indicate that subordination measures at phrasal level do not scale other syntactic complexity sources such as modification, and nominalization. In this respect, they sum up that subordination measures are limited in their linguistic scope. In addition, their indices targeted at the sentential level which known as “embedding” from the main three organizational syntactic levels though subordination.

2.2.8. Insights from studies on measures of syntactic complexity introduce

2.2.8.1. Coordination

Generally, coordination complexity assessment indicates that the indices of coordination measure by dividing the sum total number of independent clauses by the sum total number of combined and subordinate clauses (Kuiken & Veddar , 2019). In this view, Hudson (1976) emphasized that L2 studies which use CI showed an opposite results when coordination measured by focusing on coordination conjunction with a different way. However, the hybrid measure of coordination rate measured by CI, in which it is depending on the subordination amount, and the produced number of coordinate structures (Bulte & Housen, 2012).

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2.2.8.2. Subordination

To put it clearly, clausal and phrasal level do not defining by subordination measures due to their limited linguistic scope (Bulte & Housen, 2012). However, Norris and Ortega (2009) claimed that most of the subordination complexity researches have shown a mixed outcome results; since the subordinating complexity measured depend on the existing number of clauses or the sub-clauses per T unit (As cited in Noui, 2020, p.29).

2.2.8.3. Phrasal complexity

The large spread of the idea of Norris and Ortega (2009), which stated that rising in phrasal length due to the increasing of clause length made a number of researchers such as Bulte and Housen (2012), to stress on the importance of measuring the total number of words per clause.

Additionally, for Bulte and Housen (2012) factors such as clause length, which is rising through the expending of phrasal level can create a phrasal complexity, for that, clause length is relating to operationalization and definitions of the clauses. Meanwhile, to highlight the different features that built a phrasal complexity; numerous research studies have used as an alternative index of noun phrase complexity (Bulte & Housen, 2012).

2.2.9. The problem of syntactic complexity in reading and comprehension

It is important to share attention into the tight relationship between syntactic complexity and reading as well as EFL learners' reading comprehension. In one form to another syntactic complexity is considered as one of the main factors that cause the reading text complexity. Glaserfled (1970) amongst others argued that the current studies, which are applied in teaching the field of reading, have explored the teachers' inability to provide learners with the needed comprehension under the existence of complexity factors in the reading material even they unconsciously measure the reader's complexity input. As far as, there is a lack of implement strategies and tools which they should use it to assess their learners import.(as cited in Noui, 2020, p.29). However, it is useful for readers to have the ability of connecting words and phrases that exist in the reading sentence for creating coherent structure; for that, they should following syntactic links between the sentences units as possible (Glaserfled, 1970).

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In the same quest, John (n.d) point out that:

It became clear that future readability and reading comprehension research had to concentrate on three problems. First, a more reliable method had to be developed for measuring the difficulty children have in understanding materials. Second, researchers had to develop a real sophistication in linguistics so that they could learn to measure and describe the linguistic features of materials that are really important in affecting comprehension. Third, investigators had to analyze their data in far more detail than they had up to that time. (As cited in Glasersfeld, 1970, p.1).

To sum up, readers should build the sentence coherent structure by connecting its whole units or parts for solving the problem of syntactic complexity. This is considered a vital factor that affecting their reading comprehension at different levels.

2.2.10. Teachers' instructions that help EFL learners to understand complex text

According to Strands (2012), it is widely recognized that several number of EFL readers face a difficult when they deal with complex texts during reading class. However, teachers of this module also challenge with this problem. For that, they always look for tips that help them to link their learners with the given texts and tasks. Besides, teaching reading module is not the easy issue as that most of educators consider (Strands, 2012). As long as, reading is the significant skill that students need to develop, teachers should work to enhance this skill among their student, and try to facilitate their comprehension, and balance their reading while taking complex texts through following such instructions to fulfill their students reading comprehension gaps (Strands, 2012).

In this respect several research studies as (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012), demonstrate that there is a set of instructions that teachers have taking in their consideration to navigate complex texts such as providing the students with the appropriate texts to their grades for minimizing their reading comprehension difficulty (p. 10). Too often, teachers should use the anchor text in their reading courses to enhance learners' skills and comprehension strategies. This teaching tool may develop some of the students' reading techniques like text analysis and organized thinking; however, they must be clarifying the text purposes in form of direct questions to make the student read for the gist, as well as, enhancing their first reading (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012).

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Following that, teachers try to teach students close reading to help them recognize complex and unfamiliar knowledge, or link between text's thoughts to generate its comprehension; however, teachers ask the students such particular questions and highlight the evidence from texts (Robbs, 2021). Implying this tool can make readers skimming the text to get the evidence, and then exchange texts' ideas through its discussion.

Although, (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) emphasize on enhancing the students' analytical thinking and comprehension when making them writing about reading, as well as, improving their reading strategies by flexible ways such as: explain specific ideas, summarizing such reading parts...etc (p.10). Also, it is better to let learners free to choose their reading materials because independent reading supports students to understand the more difficult text, at the same time it increase learners' reading interest (Robbs, 2021).

According to Robbs (2021), teachers have to spend few times on checking their students' full comprehension of the particular printed materials by asking them a number of comprehension questions about the text content. In addition, it is preferable when teachers working to facilitate the complex syntactic texts' structures through translating them to the learners mother tongue, paraphrasing them in simple form, or reducing the amount of complex constructions in the text.

Typically, David Coleman and Susan Pimental (2011) state significant tips that teachers should recognize to select the appropriate text to their students during reading classes, which are illustrated in the following table:

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Choosing Text	Designing Text-Based Questions and Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select texts that align with complexity requirements stated in the Standards. • Use texts that are worth reading and rereading; they should show excellent craft or provide useful information. • Increase the amount of literary nonfiction and informational text for all grades. • Provide additional materials for independent student reading. • Select texts that provide research Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students opportunities to read and understand grade-level complex texts. • Begin with the text in prereading. • Base questions on the text. • Ask questions that are worth thinking about. • Require textual evidence in answering questions or performing tasks. • Incorporate group and individual instruction. • Provide activities that help improve student understanding of academic vocabulary needed to understand complex texts. • Focus on analyzing arguments and information in texts.

Table 2.1 Selecting and Using Complex Texts (David Coleman & Susan Pimental 2011), (As cited in Common Core and Literacy Strategies: Understanding Text Complexity The “Publishers’ Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy” by David Coleman and Susan Pimental (2011)”).

In a broad sense, selecting the appropriate complex text, which is going hand by hand with the right instruction can grantee the learners’ text comprehension, academic success as well as their reading advance and proficiency.

2.2.1.1. What do students need to know to navigate syntactical complex text

Several evidence describe complex texts as an educational problem for EFL learners that putting them in abiding research about how to navigate this difficulty, and what should they know to do that. Besides, constructing meaning and the good comprehension of a particular complex text is one of the major objective goals of each

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student. For that, Hirsch, (2003), point out that reading fluency needs the surrounding world knowledge which participates in complex texts' comprehension; however, this knowledge may extract from the wide reading and previous experiences.

For well comprehension, readers need to have a good knowledge about vocabulary and syntactic rules that can help them on navigating the given complicated texts (Hiebert, 2014). Fundamentally, based on Poulsen and Gravgaard (2016), facilitate the understanding of such syntactic complex text, for the students, it is obligatory for them to require the enough knowledge on subordination, coordination levels, and phrasal complexity. Furthermore, they maintain that students should have a background about all kinds of punctuation (semicolons, commas, and colons) for highlighting the length of sentences, in addition to types of conjunction, and sentences. This one leads students handle clauses, words, or phrases functions on syntactic text complexity. Therefore, Poulsen and Gravgaard, (2016), said that sentence length is the main affective reason on the syntactic complexity of texts and the reader comprehension, as far as, long sentences mainly are complex sentences, which combined multiple clauses or phrases (as cited in Carreker, p.3 , n.d).

Conclusion

As it was explained throughout this second chapter, a number of studies have shown that EFL learners' reading comprehension can affected by several factors. Inside that, syntactic complexity is considered as one of those major factors. In the view of this, that chapter has concluded this problem in three main sections. The first section presents illustrate the main factors that affecting the readers' comprehension. However, the second section determines the definitions of text, and the complexity term. It was clarified also what is text complexity in quantitative, qualitative, and the reader and task consideration. Moreover, it combined the elements those make a text more complex. However, we attempt also to discuss syntactic complexity definition, its masseurs, their developments, and such insights from studies on measures of syntactic complexity; furthermore of that, we have explained the problem of syntactic complexity in reading and comprehension.

Chapter Three: Fieldwork and Data Analysis

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CHAPTER THREE: FIELDWORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

After presenting the theoretical part in the two preceding chapters, this chapter will present the practical part of our study that aims to cover the effects of syntactic text complexity on the EFL learners' reading comprehension. Furthermore, it combines the description of the designed instruments, and the aims that are served them. However, it also involves the analysis of the data that is collected from both tools the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' questionnaire, which are used to enrich our research study with sufficient needed information. Following that, this part is provided by a summary and discussion of the analysis' findings that will be used to answer our research questions; as well as, to validate the hypothesis of the affect of syntactical texts complexities on the reading comprehension of the EFL learners.

3.1 Students' Questionnaire

3.1.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

This research tool was designed to gather accurate and concise data to check whether syntactic text complexity affects EFL learners' reading comprehension or not. It was mainly administered to second year students in order to collect data about the major obstacles that may hinder their reading skill, their reading comprehension strategies as well as the main factors that can affect their text understanding. In addition to that, syntactical complexities which might be a serious problem in reading comprehension during English classes (See the appendix 01).

3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The current questionnaire was designed for second year EFL learners. Particularly, for those who are studying reading as a module in their classes. It was structured questionnaire which was administered online. Therefore; it was sent on face book second EFL students' groups, and only 40 participants who have answered it. This instrument is a combination of open-ended, close-ended, and multiple choice questions. Moreover, it incorporates five sections which contain 24 questions. Therefore, each section with a given title and purpose will be discussed in the following subsections.

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Section One: Background Information

The general purpose behind this section is to probe the students' evaluation of their English language level (Q 01) as well as to cover their relationship with reading, or if they like to read in English in general (Q 02).

Section Two: The Reading Skill

This section is aimed to unravel the general experience of the participants with the reading skill. It contains five questions; (Q03), (Q 04), and (Q 05) attempt to gain information about the participants' views, reactions or feelings, and the situation of their class participation toward reading in English class. However, the questions number (06), (07), (08), and (09) mainly seek to find out the participants' reading challenges and how they can manage these difficulties.

Section Three: Reading Comprehension

This section tends to gather data about the participants' reading comprehension through proposing nine questions. Typically, the questions (10), (11), (12), (13), and (14) were asked to discover the participant ways or strategies that used to comprehend reading texts. In other word, their attitudes, how can they engage to understand the given text, and how many time they reading the text for recognizing its objective meaning. Besides, (Q15), (Q16), (Q17) aimed to point out the students' opinions toward the text selected by their teachers during the reading classes. In addition to the kinds of reading comprehension difficulties that they are facing while reading a text, and the main reasons behind this problem. However, the question number (18) is a dichotomous question in which the participants have to answer by yes or no. this question tend to see their evaluation to the syntactic knowledge that they have, and if it is enable them to fulfill their text comprehension.

Section Four: Syntactic Complexity

The present section consists of five questions (Q19), (Q20), (Q21), (Q22), and (Q23). Fundamentally, the major aim of those questions is to illustrate the participant's views toward texts' syntactical complexity and its impact on students' comprehension of such complicated texts. It also aims at attracting teachers' attention dealing with this problem for fulfilling their students' texts comprehension.

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Section Five: Further Suggestions

This final section concludes the participants' answers of this questionnaire. It consists of one single question in the form of an open-ended question. In a broad sense, the participants were asked to give their opinions, attitudes about how syntactic complexity affects their reading comprehension while reading a text during the English classes. In addition, this aimed to unveil the difficulties and challenges that the participants encounter in their reading comprehension. It is also meant to determine the respondent's suggestions regarding the issue under investigating.

3.1.3. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

3.1.3.1. Section One: Background Information

Item 1. How would you evaluate your present level at English?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Poor- I definitely need some help	0	0%
b. Acceptable- but I know I could improve	8	20%
c. Good- I could improve with some advanced tips	32	80%
d. Excellent- I do not think I could improve much	0	0%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.1: Participants' self-evaluation of their English level.

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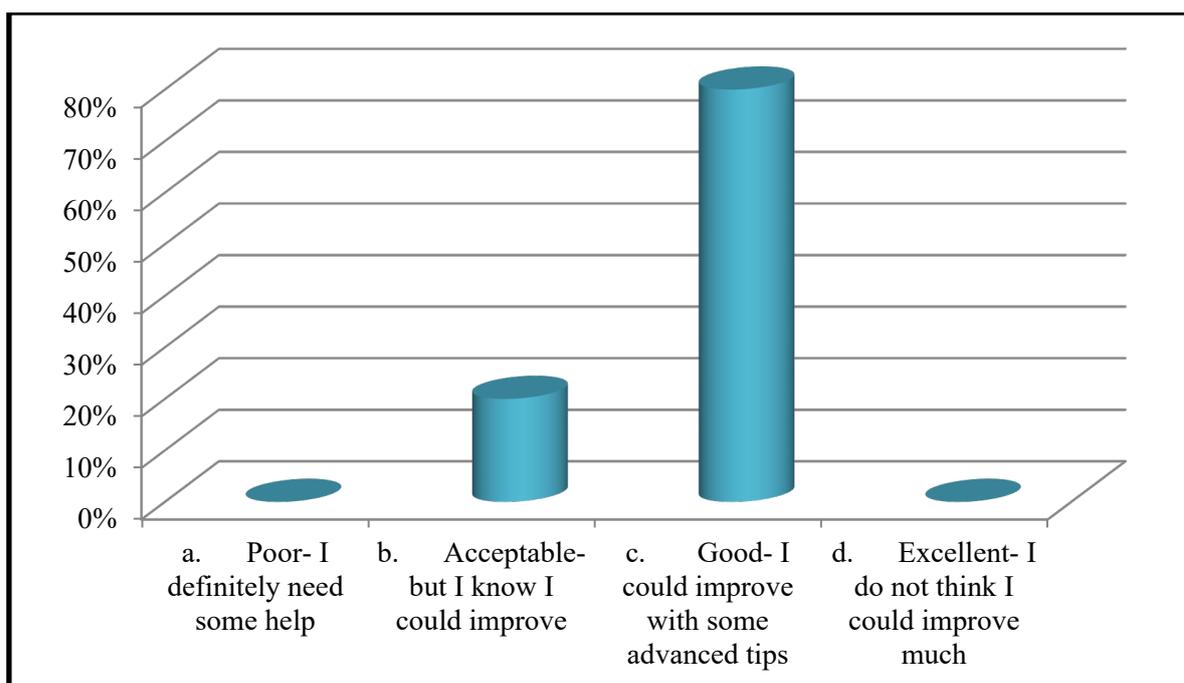


Figure 3.1: Participants' self-evaluation of their level at English.

The reason behind asking this question is to have an idea about students' self evaluation to their English level. As indicated in the table and the figure above, the majority of the second year English students by (80%) declared that they have a good English level which they can improve it with some advanced tips, and hard working on it. However, only (20%) of them stated that they have an acceptable level that they able to enhance it more for integrating their English proficiency. According to this result, it can be deduced that the second year English students have a good English level in general.

Item 2. Do you like reading in English in general?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	8	20%
b. No	32	80%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.2: Participants' responses about whether they like learning the English language or not.

The proposed question is aimed to discover the relationship of the second year English students with reading in English in general. According to what is illustrated in the

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above table, only (20%) of the participants said that they like to read in English. While, the rest majority of them stated that they don't like reading in English. These findings can interpret the reducing of the English reading level among the second year English students.

3.1.3.2. Section Two: The Reading Skill

Item 3. In your opinion, the reading skill is:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Very important	33	83%
b. Important	7	17%
c. Not important	0	0%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.3: Participants' responses about whether reading skill is important or not

This question item is intended to reveal the students' views toward the importance of the reading skill. A quick look at the data illustrated in the diagrams below, indicates that the major number of the students (83%) stressed that reading is a very important skill to them. However, the rest (17%) of them viewed that it is not an important one. Moreover, each students had to justify his/ her point of view in the following:

Students' justifications

a) For 'Very important'

- Before you write, you need to read a lot.
- To help us to develop our speaking skill and our vocabulary
- Very important , to improve our proficiency in English language
- If you can't read you can't write which is the essential skills in the language
- Improve language
- I think reading is very crucial as it has a strong relation to writing, the more you read the better you writing will be.
- Because when you have a great skills in reading it helps you to develop your understand
- Reading can cover all aspect of English language
- Because the more you read you more you are going to be better in the other skills

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- It Improves your pronunciation and vocabulary
- It's one of the language's fundamental skills
- It affects writing and speaking
- Reading is very important because it help us to understand and comprehend
- Reading holds many advantages for learning a new language. A student can acquire the vocabulary and the rules that formulate said language. Reading can count as a window to the culture and the reality of its natives, so this skill alone guarantees a general knowledge for the acquisition.
- It helps improve my level in English by helping me get acquainted with new words I did not know before, thus improving my vocabulary on one hand and also help me be more fluent speaker through loud reading on the other.
- To improve one's English, their character, and their knowledge, they must read
- It enlarge student's vocabulary
- Comprehension needs Reading skill
- Reading teaches us to how write.
- To enhance speaking professioncy and writing skills
- By reading , you can improve other skills like writing
- Without reading we can not enhance our writing capacities
- Because it helps us to acquire more vocabulary
- Through reading the skill of speaking will develop
- It us a receptive skill
- Personally speaking, I consider reading as discovering the language itself and gathering information about cultural diversity and without discovering you will be at the same level in you whole learning journey.
- Reading is important because it develops the mind by discovering new things. A person who knows how to read can educate themselves in any area of life they are interested in. We live in an age where we overflow with information, but reading is the main way to take advantage of it.
- To enrich and improve our knowledge.
- Through reading we learn new expressions and the right form of it.
- it mostly strengthen your vocab and fluency
- In order to write, one needs to read first
- Because when you read, you exercise your comprehension abilities and your analytical abilities.
- it improves the language

b) For 'Important'

- Conversation and dialogue are more important

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- Acquire new vocabulary
- Studying skill important to make information
- It increases the vocas amount
- Since it develops other skills
- It enhances the vocabulary
- To gain vocabulary

So, we can deduce that the reading skill has a value in each EFL learner's consideration.

Item 4. How often do you participate in reading in your English class?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Always	5	12%
b. Sometimes	24	60%
c. Rarely	8	20%
d. Never	3	8%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.4: Students' reading class participation.

The current item is aiming to see the percentage of the student's classroom participation. The stated results above show that the minor degrees of percentage are distributed to the students as follows: (12%) of them are always participating, (20%) who are really do that and (8%) for those who are never participating to read during their English classes. These results may refer back to the students' personal factors that can affect their reading and participation. Moreover, the biggest percentage that is noticed in these statistical results by (60%) is for the students who are sometimes participating to read in the English reading class. Generally the distinction of students' reading classroom participation refers to the students affected factors, or the personal characteristics which may affect their reading. As well as, students who participated to read text during the classroom reading sessions are active students. Since, who are rarely reading is considering as a passive student

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Item 5. When you read do you feel?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Confident	12	30%
b. Motivated	17	43%
c. Hesitated	5	12%
d. Anxious	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.5: Participants' feelings while the reading act.

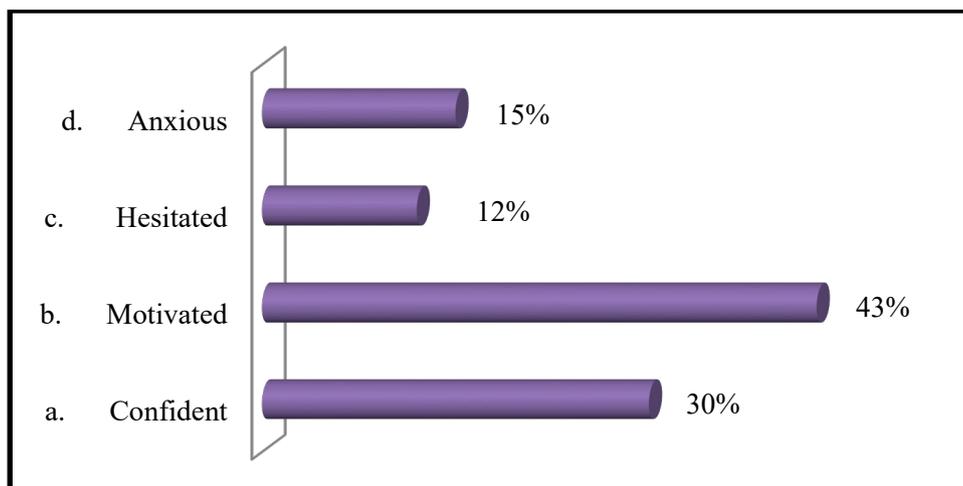


Figure 3.2 Participants' feelings during the reading act.

The goal behind this item is to seek the students' feelings while reading. The results that are presented above shows that, (30%) of the students are confident students, (43%) of them feel that they are motivated, and (15%) of them feel anxious. Moreover, the rest of them by (12%) are feeling Hesitated. From this data, we remarked that during classroom reading motivated and confident students are more than the Hesitated and anxious students. Thus, the previous results indicated that affective personal factors such as motivation and confidence may have positive effects on the students reading willingness. Besides, it is assuming that anxious and hesitated feelings can reduce the students' English class reading. Nevertheless, it may also caused by the students' fear and shyness from the

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teachers' negative feedback, or making linguistic mistakes in front of their classmates. Concerning this each student has been justified his/ her attitude in the comings:

Students' justifications

a) For 'Confident'

- I can read in front of my class mates normally
- Because I feel that i can speak fluently without any defficulties
- Because when you are always reading you will have self confident
- I feel like m native yeah man yeaah.
- Because I would be prepared
- Reading helps me feel good about myself
- Reading is interesting, fun, and very informative.
- To read well
- I do not find any difficulties because i used to read un very early stage
- Because it's not hard to read
- My reading must be evaluated by the teacher in order to know what level I'm in.
- Because I read well

b) For 'Motivated'

- Reading boost me into motivation in our study because, the more we read the more we know new knowledge
- When I read I feel that it's easy to talk Englis not like when I talk
- I realy like to in rich my vocabulary
- I find it interesting
- Because it is like you are feeding your mind and enjoying it
- It motivate to read more
- Yes, when reading, I feel excited
- Because I like reading
- I feel motivated because I enjoy it.
- When I read about something interests me i always feel motivated to know more about it.
- I feel I am cultured
- It encourage me to do better
- I feel happy
- I get motivated because, I gain new amount of vocabulary, and I feel the same way like I improve my proficiency, to carry on.

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- Reading make me feel motivated specially when I read in front of all my classmates .I got a highly motivation that time
- I practice my knowledge.
- Because reading can provide an escape from boredom or stress

c) For ‘Hesitated’

- I don't read often that's why I feel hesitant when i do read
- Bcz of stress
- A feel afraid from committing mistakes in pronunciation
- I'm not really good at reading, and when I read in front of my colleague they say I'm slow.
- I feel nervous and shy in front of the professor and colleagues

d) For ‘Anxious’

- Shyness
- I do not feel comfortable reading to an audience, might be because of lack of practice
- Doing mistakes
- Because , I feel boring
- I am shy

Item 6: What are the difficulties you encounter while reading? You may choose more than one option

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a) Slow reading speed	4	10%
b) Poor comprehension when reading material either loudly or silently	6	15%
c) Reversal of words or letters while reading	4	10%
d) Difficulty decoding syllables or single words	7	18%
e) Difficulty decoding syllables or single words	4	10%
f) Different difficulties	15	37%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.6: The participants’ difficulties encounter while reading.

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This question is included to find out the major challenges that learners may encounter while reading a text. Table 3.6 indicates that 4 participants responded by 15% to state their suffering from slow reading speed, and other 4 participants choose the problem of reversal of words or letters while reading. Moreover, eleven out of forty participants by 28% are related their reading complexity to the Difficulty of decoding syllables or single words. Whether, the majority of them by the percentage of 37% accorded that the main reason behind this investigating issue is referring to other different difficulties. In this regard the figure 3.3 below is showing the same of the preceding remarks. As long as, the verities of the factors that is affecting the students' reading ability of texts is mainly connected to different reasons; for example: the personal factors, or the unsuitability of the reading text to their current levels. Also, it can back to the teacher of the reading module strategies, or the way he present the reading text.

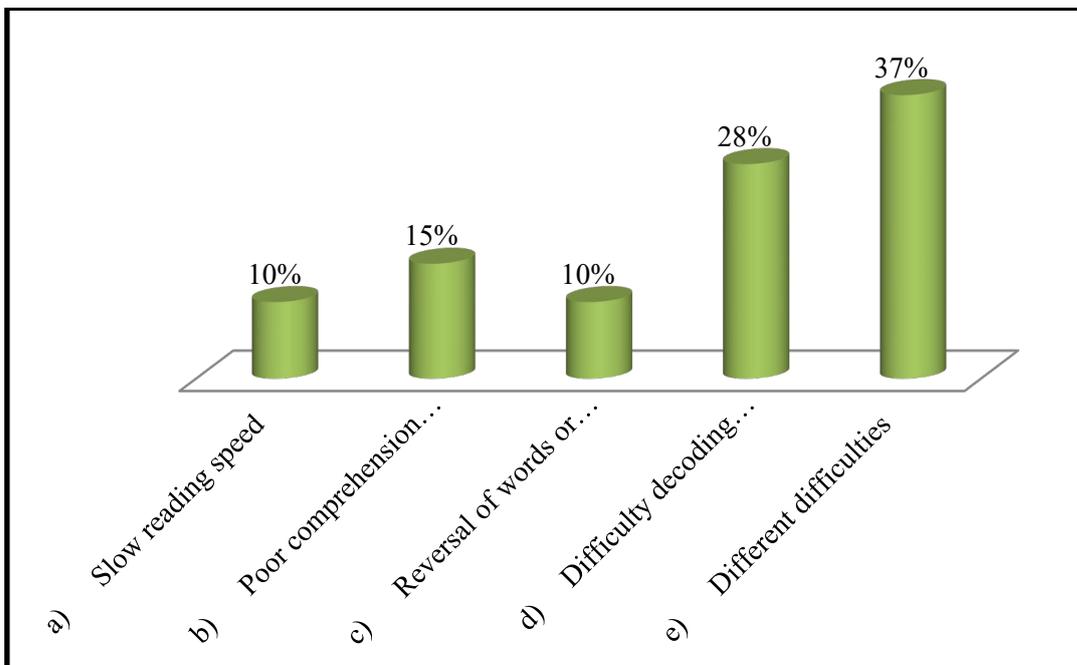


Figure 3 .3: The participants' difficulties encounter while reading.

***If others, please mention them**

On other hand, a number of respondents added other difficulties which are complicating their text reading, for instance:

- Dyslexia
- Being easily distracted.
- Finding new difficult words.
- No difficulties.

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- Finding difficulties in understanding the new words, and its pronunciation.

Item 7. How do you overcome your reading problems? You may choose more than one option

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Avoiding participation to read	5	13%
b. Read carefully	4	10%
c. Re-read to correct mistakes and to develop fluency	4	10%
d. Be patient with unfamiliar forms	3	7%
e. Asking for teacher or mate's assistance	0	0%
f. Different strategies	24	60%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.7: Participants' strategies to overpass their reading problems

As the above table shows, five participants of percentage of (13%) prefer avoiding participation to read to stay away of facing such reading problem. While, four respondents by (10%) are used to read the text carefully; beside that, other four respondents with the same percentage (10%) are trying to pass this issue by re-read to correct mistakes and to develop fluency. In the same respect, three respondents (7%) choose to be patient with unfamiliar forms which can make them identifying over new texts' forms, and gaining more knowledge about it. Surprisingly, according to the table 3.7, the existing of the percentage (0%) means that no one of the respondents in this sample use the strategy of asking for teacher or mate's assistance that may helping them on reading texts without such obstacles. Interestingly, the great majority (60%) regarded that the suggestion of using different strategies is the suitable solution to face the text reading difficulties.

Still, the main purpose of this question is probing the factors leading EFL learners' reading difficulties; in a particular form for those who stated that they challenge with this problem. Thus, reading or reading comprehension is affecting by three major factors which are: text variables, context variables, and reader variables (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) (As cited in Henouda, 2019, p.124).

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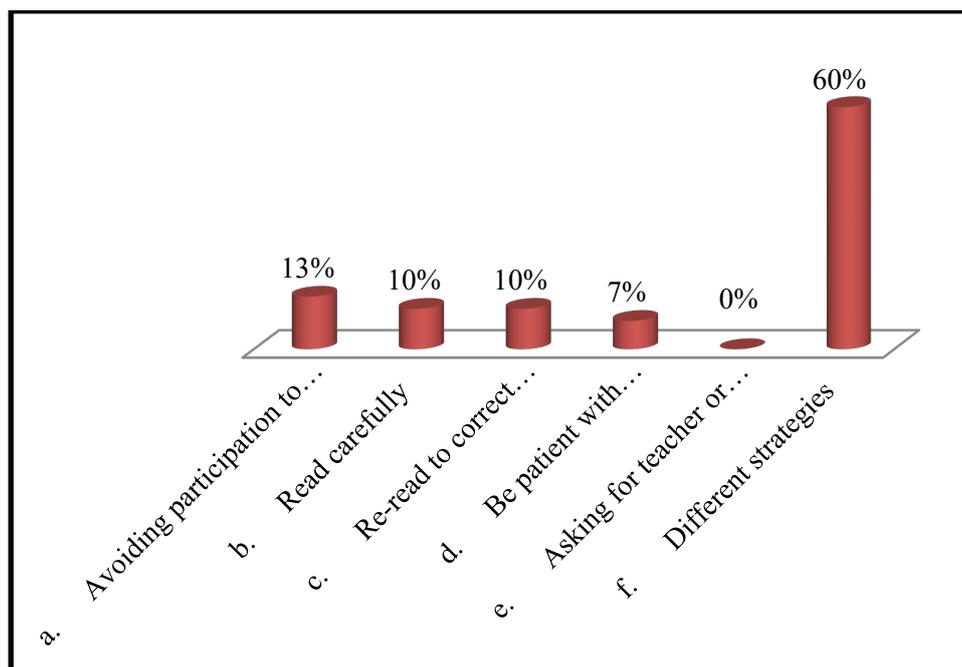


Figure 3.4 Participants' strategies to overpass their reading problems.

***If others, please mention them**

In the same quest, the participants suggest other three strategies for avoiding reading problems which are:

- Participate to read more
- B and D
- Depends on the style and language ,also the topics such as scientific ones

Item 8. Do you ever practice to improve your reading skill?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	27	68%
b. No	13	32%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.8: Participants' responses about whether they practice to improve their reading skill, or not.

This table illustrates that (38%) of the participants are not interested in enhancing their reading skill. However, the higher rate (68%) goes to those are working to make their

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reading level more advanced. Hence, it is obvious that the previous results of this question evaluate the participants' recognition about the value of the reading skill on improve EFL learners' language proficiency. This is clearly stated in the following participants' justifications:

*participants' justifications

a) For 'Yes'

- Because i know that improving my reading skills will be only through practice
- To make my pronunciation fluently
- To be more good language communicator
- Because I want to improve my English reading
- I participate to read in the class whenever there is a chance to
- Well, first, reading is one of the four language mastery skills, second it has a strong impact on my writing
- To have an excellent style of reading and develop my skills in English
- Practice improves my reading skills which improves my level.
- I like practicing to improve my reading skill
- To be fluent
- To gain more information
- Because ,I like that
- Neglecting of this skill for the most part
- I read articles and speeches to gather new information and vocabulary
- To improve my level in reading and build culture
- Since I see that it holds a great importance in my journey of learning
- Practice makes perfect
- Because it is important. You cannot know how to write if you don't read
- Cause i am enjoying reading that helps you discover your level
- Because reading skill is so important to learn a foreign language
- It is an important skill
- Owing to its guiding importance
- To improve my understanding.
- Of course just so I can be prepared for future tests for example
- Because if I don't read, my reading skill will vanish
- Because reading builds knowledge and allows to be the inquisitive knowledge seekers that we ought to be
- Because reading is very important for learning language

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b) For 'No'

- Fear of making mistakes
- I don't face difficulties in reading
- I'm too introverted to read in class if that's what you mean by participation
- Practicing in class was enough for me
- I'm lazy
- I haven't enough time
- I am not very interested
- There is no obvious reason
- My mood

- To develop my reading skill
- I'm very lazy person in reading, so I didn't practice at all, even though I want to improve my reading skills.
- I am lazy

It is obvious that the results of this question evaluate the learners' interest about the value of reading skills on the improvement of their language proficiency. As far as, this final is clearly remarked through the following students' justifications:

Item 9. In your point of view what are the essential elements that motivate the student to read (Indicate below)

This open-ended question seeks to investigate the participants' personal views toward the essential elements that motivate the students to read. Following this, each participant proposed a suggestion about the way that may rise students' motivation in reading a printed material, in which their suggestions is constructed from their personal experiences.

- I think it depends on the student, whether he likes reading or not
- Stories, poems
- Short stories. Novella.
- Reading interesting articles or stories
- The relevant topics the student's era of interest
- Confidence

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- Constant practice "practice makes perfect", and choosing reading materials that are suitable for one's level
- Maybe their projects or research
- To read something interesting
- Teachers, interesting topics , may be a friend , parents
- The topic
- E-books
- Subject and type of reading
- Passion to develop the reading skill to imitate natives
- Interesting topics to them
- Choosing subjects that interest them , practice reading everyday at least one article in a day
- The need of gaining more knowledge and information.
- Good and exciting reading materials for example: a fun story.
- The need to improve
- When the topic is interesting to their needs
- Benefits of reading
- If the texts or passages are adorable, and if the topic is interesting and helpful.
- When he is interesting in the topic of the material and like the foreign language and has certain capacity of level
- The amount of information
- Give them books or stories that have action or they are interesting in to motivate them to read
- To have competence in the other process good reader is good writer
- The topics of books because each reader search about something he likes to read about it
- Gain the trust of the students
- Reading books related to their preferences
- First of all, his desire to read; besides, his teachers piece of advice, and the some recommended books from the teacher, to improve the level and to motivate him to read

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- Teachers can help by doing some of the work for students and structuring assignments in a step-by-step manner. Also, reminding them that trying their hardest is what counts and praise their efforts. In addition , Review progress and set realistic goals
- To improve his reading skills
 - If we make a competition between student, to read, group work is a very good way to avoid boring situations, reading loudly, and accept the others help like correction or criticism.
 - Interesting topics
 - Reading short stories
 - Is to gain vocabulary
 - To gain vocabulary
 - Make activities and lessons plans for reading and encouraging students to read at home
 - Choosing reading topics that attract students
- Stimulating students' self-confidence

From the above considerable students' suggestions, we can recognize that motivation is one of the affective characteristics that affect the students reading act. However, the majority of the preceding views accorded that texts' suitability to the students' level and interest raise their reading willingness

3.1.3.3. Section Three: Reading Comprehension

Item 10. When you read a text:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. You try to understand the whole text	34	85%
b. You only look for answers to comprehension questions	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.9: Participants' techniques while reading a text.

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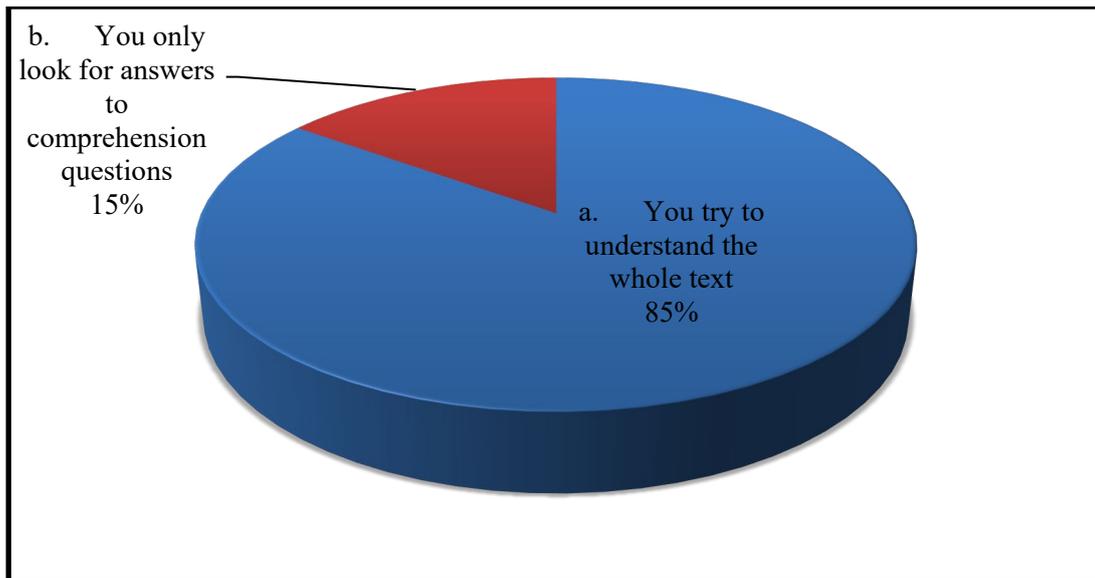


Figure 3.5 Participants' techniques while reading a text.

The current item is used to obtain the students' reading comprehension strategies. However, both table 3.9 and the figure 3.5 results show that the majority of the respondents by (85%) are trying to understand the whole text during texts' reading comprehension. Nevertheless, only six respondent by (15%) used to look only for the answers of comprehension questions. Generally, we discovered that the majority of the students are used to imply the strategy of understanding the whole text during the reading comprehension act. In addition, there are other strategies which are illustrated in the coming participants' suggestions:

Others

- Reading the text. Then trying to answer the questions
- Understand the difficult words
- It depends on the purpose I am reading for, if it's for pleasure I try to understand as much as possible. If it's to answer certain questions then I only focus on what is needed to answer.

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Item 11. How many times do you need to read the text to get a full understanding of it?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Once	6	15%
b. Twice	23	58%
c. More	11	27%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.10: The number of participants' attempts of reading for understanding a text.

This question is aimed to see how much time students spend reading the text to fulfill their comprehension. Moreover, the results illustrated on the table 3.10 noted that six of the respondents by (15%) have the ability to comprehend the text from the first reading, that may refer to their reading fluency, and their mind's perspicacity, or they are having a high degree of attention. Whereas, the majority of them by the percentage of (58%) asserted that they used to reread the text another time to complete their text understanding, which means that they have to check the text knowledge twice for ensuring their comprehension. Besides, the rest (27%) of those respondents said that they need to reread the text more than twice time for recognizing the whole text meaning. Consequently, this final set of participants are challenging with the lack of attention and concentration, lack of the text background knowledge, or the lack of reading practices.

Item 12. When you read, can you understand the aim behind reading certain texts easily?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	28	70%
b. No	12	30%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.11: Students' understanding of the text's aim

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The objective of this item is to see whether the students are easily recognizing the aim behind certain texts or it takes time with them. As clearly shown on the above table 3.11, eleven out of forty participants by (30%) stated that it is difficult for them to get the main aim behind the text. However, the majority of them by (70%) emphasized that they can understand the general idea of the reading text easily. Nevertheless, both of the two participants categories have been justified their answers as following:

Students' justifications

a) For 'Yes'

- I don't know why
- Trying to give a full comprehension
- Because I read carefully
- I can grasp the main idea of the text
- I try to look for the pre-reading questions, and extract the main ideas and keyword to get an understating of the objective behind reading that passage.
- It depends on the contents
- Because of the easy vocabulary or content
- Through discovering the important elements
- My language level allows me to easily grasp the meaning behind the material
- Because I analyse the text
- I don't understand this question.
- If the text is clear, i don't see why there would be a difficulty in not getting it
- When you have a good vocabulary initially is easier to comprehend certain texts
- Iam intelligent
- Simple clear words, short sentences, direct style, abordable topic or piece of information.
- I can enfer what they want to convey
- I would be to understand the topic
- Because I don't just read I try to analyze the text
- Yes improving English
- I already have chosen certain books to be read, knowing the aim, but I easily understand the aim from the content and sometimes from the writer when he's well-known
- Reading help us to understand the texts easily

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- The main idea
- The key words help to understand the aim of the text, and sometimes a simple understanding also helps to get the idea, it is not necessary to understand the whole text though.
- Since I read all kinds of topics it gets much easier
- Because of habitual reading

b) For 'No'

- Some texts are not easy to be understood
- Some difficult words
- Because I found some difficult words that I don't really know their meaning
- I am not good in pronunciation
- It depends actually on what kind of text I have. In general, when there's not so much work on hiding the true meaning, it is easy to understand.
- As i said before it depends on the subject
- Actually it depends on the topic and vocabulary that is used in the text
- Because sometimes the text is difficult to understand
- Because my vocabulary is poor
- I need more time to understand
- Because of the difficulty of the new vocabulary

Importantly, what is remarkable from these explanations is that students who cannot understand certain text aim easily, they are mainly facing a number of obstacles that impact their text comprehension.

Item 13. Do you have the ability to be more engaged with texts which:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Contain familiar topics	16	40%
b. Made of short paragraphs	9	22%
c. Contain simple vocabulary and constructions	13	33%
d. Guided by simple instructions	2	5%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.12: Characteristics of texts that engaged students to read.

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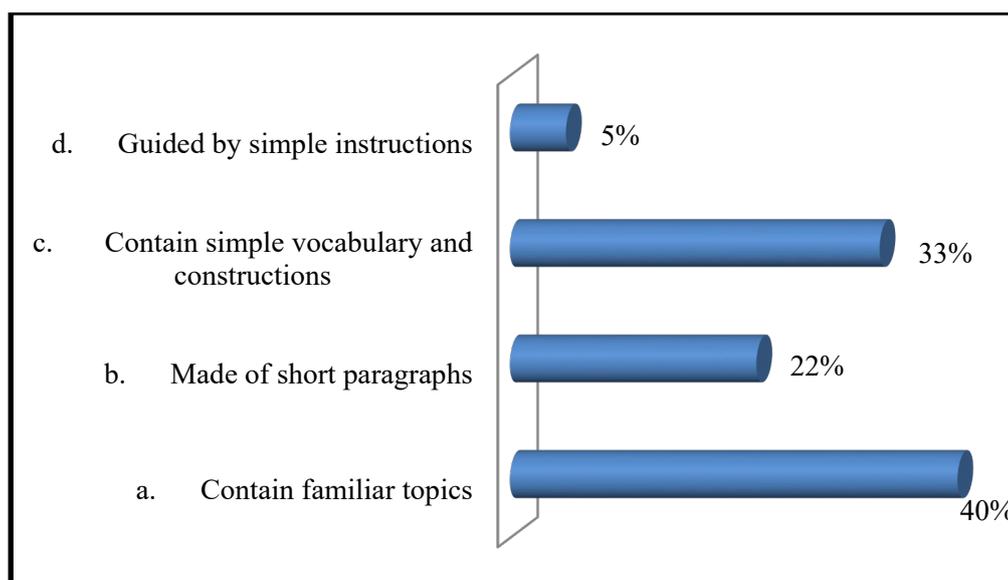


Figure 3. 6. Characteristics of texts that engage students to read.

The aim of this question is to identify the preferable kinds of texts that most of the students are more engaged to it. As it stated on the table 3.12, most of the students by (40%) prefer the texts which include a familiar topics, which due to the using of their background knowledge or their prior information during the reading comprehension. While, (22%) of them are more engaged with the text that made of short paragraphs. However, around (33%) of those students are often engaged with text that containing simple vocabulary and constructions. That may interpret their lack of rich vocabulary while, the lowest rate (5%) of them chose the once that guided by simple instructions.

Item 14. Do you have the ability to be integrated with different text types and styles of scripts?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	36	90%
b. No	4	10%
Total	40	100%

Table 3. 13. Students' ability to be integrated with different text types and styles of scripts.

The current results of this table reveal that four out of those forty participants asserted that they have not the ability to be integrated with different text types and styles of

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scripts .while the vast majority of them by (90%) declared that they have the ability to do that. It can be said that this is refers to the new knowledge for them, newest genres, or types of structure.

Item 15. In your opinion, texts provided by your teacher in the course are: You may choose more than one option.

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Written in clear and simple language	3	8%
b. Complex and beyond your level	2	5%
c. Well exemplified	1	2%
d. Unclear and ambiguous	1	2%
e. Interesting and exciting	1	2%
f. Uninteresting and dull	5	13%
g. More than one characteristic	27	68%
Total	40	100%

Table 3. 14: Characteristics of texts provided by teachers in the course.

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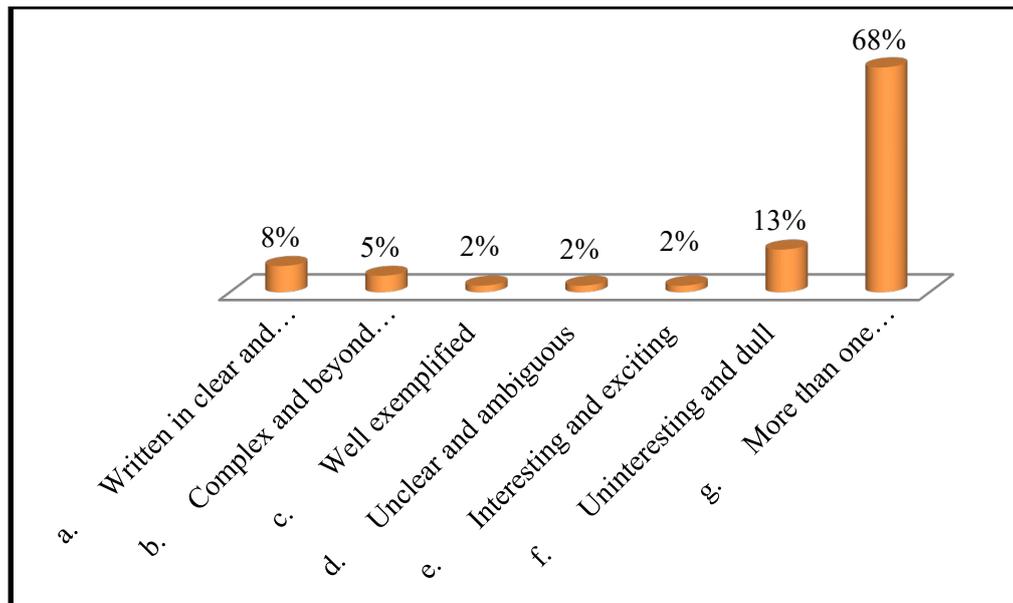


Figure 3.7 : Characteristics of texts provided by teachers in the course.

As shown on Table 3. 14 and the figure 3.7 above, three respondents declared that texts provided by their teacher are written in a clear and simple language, but other two respondents shown that this provided text are Complex and beyond your level. However, there are three participants by the same percentage (2%) gave different views, in what the first stated that the teacher give a well exemplified texts, and the second said that they are unclear and ambiguous; whereas, the third one found them interesting and exciting. Beside, five respondents indicate that their teachers give uninteresting and dull texts during the course. Despite of all this, the majority of them (68%) accorded that those texts are characterized by more than one characteristic. It is clearly interpreted that, students who are claimed that the texts providing during the course by the teacher are dull and uninteresting, or they are complex and unclear are mainly poor readers, and they are suffering from lack of text knowledge. While, the others who are found them interesting, and well exemplified texts are surly advanced readers.

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Item 16. Do you have any reading comprehension difficulties?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	29	72%
b. No	11	28%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.15: Students' response about if they have a reading comprehension difficulties.

Regarding to the remarkable results in the table 3.15, the vast number of the respondents by (72%) demonstrated that they are struggling with a number of reading comprehension difficulties. However, (28%) of them declared that they have not any reading comprehension difficulty.

If yes, what kind of difficulties?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. The inability to recognize the types of text	2	5%
b. The inability to connect background knowledge with a new one	1	2%
c. The inability to understand complex sentences	11	27%
d. The inability to understand new vocabulary	10	25%
e. Lack of attention	13	33%
f. All of them	3	8%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.15.1: Kinds of reading comprehension difficulties that face student in reading a text.

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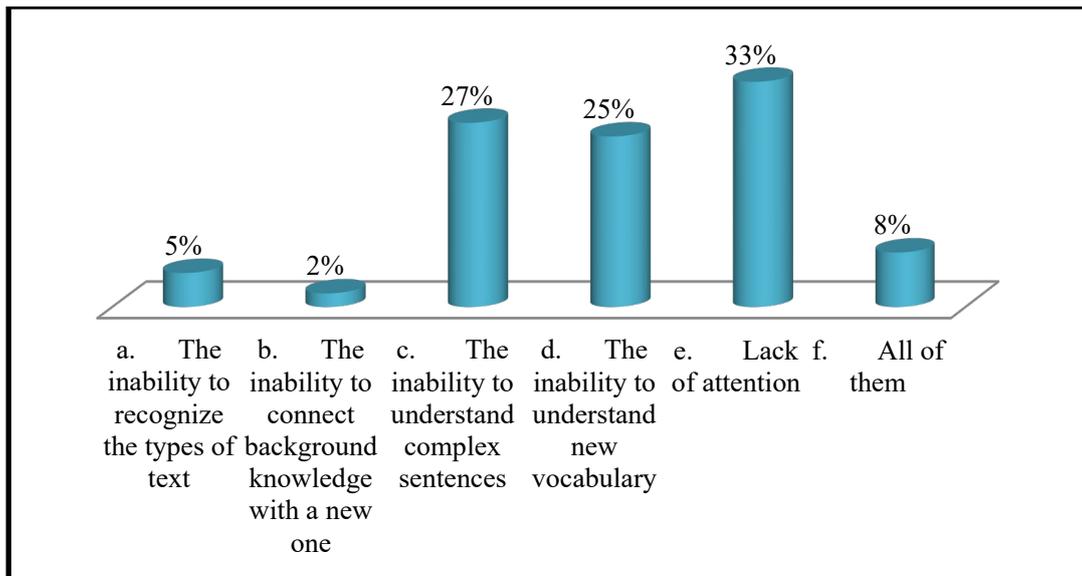


Figure 3.8: Kinds of reading comprehension difficulties that face student in reading a text.

In the same quest, participants who claimed before that they are challenged by reading comprehension problems are specifying their difficulties according to the preceding suggestions on table 3.15.1. In fact, the above figure 3.8 shows that (5%) have a problem with the inability to recognize the types of text, and (2%) their reading comprehension problem is the inability to connect background knowledge with a new one. However, (27%) of them are struggling with the inability to understand complex sentences. At the same time, other (25%) of the sample cannot understand the meaning of the text easily because of their inability to understand new vocabulary. Moreover, the vast rate of them (33%) stressed that their main problem in reading comprehension of the printed material is the lack of attention. In addition, the rest of those participants (8%) showed their suffering from all these difficulties. It is important to note that all these reading comprehension problems which students find them during classroom reading act are established by such reasons.

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Item 17. Would you specify the main reasons behind your reading comprehension difficulties? You may choose more than one option.

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies	2	5%
b. Having poor vocabulary	2	5%
c. Having poor background knowledge	2	5%
d. Facing difficulty in recalling previous knowledge	0	0%
e. Learning in disorganized and noisy environments	12	30%
f. Lack of exposure to different text genres and different text structures	4	10%
g. All of them	1	2%
h. More than one reason	17	43%
Total	40	100%

Table 3. 16: Reasons behind students’ reading comprehension difficulties.

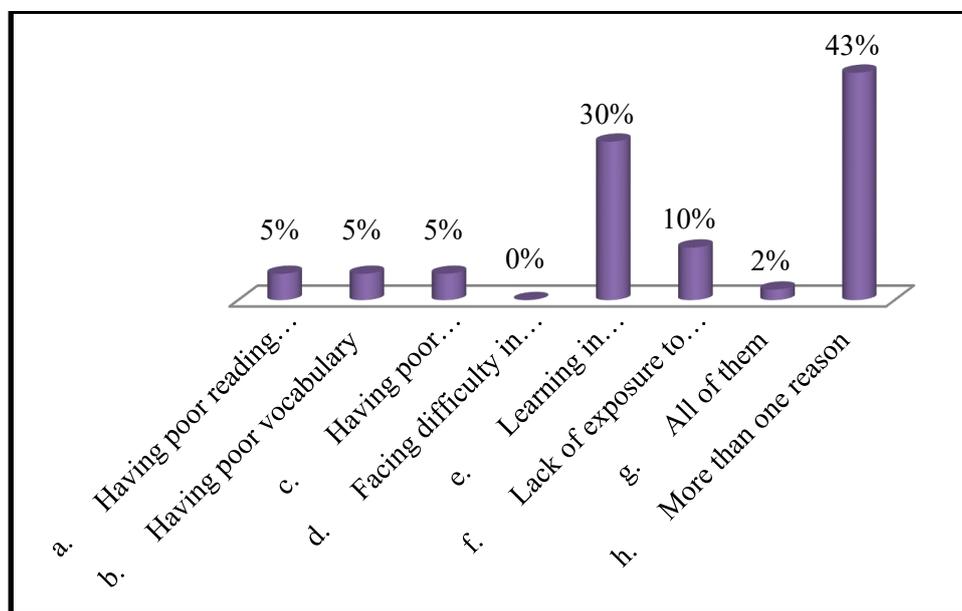


Figure 3. 9: Reasons behind students’ reading comprehension difficulties.

Through posing the questions in the item 17, we intended to potentially reveal the main reasons behind students’ reading comprehension difficulties. So, According to the table 3.16 and the figure3.9, we noted the percentage (5%) in the first three sets; in which

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every set of them included by two participants. The first set's participants having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies, and the second having poor vocabulary, but the third one having poor background knowledge. While, no one declared about facing difficulty in recalling previous knowledge; twelve out forty respondents by (30%) said that they cannot comprehend a text easily because of learning in disorganized and noisy environments. Yet, four students (10%) viewed that their principal reason is the lack of exposure to different text genres and different text structures. What is evident in the table above is that the majority of the students (17 representing 43 %) indicated that they have more than one reason. However, only one participant (2%) chose all those preceding reasons. Hence, reasons behind reading comprehension difficulties are differentiating form one student to another; even they are living the same learning experiences.

Item 18. Do you consider that your syntactic knowledge is adequate enough to complete text comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	27	68%
b. No	13	32%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.17: Students' evaluating of their syntactic knowledge satisfactory to complete text comprehension

This item is considered as an interrelated unit to the coming question since it is proposed to identify the students' syntactic ability in complete text comprehension. However, from the above table we notice that the major rate comprising 27 participants out of 40, which makes a percentage of 68% determined that their syntactic knowledge is adequate enough for a complete text comprehension. However, the remaining thirteen participants stated that their syntactic knowledge is not satisfactory enough to fulfill their text comprehension. This implies that, most of them have a full linguistic ability, a complete syntactic knowledge, or they are familiar with most of texts' structures.

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3.1.3.4. Section Four: Syntactic Complexity

Item 19. Do you find that texts contain complex syntactic structures?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	28	70%
b. No	12	30%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.18: Students' responses about whether they find complex syntactic structures in the reading texts or not

The proposed question targeted to discover whether students find a syntactic complexity in texts, or not. Interestingly, we remarked from the table 3.18 that most of the answers turned around the choice “yes” with the percentage of (70%). In this respect, those participants stated that they find complex syntactic structures in the reading texts because of their unfamiliarity with such text structures, or it can be for their lacking of the syntactic knowledge structures. However, 30 % of them asserted that they did not facing any complex syntactic structure, this refers to their proficiency in syntactic structure knowledge and their reading advance.

Item 20. Which of the following levels of syntax affect(s) your reading comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. The level of words	12	30%
b. The level of phrases	5	13%
c. The level of clauses	17	42%
d. All of them	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.19: The Syntactic levels that affecting students' reading comprehension.

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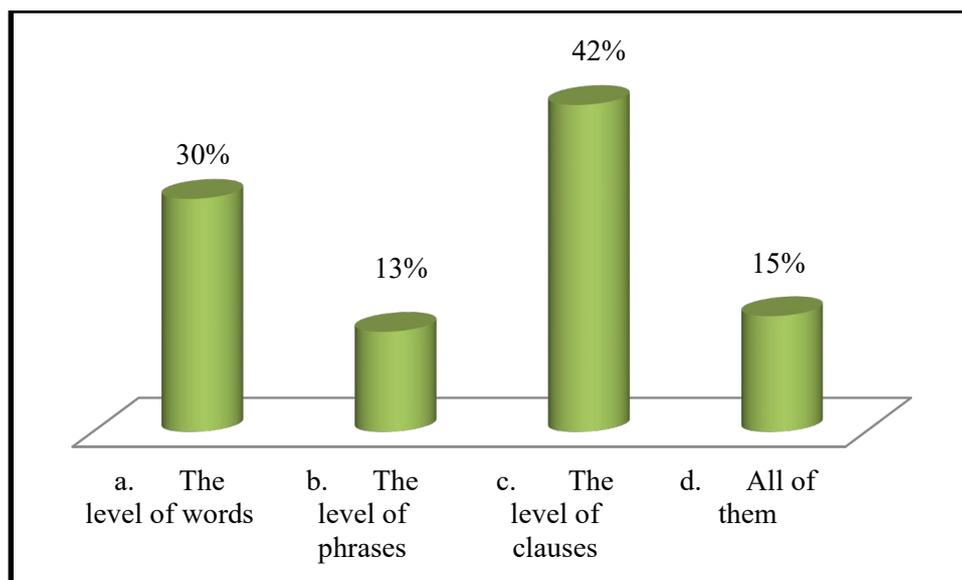


Figure 3. 10: The syntactic levels that affecting students’ reading comprehension.

This item respectively, aimed to figure out the different syntactic levels that can affect the learners’ reading comprehension. Noticeably, the table 3.19 signifies that (30%) of the respondents declared that they have a problem with the level of words. While, the other rate of (13%) asserted that their problem is with the level of phrases. Otherwise, the figure3.10 illustrated that the highest rate (42%) was for the participants whose find a difficulty with the level of clauses. In the similar regard, another rate by the percentage of (15%) is facing a complexity with all the preceding levels. in this consideration, it is important to highlight that the previous results refers to the students lack of the syntactic knowledge especially their lack in the grammatical level, or maybe they did not studied the adequate grammar courses that complete their syntactic level.

Item 21. Does your teacher simplify the complex syntactic structures in the text for you before reading?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	28	70%
b. No	12	30%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.20: Students’ response about whether their teachers simplify the complex syntactic structures in the text for you before reading

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The current results which are illustrated in the table 3.20 point out that a twelve out of forty participants by (30%) stated that their teachers do not simplify the complex syntactic structures in the text for them before reading. However, the most number of them by (70%) asserted that their teachers are doing that before they start reading a text. That is mainly to cop them into the text concern.

***If yes, how do you prefer your teacher to facilitate the complex syntactic structures for you before reading? You may choose more than one option**

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Translating them to Arabic	4	14%
b. Paraphrasing them in simple form	16	58%
c. Reducing the amount of complex constructions in the text	6	21%
d. All of them	2	7%
Total	28	100%

Table 3.20.1: Students' preferable teachers' ways of facilitating the complex syntactic structures before reading

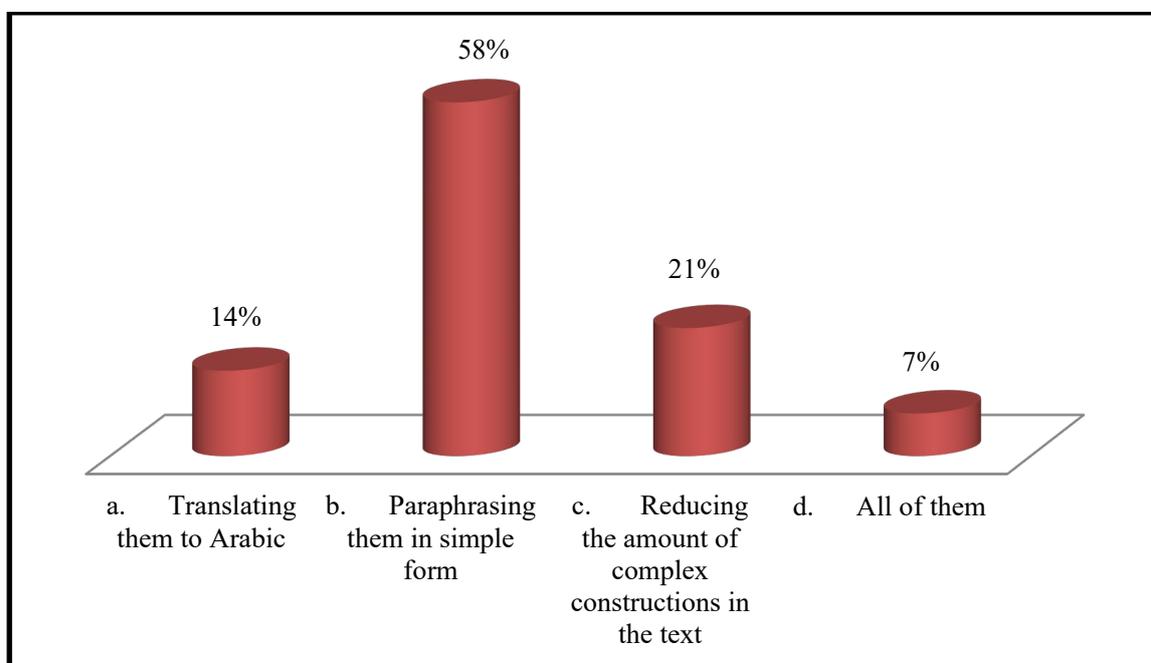


Figure 3.11: Students' preferable teachers' ways of facilitating the complex syntactic structures before reading.

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The general aim behind this sub-subsequent item is to cover how students prefer their teachers to facilitate the complex syntactic structures for them before reading. Concerning that, both of the table 3.20.1 and the figure 3.11 signified that (14%) of the participants prefer their teachers to translate the text to the Arabic language before reading it, and other (21%) prefer them to reduce the amount of complex constructions in the text before reading it. However, the highest percentage of (58%) from the general number of these participants wanted their teachers to paraphrase the reading text in simple form before to start reading it. While, the rest of them by (7%) indicated that their teachers should working with all of those ways for facilitating the texts' complex syntactic structures to them before reading it. Thus, teacher should be a facilitator, and an instructor in the same time during the reading class. In other word, students need their teachers' help to overcome their syntactic structure problems while reading a text.

Item 22. Concerning the texts of your tests and exams, do they include:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Only the constructions you have been exposed to	9	22%
b. Different constructions (familiar and unfamiliar ones)	31	78%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.21: Students' response about what their exams' texts include.

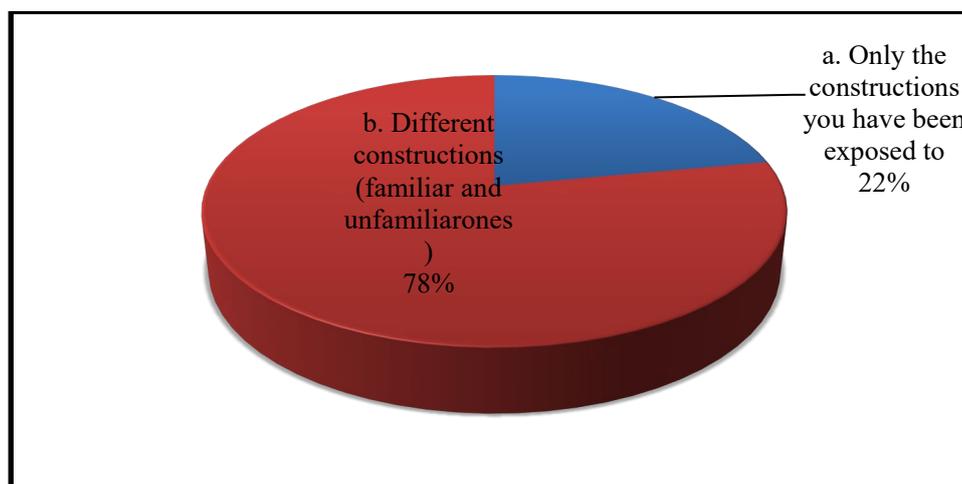


Figure 3.12: Students' response about what their exams' texts include.

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The results shown in the table 3.21 and the figure 3.12 presented that nine out of forty participants responded that their tests and exams' texts contained only the constructions they have been exposed to. While, the majority (78%) of them found that the texts existed in their exams and tests' paper structured with different constructions (familiar and unfamiliar ones).

Item 23. Do you think that syntactic complexity affects your reading comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	33	83%
b. No	7	17%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.22: Students' views about whether syntactic complexity affects their reading comprehension

The item number twenty three aimed to explore if the syntactic complexity that affect EFL learners' reading comprehension during the reading class. According to the table above, the majority of the participants (83%) confirmed that syntactic complexity and texts' difficult structures are affecting their reading comprehension. however, the other (17%) of them declared that they have not any problem with the complex syntactic texts' structures, and it does not affect their reading comprehension.

If yes, is that because? you may choose more than one option.

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. It enables you to be more exposed to language features	6	18%
b. It hurdles your accuracy and creates more deficiencies in reading	2	6%
c. It allows you to practice the constructions dealt with earlier	4	12%
d. It makes the text more demanding of time and focuses	12	36%
e. More than one reason	9	28%
Total	33	100%

Table 3.22.1: Reasons that make syntactic text complexity affects the students' reading comprehension

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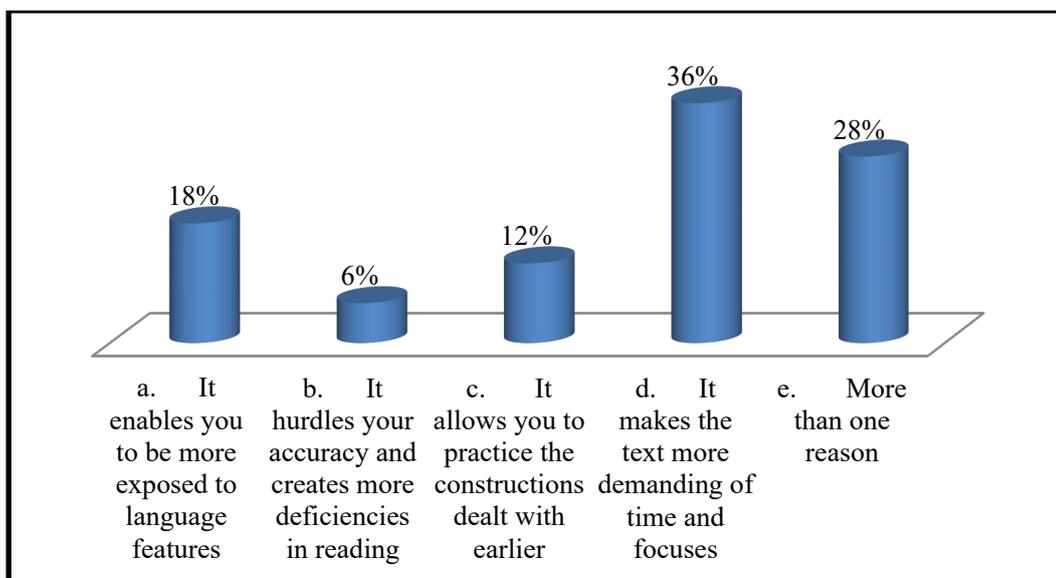


Figure 3. 13: Reasons that make syntactic text complexity affect the students’ reading comprehension.

This subsequent item aims to explicate the answers given within the closed question. In fact, this question is proposed to cover the possible reasons that enable syntactical text complexities impact on students’ reading comprehension. So, as it is demonstrated in the figure3.13 and table (3.22.1); 18% of the participants shown that syntactic text complexity enables them to be more exposed to language features. While, the minor number 6% of them note that it hurdles their accuracy and creates more deficiencies in reading. Whereas, about 12% of the participants claimed that syntactic complexities allows them to practice the constructions dealt with earlier. Evidently, form the figure above we noted that the highest rate by (36%) was for the participants who asserted that syntactic text complexity implies to make the text more demanding of time and focuses. Besides, the rest percentage (28%) of the participants demonstrates that syntactic text complexity affects the students’ reading comprehension because of more than one reason.

3.1.3.5. Section Five: Further issues, and Suggestions

Please, write any other comments or suggestions about how syntactic complexity affects your reading comprehension while reading text.

More specifically, this section tends to give the respondents the chance for identifying their views about the issue under the investigation. In this quest, we asked them to express their opinions about how syntactic complexity affects their reading comprehension while reading text; at the same time, to give their suggestions about this

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problem. Noticeably, only two respondents out of forty answered this question. As such they reported: “Very difficult”; “It may lead me to be out of subject”. In this respect, it can say that both of the participants are challenging with the complexity of texts’ syntactic language during their reading class. Nevertheless, the first one views the syntactic complexity as a difficult issue that making them struggle with his/her reading comprehension of the expected text. While, the second one find that the challenge with this problem can make his/her text comprehension out of the subject.

3.2. Teachers’ Questionnaire

3.2.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

The significant aim behind using this questionnaire is to unveil the different attitudes and insight of EFL teachers at Mohamed kheidher Biskra University toward the effect of syntactic text complexity on the EFL learners’ reading comprehension. Additionally, it is targeting to obtain how can teachers help their students to overpass their reading comprehension difficulties in that case.

3.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire

This data collection tool is designed according the principal basisof the theoretical part of our investigation. Fundamentally, this questionnaire is conducted for EFL reading module’s teachers. In a particular form, it is administered for seven teachers at Mohamed khidher Biskra University. It was emailed to them as an online questionnaire. Since, this instrument is a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire; as well as, multiple choice questions. Following that, this questionnaire consists of twenty four items; besides, they are distributed on five sections as the following:

Section One: General Background

The aim behind this section is to congregate the participants’ general background information. Initially, it comprises two questions; the first question aims to present the participants’ degree: license, magister/master, and doctorate. Since, the second one holds to know their exact apprenticeship for seeking their experience in teaching English.

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Section Two: The Reading Skill

This section tends to collect the teachers' opinions about the reading skill and its importance in learning the language. Clearly put, it includes seven questions; (Q3) seeks to explore the most important skill that teacher focus on for instance: speaking, listening, writing, reading, all of them, or if they focus on more than one skill. While, (Q4) is asking the teachers to give their views about the relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency with specifying the kind of the relationship between them. As long as, (Q05) obtained their opinions about having a good reading skill, is it compulsory, preferable, or optional, and to provide their justifications. However, the questions 06, 07, 08 are asking about whether they encourage their students to read, how do they find teaching reading, and if the time allocated to teaching reading is enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies, or not. Whereas, the question number nine is for covering the teachers' advices to the students when they face unfamiliar words during reading tasks.

Section Three: Reading Comprehension

Generally, this section contains seven questions which serve to gain rich data from teaches about the students' reading comprehension, and the challenges that facing them during reading certain texts. Besides, the two questions (Q10), and (Q11) asked the teachers about the purpose behind assigning reading tasks, and what do reading comprehension comprises. In other hand, the collection of (Q12), (Q13), (Q14), (Q15), and (Q16) is emphasizing to identify if their students have a reading comprehension difficulties, or not; if yes how many of them are having it. After word, what kind of these difficulties that impact their reading comprehension, what are their reasons, and their factors; in addition, to the text variables that control EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Section Four: Syntactic Complexity

The main purpose behind proposing this section is to highlight the teachers' insight about the syntactical text complexity, and how it can affect their learners' reading comprehension during the reading class. Following that, how can they help them to navigate this problem. Basically, this part is consisting of seven questions (Q17),(Q18),(Q19),(Q20), and (Q21) are exactly looking for the second year student texts' struggles, the complexity of texts providing in the course session, causes of their

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complexity; in addition, to the reasons of their syntactic complexity problems , and the syntactic levels that can affect their students reading comprehension. However, (Q22), and (Q23) are trying to discover how can syntactic complexity affect EFL learners' reading comprehension, and which is the text variable that control EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Section Five: Further Suggestions

In this final section are free to provide their insight views, and making suggestions about the issue under investigation. However, they can also comment on the questionnaire itself.

3.2.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

3.2.3.1. Section One: General Background

Item 1. Would you specify your degree?

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
e. Master	1	14%
f. Magister	6	86%
g. Doctorate	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.23: Participants' degrees

Through the data illustrated in the table bellow we notice that only one teacher has the master degree, and the other six teachers have the magister degree. However, no one of them has obtained his/her doctorate degree yet. So, it can say that most of them are experienced teachers; since the majority of them have the magister degree.

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Item 2. How long have you been teaching EFL at university?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
d. 1-5 years	0	0%
e. 5-10 years	1	14%
f. More than 10 years	6	86%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.24: Teachers' years of experience in teaching English at university

The aim behind this question is to explore the teachers years of experience in teaching the English language at university. In this respect, we remarked from the table 3.2 that no one of the participants has taught less than five years. However, one of them has been teaching English for 1-5 year, since the majority of them by (86%) pointed that they have been teaching English for more than 10 years. Hence, the major number of them is experienced in their domain, or they are professional teachers.

Section Two: The Reading Skill

Item 3. As a teacher of English language, which language skill(s) do you focus on more?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Speaking	0	0%
b. Listening	0	0%
c. Writing	1	14%
d. Reading	0	0%
e. All of them	2	28%
f. More than one skill	4	58%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.25: Skills that take the teachers' focus interest during teaching.

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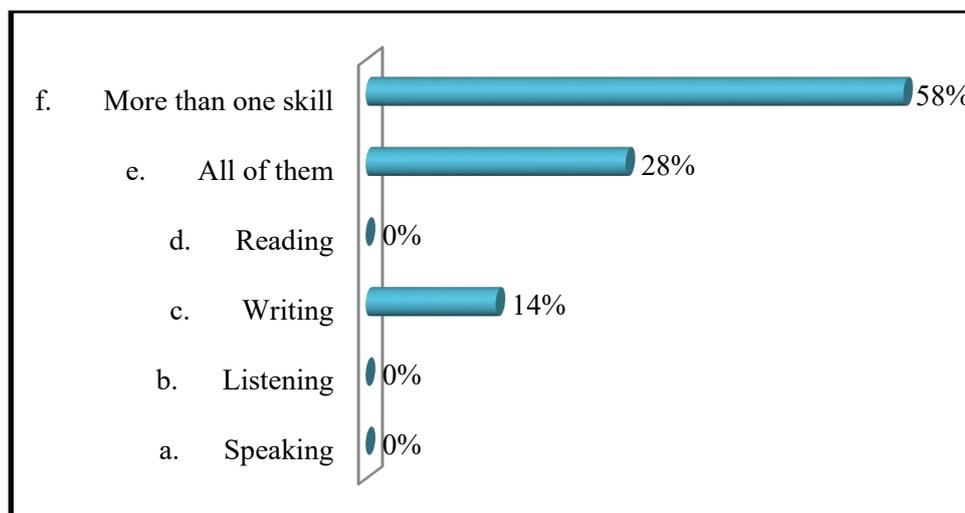


Figure 3.14 Skills that take the teachers' focus interest during teaching.

The major aim of this question is to identify the skills that English language teachers concentrate to improve their students' competence. The results that is stated on the table 3.25 and the figure3.14 show that (14%) of the participants are focusing on the writing skill, and (28%) of them are concentrating on the four skills. As long as, the majority of the participants (58%) are interesting to focus on more than one skill during their class teaching. In this sense, teachers have been justified their answers as following:

a) For 'writing'

- The most practical and the widely demanded in business & academic environments.

b) For 'All of them'

- Any language is a whole entity and needs all its parts to stand and to have a spirit that makes it useful.
- They are equally important

c) For 'More than one skill'

1. Speaking +listening+writing

- The productive skills are crucial for Students at University.

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2. Speaking + writing

- These are the 2 productive/ communicative skills that students need to improve and master the most. They are the most needed in test and exams even though listening and reading are closely related to them.

3. Speaking + reading

- I teach literature and Civilization modules. I tend to rely on reading and speaking because of the nature of both modules. Both deal with reading materials and students use speaking as a means of communication.

Regarding to that, most of the teachers are mainly give their attention to work on more than on skill during teaching. For that, each one of them has been justified their focus maybe according to their proficiency and their students' needs. In the whole, teachers are working to fulfill their students' lacks through helping them to improve their skills.

Item 4. From your experience as a teacher of English language, do you think that there is a relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
g. Yes	7	100%
h. No	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.26: Teachers' response about if there is a relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency.

Table 3.26 reports teachers' views about if there is a relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency, or not. According to the available results, all the participants (100%) confirmed the existing of reading and EFL learners' language proficiency's relationship.

Please specify what kind of relationship exists between them

Subsequently, in this interrelated question all the participants have been clarified the kind of relationship exists between the two elements as following:

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- The more students read the better their grades will be and their knowledge will boost
- Reading contributes in promoting proficiency as it provides the learner with vocabulary, it helps him master grammar, it enlarges his knowledge and culture about the target language, it is a reference for correct writing rules (style-mechanics use ...) - it improves pronunciation....
- Reading is an essential skill that permits EFL learners to build their language in terms of vocabulary, grammar and orthography...
- Our students have no Anglophone surrounding so, without reading 'and watching movies) there is no way for them to acquire the needed vocabulary and to make it grow.
- Reading is the major source of language to boost all the other skills
- Reading is a basic skill that paves the way to the development of other skills

Based on teachers' insights we can conclude that, most of the English teachers consider the reading skill as a fundamental receptive skill that participates on creating the students' language production, and proficiency.

Item 5. What do you think of having good reading skills?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
e. Compulsory	5	82%
f. Preferable	4	28%
g. Optional	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.27: Teachers' views toward having good reading skills

The answers displayed in table 3.27 show that, about (28%) of the participants said that it is preferable for having a good reading skill. Overall, the majority of them (82%) insisted for the compulsorily of having good reading skills. However, they provided their justifications as following:

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For ‘Compulsory’

- Students need to know what to read and how...
- Being able to read is a must. Reading is the first skill a new learner has to master.
- Reading skills pave the way for grasping the language well
- Poor reading skills affect the efficiency of learning

a) For ‘Preferable’

- Being a good reader leads generally to being a good writer as reading materials function as a source of ideas as well as grammar, lexis and pronunciation models.
- The more you read, the faster you do it and the faster you read the more you master the language

Since, having a good reading skill is not an optional choice for all of the EFL learners; teachers see having this skill is a compulsory matter for them. This may due to its principle role on learning, and acquiring the language. But, its preference can refer back to learners’ characteristics, and their willingness to read, or learn.

Item 6. Do you encourage your students to read?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
e. Yes	7	100%
f. No	0	0
Total	7	100%

Table 3.28: Teachers’ encouragement to their students.

The intention behind this question is to discover whether EFL English teachers in encouraging their students to read, or not. The table bellow presents that all the participants certified their encouragement to their students.

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***If yes, please say how?**

In the coming statement teachers have been clarified how they do encourage their learners to read and why they do that.

- Extensive reading for improving their knowledge
- Assigning research papers and projects- doing reading comprehension sessions- encouraging extensive reading by suggesting titles of books...
- I constantly urge my students to read daily. Reading helps EFL students to build their language, to master the vocabulary and to excel in it
- By asking them to summarize the book I gave them to read and to present that summary orally in Oral Expression sessions.
- motivate them, assign titles to read and prepare book reviews,
- Assigning reading tasks

Thus, teachers may encourage their students to read for its significance role in learning and teaching of language. Even so, they are doing through making them always related with reading act.

Item 7. How do you find teaching reading?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. An easy task	1	14%
b. A hard task	6	86%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.29: Teachers' attitudes concerning to teach reading.

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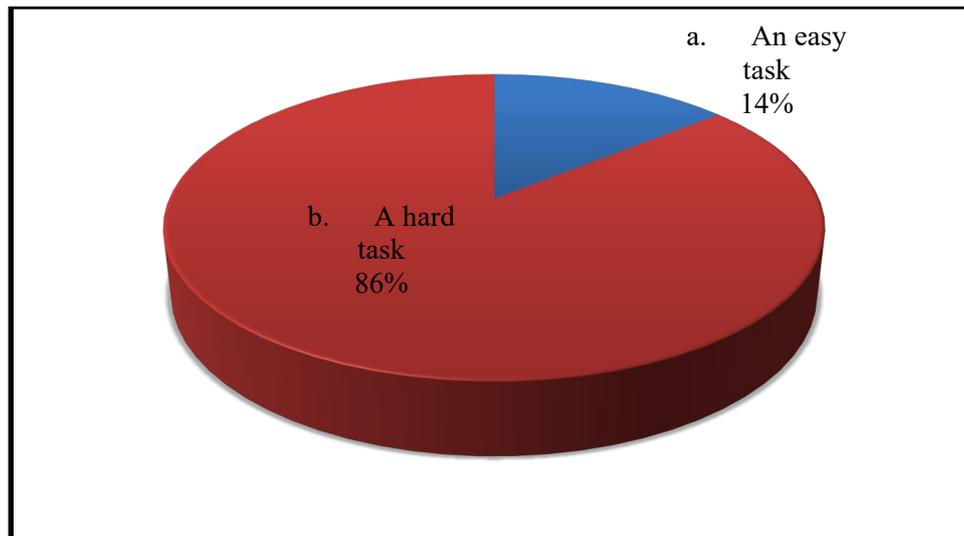


Figure 3.15: Teachers' attitudes concerning to teach reading.

Intentionally, this item stated to become aware of how teacher find teaching reading task. As attested by table 3.29 and Figure 3.15, around (14%) of the general respondents' number have been determined that teaching reading is an easy task. Nevertheless, the preponderance of them (86%) corroborated that teaching reading task is a hard matter. As far as, the respondents justified their attitudes as the comings:

a) For 'An easy task'

- Easiest comparing to other skills

b) For 'A hard task'

- In Arab countries, students rarely read which is a big problem for their studies and affects their results
- It is hard to choose appropriate reading materials that suit every student's likes-interests and level. It is also hard to motivate students to read as most of them find it a boring/ annoying task
- Because reading has always been taken for granted and dealt with as an natural behaviour however it should be taught in a scientific way

According to these justifications, we can deduce that teachers are looking for teaching reading task as a facile issue maybe for its simplest in front of the other skills. Whereas, the others see its difficulty regarding to such reasons, for instance: the effects of

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students' lack of reading, the difficulty of selecting the suitable tasks to their students' level; in addition, to the way of how should be teaching it with.

Item 8. Do you think that time allocated to teaching reading is enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	1	14%
b. No	6	86%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.30: Teachers' response about whether the time allocated to teaching reading is enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies.

According to the table 3.8 results, only one respondent declared that that time allocated to teaching reading is enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies; while, the rest majority of them (by the percentage of 86%) viewed the opposite of that. Thus, developing of the students' reading skill and strategies through teaching reading is not the easy matter. Besides, it demands the enough time to make the student more skilled.

Item 9. When your students face unfamiliar words during the reading tasks you advise them to (You may choose more than one option)

Option	Respondents	Percentage
g. Skip them over	1	14%
h. Use the dictionary	0	0%
i. Recall information	0	0%
j. Use background knowledge	0	0%
k. Ask for clarification	0	0%
l. More than one advice	6	86%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.31: Teachers' advises to their students when they face unfamiliar words.

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The aim behind this item is to highlight the main advice that teachers are working with when their students face new words during the reading task. The current results that is noting on the Table 3.31 and the Figure 3.16 demonstrate that (14%) of the teachers used to advise their students for skip the unfamiliar words over. While, the highest rate (86%) of them are using more than one advice; which is may refer to the kind of words' unfamiliarity, or the quality of the problem.

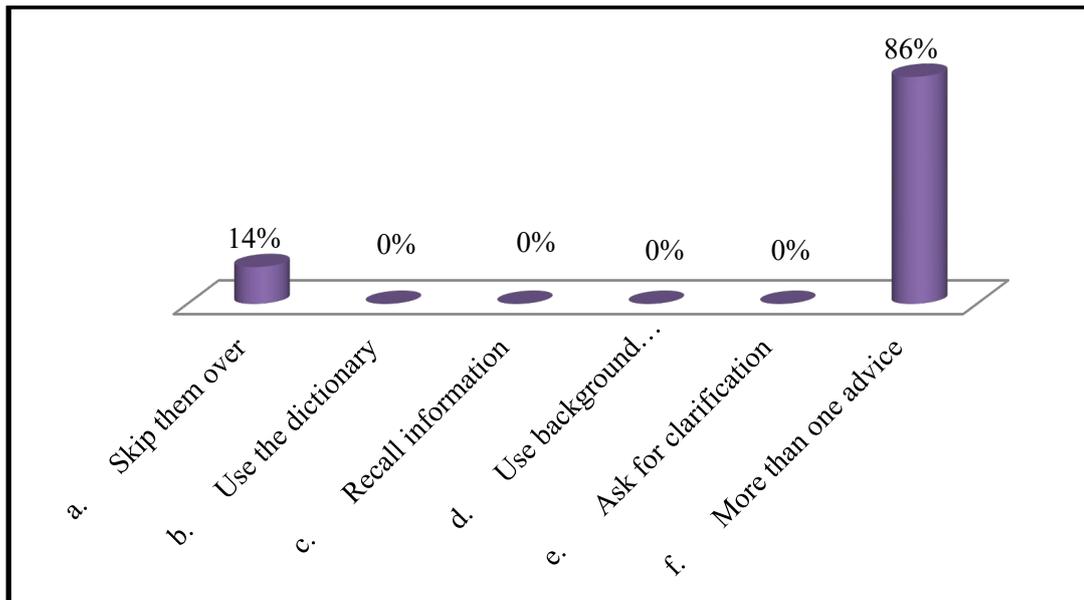


Figure 3.16: Teachers' advises to their students when they face unfamiliar words.

If others, please specify

In this sense teachers provided another two advises which they are used to give them to their learner during reading, which are:

- Guess from context
- We should encourage them to be autonomous readers

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Section Three: Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Item 10. For what purpose do you assign reading tasks?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
c. To gain vocabulary from a context	2	28%
d. To make students better readers	0	0%
e. To develop critical thinking skills	0	0%
f. To develop key reading sub-skills (skimming, scanning)	0	0%
g. To apply specific skills and strategies to interact in Communicative post-reading tasks	0	0%
h. All of them	5	72%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.32: Teachers' propose behind assigning reading tasks.

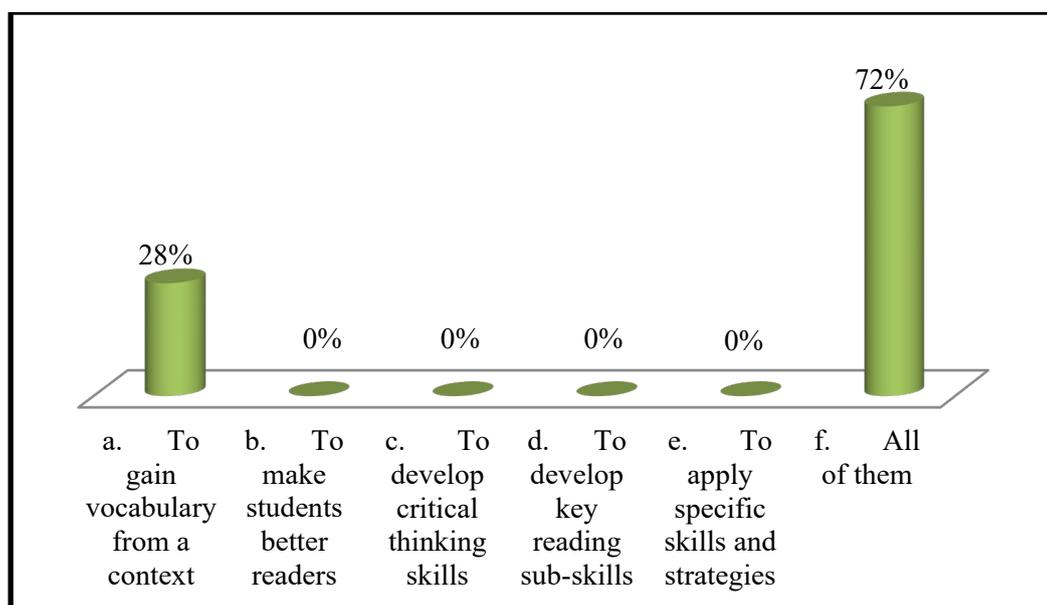


Figure 3.17: Teachers' propose behind assigning reading tasks.

In fact, this question tries to see teachers' main objectives behind assigning reading tasks. Depending on both of Figure 3.17 and Table 3.32 results, (28%) of the respondents declared that they target to gain vocabulary from a context. While, the majority of them around (72%) stressed on using it for all of gaining vocabulary from a context, making

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students better readers, develop their critical thinking skills, and developing their key reading sub-skills (skimming, scanning).also, for applying specific skills and strategies to interact in Communicative post-reading tasks.

***Others, please specify**

However, one of the participants added another aim which is: making students love reading by showing it is fun, interesting and fruitful Enhance their motivation for extensive reading. So, teachers have a variety of objectives that participating on reading tasks' establishment.

Item 11. In your opinion, reading comprehension comprises: (You may choose more than one option)

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Decoding	0	0%
b. Fluency	0	0%
c. Vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion	0	0%
d. Reasoning and background knowledge	0	0%
e. Working memory and attention	0	0%
f. Generating answers and conclusions	0	0%
g. Determining Author's purpose and understanding point of views	0	0%
h. All of them	4	57%
i. More than one aspect	3	43%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.33: Reading comprehension's elements.

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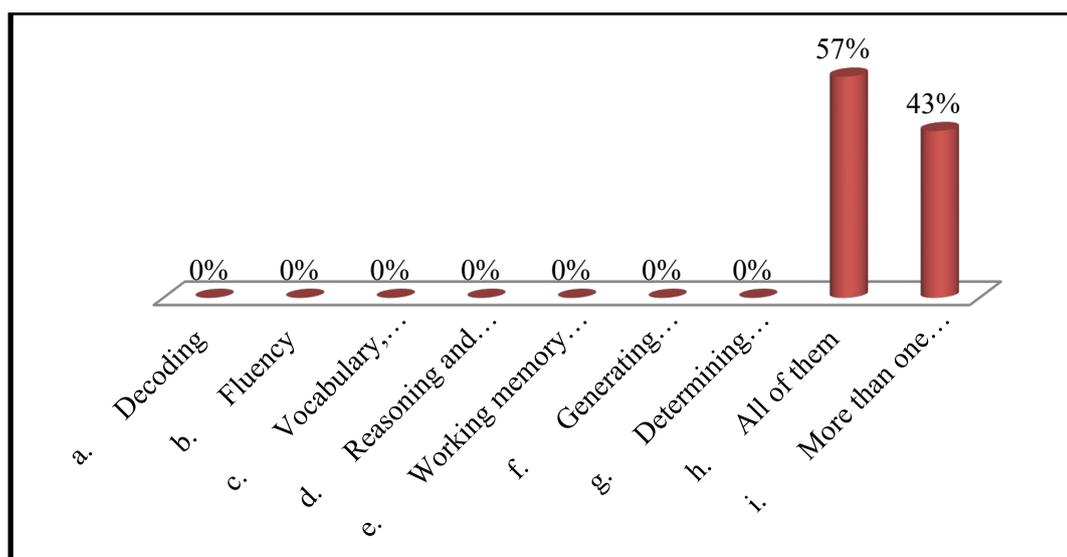


Figure 3.18: Reading comprehension's elements.

As table 3.33 and the figure 3.18 indicate, around (43%) of the participants presented that reading comprehension comprises more than one aspect. At the same time, the majority of them by (57%) aforementioned that it is including all the aspects that have been mentioned in the table above.

***If others, please specify them**

- Memory and attention.

In addition to that, one of these participants provided aspects of memory and attention to the reading comprehension consistencies.

Item 12. Do your students have reading comprehension difficulties?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
c. Yes	6	86%
d. No	1	14%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.34: Teachers' responses about if their students have reading comprehension difficulties.

The present item attempts to investigate teachers' responses towards their students' reading comprehension difficulties. The greater percentage (86%) of the respondents answered yes. While, around (14%) presented that their learners do not challenge with any

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reading comprehension difficulty. Hence, the results of this question may refer to students' reading levels either advanced, or lacked one.

***If yes, how many of them have reading comprehension difficulties?**

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a) All of them	1	14%
b) Most of them	4	58%
c) Some of them	2	28%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.34.1 The quantity of students that facing reading comprehension difficulties.

On other hand, this subsequent item tends to identify the number of the students that are having reading comprehension difficulties. As table (3.34.1) shows, around (14%) of the teachers said that all of their students are facing reading comprehension difficulties and the other (28%) of them declared that some of their students are challenging with reading comprehension complexities. Besides, the majority of them (58%) reported that most of their learners have this reading comprehension problem.

Item 13. What kind of difficulties do your students face most?(You may choose more than one option)

Option	Respondents	Percentage
c. The inability to recognize the types of text	0	0%
d. The inability to connect background knowledge with a new one	0	%
e. The inability to understand complex sentences	0	0%
f. The inability to understand new vocabulary	0	0%
g. Lack of attention	0	0%
h. All of them	4	58%
i. More than one difficulty	3	42%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.35: The difficulties that affecting students' reading comprehension.

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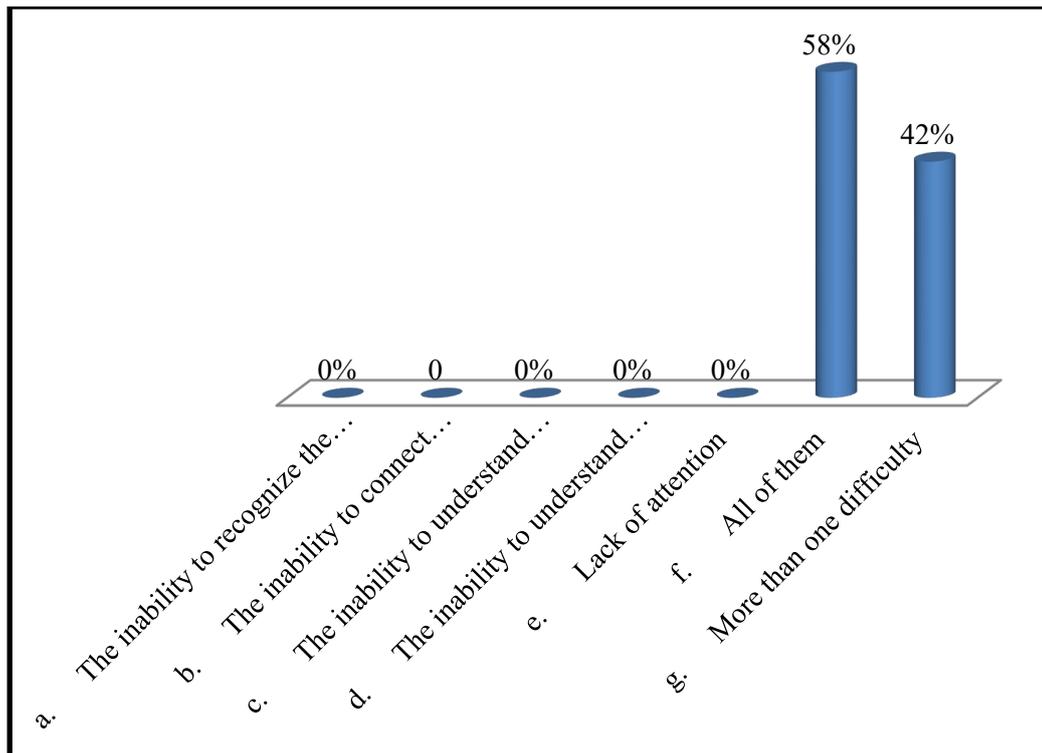


Figure 3.19 : The difficulties that affecting students' reading comprehension.

The aim behind this question is to recognize the major kinds of reading comprehension difficulties that are facing most of EFL learners. Concerning that, figure 3.19 and table 3.35 shows that the highest rate (58%) of the participants reported that their learners are facing all of the inability to recognize the types of text, the inability to connect background knowledge with a new one, and to understand complex sentences, or to identify new vocabulary. Also, they have lack of attention. While, the other rate (42%) affirmed that their learners have more than one difficulty of them.

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Item 14. Which of the following can be the main reason behind students' reading comprehension difficulties? You may choose more than one option.

Option	Percentage	Percentage
a. Lack of exposure to different text genres and to different text structures	0	0%
b. Having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies	0	0%
c. Having poor vocabulary	0	0%
d. Having poor background knowledge	0	0%
e. Learning in disorganized and noisy environments	0	0%
f. All of them	4	58%
g. More than one reason	3	42%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.36: The main reasons that causing students' reading comprehension difficulties.

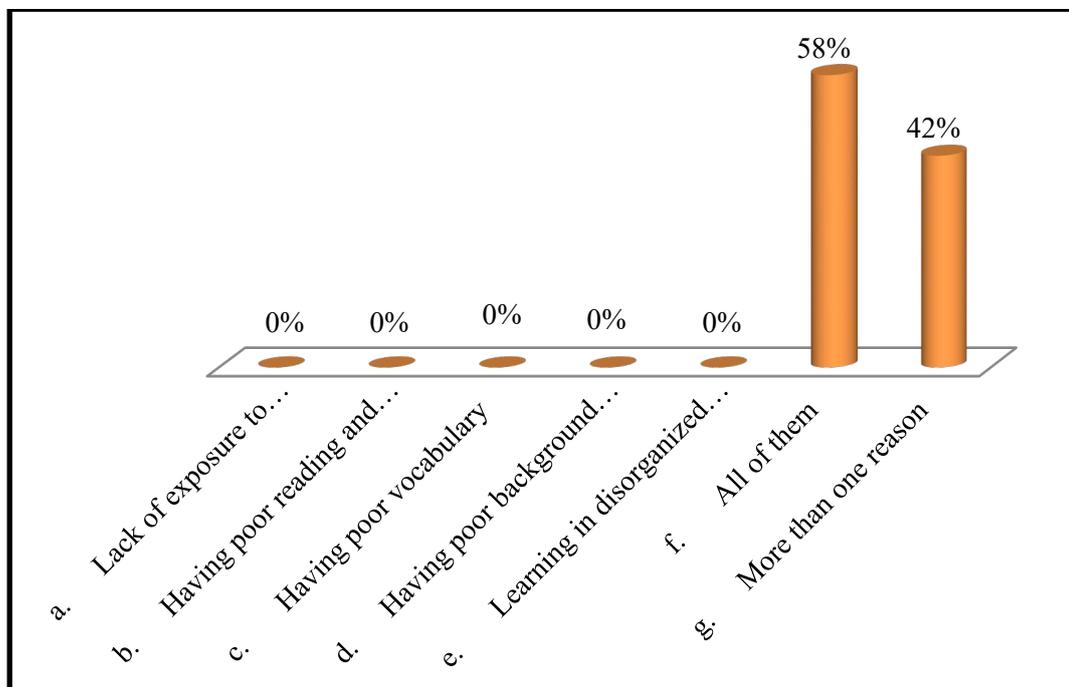


Figure 3.20: The main reasons that causing students' reading comprehension difficulties.

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The current question aims to detect the main reasons behind students' reading comprehension difficulties. The statistics above indicate that, the majority of teachers (58%) asserted that the main reasons that causing their students' reading comprehension difficulties is all the reasons that have been stated on the table 3.36 above. Nevertheless, around (42%) of them claimed that more than one reason due to the students' reading comprehension problem. That is to say, there are several reasons that make the students facing such reading comprehension difficulties, which can be affiliating either with the characteristics of the students, or the written material itself.

Item 15. What are the main factors affecting EFL learners' comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
c. Environmental influences	0	0%
d. Learners' interest and motivation	1	14%
e. Learner's linguistic competence	1	14%
f. Text length and complexity	0	0%
g. All of them	5	72%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.37: The main factors that affecting EFL learners' comprehension.

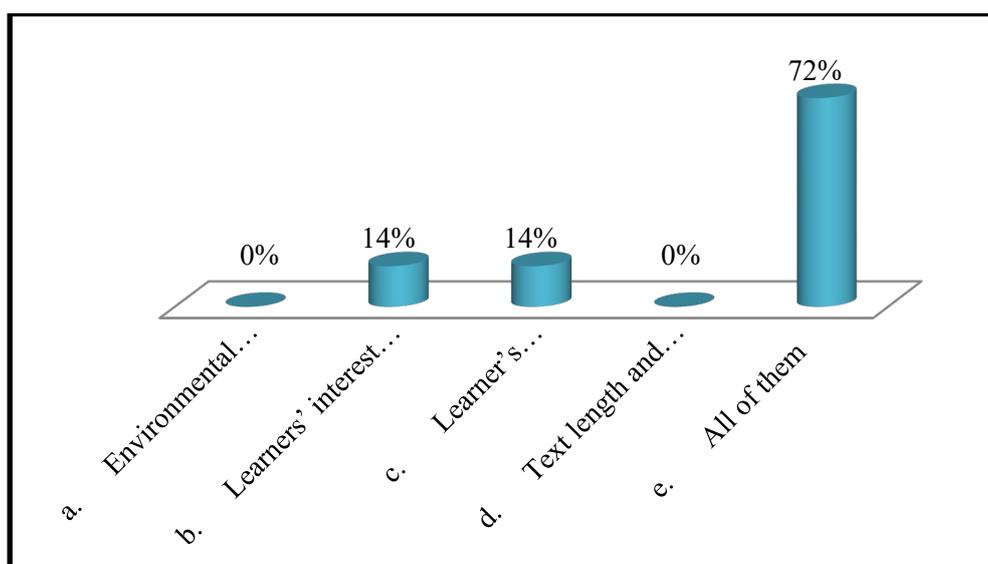


Figure 3.21: The main factors that affecting EFL learners' comprehension.

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This Item set out to discover the main factors that affect EFL learners' comprehension. As a matter of fact, the results illustrated above, show that (14%) of the participants declared that learners' motivation and interest can affect their reading comprehension. However, another (14%) of them related its affecting to learners' linguistic competence. Furthermore, the highest rate (76%) of the participants' general number shown that learners' reading comprehension is affecting by all of: the environmental influences, the learners' interest or motivation, and their linguistic competence, or to text length and its complexity. That is to say, students' reading comprehension can affect either with the students factors, or the text factors.

Item 16. Among the following text variables, which of them control EFL learners' reading comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Text type and genre	0	0%
b. Text topic and content	0	0%
c. Text linguistic variables	1	14%
d. Text length	0	0%
e. All of them	5	72%
a+b+c	1	14%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.38: Text variables that controlling EFL learners' reading comprehension

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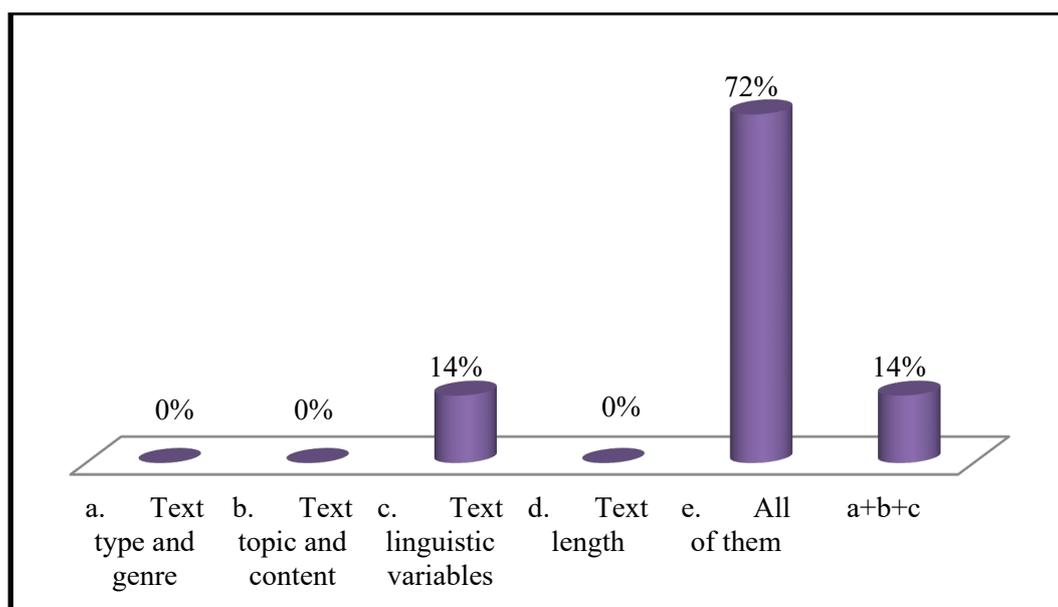


Figure 3.22: Text variables that controlling EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The present item is targeting to reveal the text variables that control the EFL learners' reading comprehension. According to the Figure 3.22 and Table 3.38, we notice that (14%) of the participants stated that EFL learners' reading comprehension is controlled by the text linguistic variables. However, the other (14%) of them said that it is controlled by the combination of text type and genre, text topic and content, and the text linguistic variables. While, the majority of them by (72%) have demonstrated that EFL learners' reading comprehension is controlled by all of the preceding variables in addition to text length.

Section Four: Syntactic Complexity

Item 17. Do you think that second year EFL students struggle mainly with:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Complex vocabulary	1	14%
b. Complex sentence structures	2	28%
c. Ideas and text content	4	58%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.39: Second year EFL students' reading comprehension struggles.

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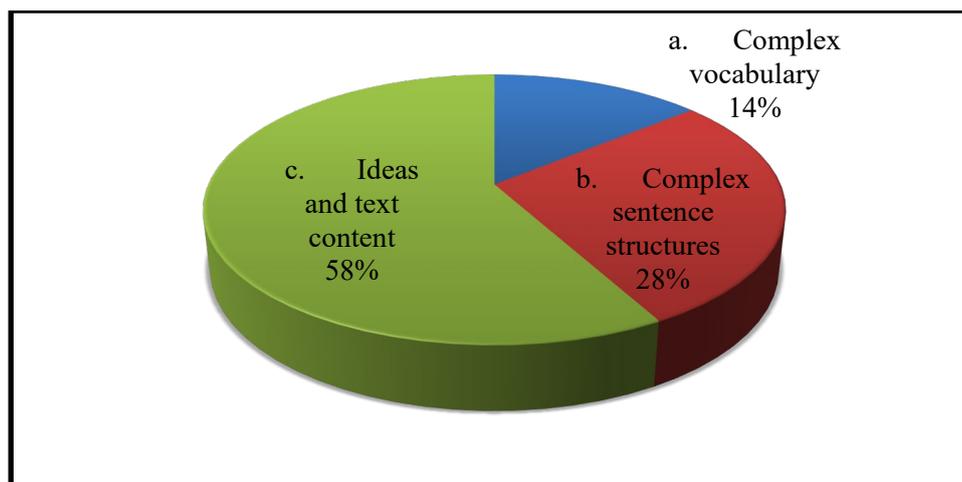


Figure 3.23: Second year EFL students' reading comprehension struggles.

The aim behind this item is to reveal second year EFL students struggles during the reading comprehension act. As illustrated in table 3.39 and figure 3.23, a few of the teachers (14%) stated that second year EFL students at Mohamed khidher Biskra University are mainly struggling with complex vocabulary. Nevertheless, (28%) of them said that they are struggling with complex sentence structures. While, the majority of the teachers (58%) have declared that their students' main struggles is with ideas and text content.

***If others, please specify**

- New terms

Taken together, from the above results we remarked that second year EFL students do not struggle only with complex sentence structures, complex vocabulary, and ideas and text content. They are challenging also with new terms

Item 18. Regarding syntax, do you find that the texts provided in the course session are:

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Very complex	0	0%
b. Somehow complex	2	28%
c. Not complex at all	5	72%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.40: The complexity of texts that providing during course session.

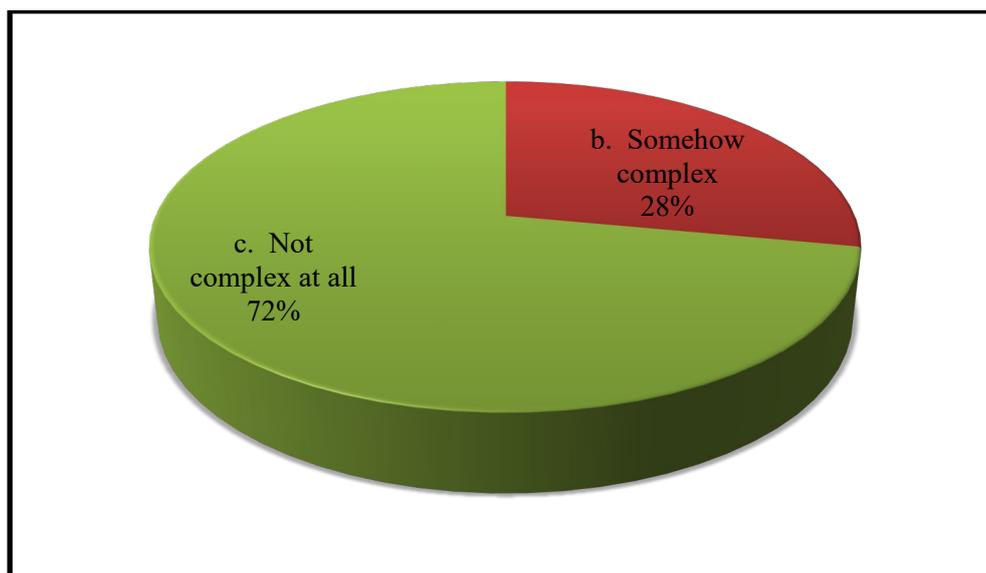


Figure 3.24: The complexity of texts that providing during course session.

This item brings to highlight the teachers' attitudes toward the text that they are providing it during the course session. Table 3.40 portrays that, except for (28%) of the teachers who declared that texts providing during course session is somehow complex. While, the majority of them by (72%) confirmed that these texts are not complex at all. However, they justified their answers as following:

a) For 'Somehow complex'

- Accessible for most students and those who are used to reading extensively.
- The material is selected by the teacher who should consider students' level on one hand and reach the lesson objectives on the other hand. So syntax shouldn't be too easy; otherwise learners won't learn anything new. It shouldn't be too difficult as well not to frustrate and demotivate them
- In our university there is no adequate strategy for choosing neither novels nor authors.
- To meet the university level requirements

b) For 'Not complex at all'

- I don't believe the texts assigned are complex. They are suitable according to the level of the learners.

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- Acceptable

From the above justifications, teachers stated that the provided texts during course session is somehow complex due to the instructions that they should follow it when they come to select a suitable text for their students. Also, that should meeting with their needs and fulfilling their lacks. While, those who have claimed that it is not complex at all; they considering the acceptability of their students' levels, and suitability of the texts with that.

It is important to note, then, that there are contradictions between the students and the teachers' response toward the complexity of texts providing during the course session. However, the majority of students claimed that they face a complexity with the texts providing by the teachers during the session. However, most of the teachers viewed the opposite of this. Nevertheless, they argued that they providing an acceptable text which accords to the students' levels. yet, this contestations may refer to the either the reader based factors (text knowledge, readers' prior knowledge, affective characteristics, and the metacognitive strategic knowledge) that affecting the readers' reading comprehension, or the text based factors (text structure, and linguistic complexity).

Item 19. In your opinion, what make(s) a text complex?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Difficult vocabulary	0	0%
b. Difficult sentence structures	0	0%
c. Text cohesion	0	0%
d. Text organization	0	0%
e. Implicit meaning	0	0%
f. All of them	4	58%
g. More than one factor	3	42%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.41: Teachers' opinion toward the factors that creating the text complexity.

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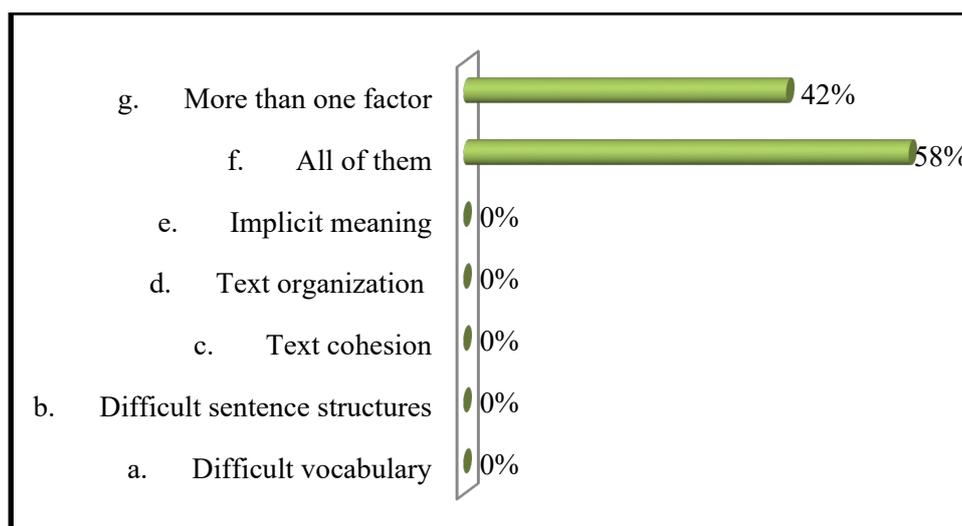


Figure 3.25: Teachers’ opinion toward the factors that creating the text complexity.

The present question attempts to investigate teachers’ attitudes towards the factors that cause text complexity. The illustrated results show that the majority of teachers (58%) agree that all of difficult vocabulary, difficult sentence structures, text cohesion, text organization, and implicit meaning; are mainly participating on the text complexity. However, the remaining (42%) of the teachers have demonstrated that more than one of the preceding factors are causing the complexity of texts. This interpret that, text complexity is producing by the collective of more than one factor.

Item 20. Do you think that students face difficulties with syntactic complexity when they read because of?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. L1/L2 differences	2	28%
b. Poor instruction	1	15%
c. Their proficiency levels	3	42%
d. Inadequate exposure to different text genres and structures	1	15%
e. Text constructions	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.42: Reasons that creating the syntactic text complexity.

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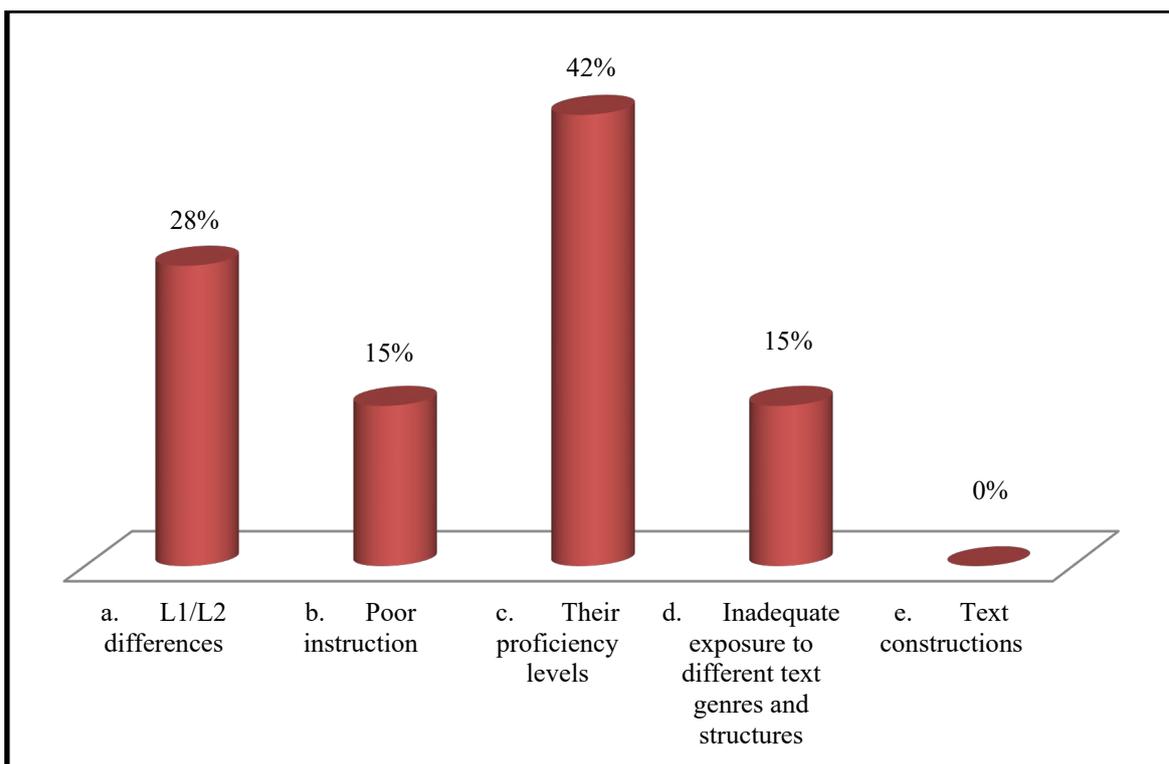


Figure 3.26: Reasons that creating the syntactic text complexity.

The intention behind this question is to see the principal reasons that lead to build the syntactic text complexity. The results related to this item shows that, around (28%) of the participants affirmed that students face difficulties with syntactic complexity when they read because of L1/L2 differences. However, (15%) of them maintained that the reason here refers to poor instructions, and another (15%) of them said that is the inadequate exposure to different text genres and structures. Seemingly, the majority of the participants asserted that the students' proficiency levels are the reasons behind the syntactic complexity of the texts.

***If others, please mention them**

- New terms and their lack of syntactic knowledge.

In addition, one of the participants states that the syntactic complexity of the texts can also established by existing of the new terms, and the learners' lack of syntactic knowledge.

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Item 21. Which of the following levels of syntactic effect (s) your students' reading comprehension?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. The level of coordination	1	12%
b. The level of subordination	0	0%
c. The level of phrasal complexity	2	25%
d. All of them	5	63%
Total	7	100%

Table 3.43: Syntactic levels that affecting students' reading comprehension.

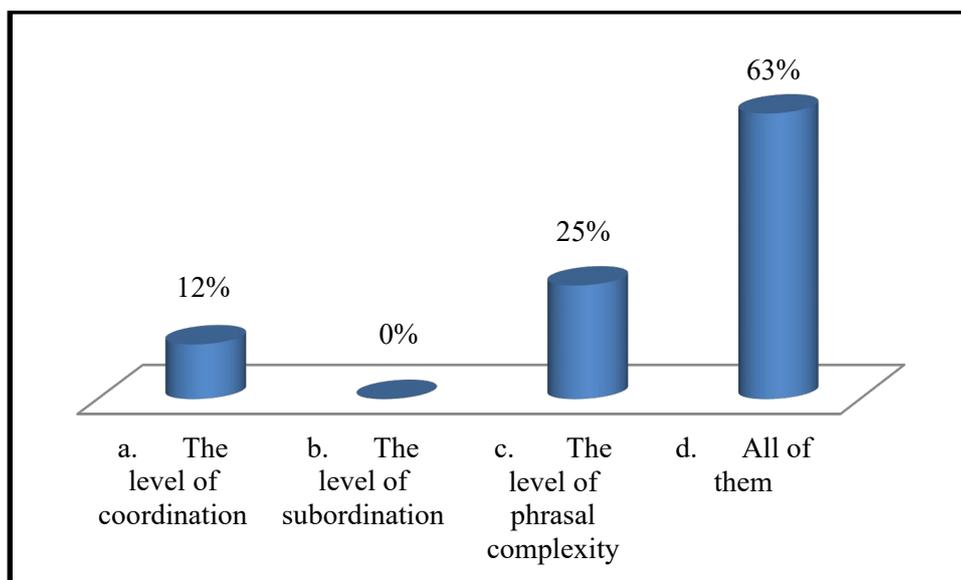


Figure 3.27: Syntactic levels that affecting students' reading comprehension.

The item above is intended to cover the teachers' data about the syntactic levels that affecting the students' reading comprehension. The statistics related to this item shows that, a few number of the teachers (12%), declared that students' reading comprehension is affected by the level of coordination. However, the other (25%) of them maintained that is affected by the level of phrasal complexity. Nevertheless, the majority (63%) of the teachers demonstrated that students' reading comprehension is affected by all of: the level of coordination, phrasal complexity, and the level of subordination. So, we can saying that all the level of syntactic are affecting the learners' text comprehension.

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Item 22. How can syntactic complexity affect EFL learners' reading comprehension?

This item is principally proposed to unravel the teachers' insight views toward the effects of the syntactic complexity on the EFL learners' reading comprehension. As long as, they provided their discussions as the following:

- Students fail to understand the gist of the foreign language materials
- Inability to grasp the text meaning Inability to answer comprehension questions
Stress- anxiety- doredom- demotivation
- Being able to combine words together to form a meaningful sentence is key. EFL students are constantly facing syntactic issues due to the nature of their target language.
- A syntactic complexity will make any text becoming sibylline for any reader whatever his/her reading skills.
- It is unfamiliar so they cannot grasp it
- It would work as an obstacle that hinders the text comprehension

Overall, we can say that the teachers' ideas deduce that syntactic complexity can be an obstacle that reducing the learners' text comprehension. In the whole, text difficulty is working to make the students demotivating, uninteresting, and feel boring when they cannot understand the text meaning.

Item 23. What do you do to help your students to navigate syntactic complexity while reading?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
a. Exposing them to different text types and genres	5	72%
b. Exposing them to different and difficult sentence structures	0	0%
c. Explaining the difficult words in Arabic	1	14%
d. Reducing the amount of complex constructions	1	14%
Total	7%	100%

Table 3.44: Teachers' strategies that helping students to navigate with syntactic complexity while reading.

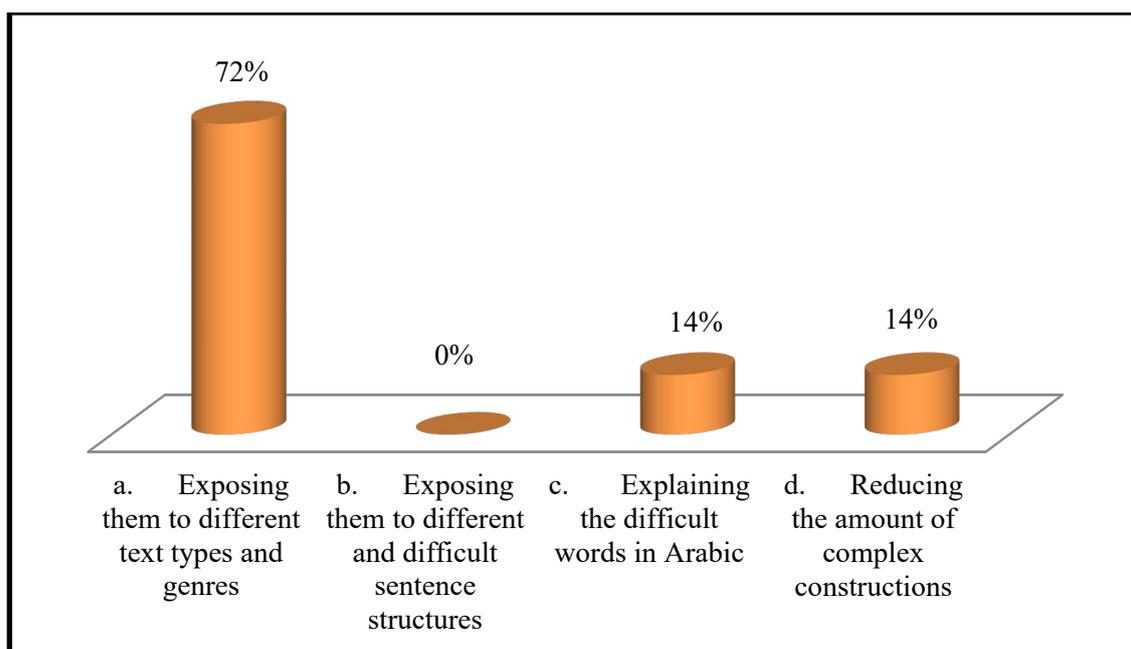


Figure 3.28: Teachers' strategies that helping students to navigate with syntactic complexity while reading.

This item helps us to illustrate the significant strategies that are used by the teachers to help their students coping with syntactic complexity while reading. What is evident in table 3.44 and figure 3.28 is that the majority of teachers (72%) declared that they are used to expose their students to different text types and genres. However, the rest of them (14%) said that they explains the difficult words in Arabic, and the other (14%) of the teachers are used to reduce the amount of complex constructions to them. Consequently, we can discern that teachers tend to help their students in passing their syntactic text difficulties by using strategies, or teaching ways that are suitable to their students' problems. As we can say also, teachers are working as a facilitator and controller to their students.

3.2.3.5. Section Five: Further Suggestions

If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free

Three teachers have commented about the topic issue and encouraged us about our efforts. However, they give their insights and suggestions. Since, they viewed that teachers should by attention to their students' lack of syntactic knowledge; otherwise, they have selecting a suitable text to their levels during the course sessions, and helping them to understand what they read.

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Teachers' suggestions

- I congratulate you for choosing Reading and syntax as a main focus. Good job, sister.
- Thanks for this efforts. I think that teachers have focus more on the complexity of text that they present on their course session.
- Grammar teachers should be aware to their students' lacks on the syntactic and grammar structure levels.

3.3. Discussion and Summary of the Findings

This part holds the summary and the discussion of the findings that are resulted from the analysis of the two data collection tools. However, we have analyzed both the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' questionnaire's results that served to investigate the aims of the present research study.

Fundamentally, this research was undertaken to explore the effect of the syntactic text complexity on the second year EFL learners' reading comprehension. Furthermore, it is aimed to reveal the main factors and reasons that create the learners' reading comprehension problems. More specifically, this investigation is undertaken to discover whether syntactic text complexity makes a reading comprehension difficulties for the EFL learners. The aim of our study to highlight the main aspects those cause text comprehension problems. In addition to that, this study sought to underline the teachers' instructions or strategies that help the students to understand complex texts.

On one hand, the preceding analysis of the previous instruments has provided sufficient insights, and relevant ideas that enable us to answer our research questions as well as to confirm our research hypothesis.

It was assumed that there are some causes that lead to students' reading comprehension difficulties. This question was established to explore the possible reasons that can induce this problem. In this respect, after analyzing the teachers and students' questionnaires particularly the items that are related to the participants' attitudes or views towards the students' reading skill or their reading comprehension in general. Specifically, they are asked about the difficulties that are faced their reading, and how can that affect their reading comprehension.

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It was deduced that second year EFL learners recognize that reading is very important skill for their English language learning, but they do not like reading in English due the different difficulties they face during the reading act. Such as, poor comprehension when reading material either loudly or silently, difficulty decoding syllables or single words, and finding difficulties in understanding the new terms. These difficulties lead them to use different strategies for over passing these problems like avoiding participation to read, reading and re-reading the text carefully to correct mistakes or to check their understanding, and being patient with unfamiliar forms. They neglecte the strategy of asking for teacher or mate's assistance because of their negative affective factors such as fear and shyness from making linguistic mistakes in front of their classmates, or their teachers' negative feedback. This final one may reduce on their reading participation and their reading level.

Besides, most of the learners are practicing to improve their reading skills' level, and to develop their language proficiency through advancing their productive skills. As well as, they asserted that motivation is one of affective characteristics factors that raise their willingness to read. In addition, from the elements that motivate them to read during the English class is the text's suitability to their level and interest. Typically, learners determined that during reading comprehension, they tend to understand the whole text's meaning. Therefore, they engaged more on the text that contain familiar topics, made of short paragraphs, or contain simple vocabulary and constructions. Although, the big number of those learners have the ability to be integrated with different text types and styles of scripts, and they viewed that texts provided by their teachers in the course are carrying more than one characteristic. In other words, a number of them consider the text as uninteresting and dull, complex text and beyond their levels while the others are seeing them written in clear and simple language, also interesting and exciting. It can be said, this is refers to the students linguistic proficiency, interest, and motivation.

Concerning teachers' questionnaire, it can be concluded that all the English language teachers at Mohamed Khidher Biskra University that was responded to this instrument confirmed that there is a relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency because reading is the major source of language to boost all the other skills, and it permits EFL learners to build their language proficiency. For this reason, they considered that it is compulsory for all the EFL learners to have a good reading skill.

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According to them, students have to know what to read and how, and being able to read is a must. That means, reading is the first skill a new learner has to master. It paves the way for grasping the language well; as long as, poor reading skills affect the efficiency of learning. In other hand, those teachers certified that they encourage their learners to read by using various strategies such as encouraging extensive reading by suggesting titles of books, assigning reading tasks, doing reading comprehension sessions, and assigning research papers and projects.

It is worth mentioning that, most of the teachers find that teaching reading is a hard task for a number of reasons, for instance: the effects of students' lack of reading, the difficulty of selecting the suitable tasks to their students' level. In addition, to how working with its appropriate teaching strategies, and the insufficient time to teaching reading in enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies.

Research Question 1: What are the main reasons that may cause students' reading comprehension difficulties?

Reflecting on the available findings, both teachers and students agree that the majority of second year EFL learners have reading comprehension difficulties especially the inability to recognize the types of text, lack of attention, the difficulty of understanding complex sentences, or recognizing new vocabulary. Moreover, teachers added another difficulty which is the inability to connect background knowledge with a new one. Meanwhile, they maintained that the reason behind EFL learners' reading comprehension difficulties is related to the lack of exposure to different text genres and different text structures, having poor background knowledge, learning in disorganized and noisy environments, and having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies.

Furthermore, teachers recognized that the learners' reading comprehension is affected by all of the environmental influences such as learners' interest and motivation, learner's linguistic competence, and the text length and text complexity. However, it is also controlled by a number of variables including text type and genre, text topic and content, text linguistic variables, and text length. That is to say, EFL learners' reading text comprehension is affecting by either the reader based factor that is including (the reader's prior knowledge, text knowledge, meta cognitive strategic knowledge, and the affective

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characteristics), or the text based factors which is also involving the linguistic complexity (syntax and semantics), and the text structure.

Based on the available studies, factors that are related to the reader himself such as the reader's background knowledge, affective characteristics, metacognitive strategy knowledge and text knowledge contributed the constructing of text meaning process (Brown et al., 1986, Flavell, 1985, Garner, 1987, as cited in Seddik, 2017, p. 57). In the same quest, researchers as Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), demonstrated that text characteristics such as text structure, genre, syntax, textual markers and vocabulary are chipping in its comprehension. Thus, there is a link between the printed material features and its reading comprehension.

Research Question 02: Does syntactic text complexity affect EFL learners' reading comprehension? To what does that extent?

Most of the second year EFL learners have an adequate syntactic knowledge that is enough for complete their text comprehension, but the rest of them maintained the opposite of that. While, the majority of them find that texts contain complex syntactic structures, especially at the levels of clauses, words and phrases which are mainly affecting their reading comprehension of a given text. However, teachers declared that their students are struggling with complex sentence structures and ideas or text content. In a broad sense, syntactic complexity will make any text becoming hard for any reader whatever his/her reading skills, and inability to grasp the text meaning inability to answer comprehension questions because of stress, anxiety, boredom and the demotivation. In this respect, McCormack and Pasquarelli state that, "the complexity of the syntax affects the readers' overall comprehension task" (2010, p. 112). Therefore, students understand the gist of the foreign language materials they should be able to combine words together for forming a meaningful sentence is the reading comprehension's key. Thus, EFL students are constantly facing syntactic issues due to the nature of their target language.

Research Question 03: what are the main aspects of syntactic text complexity that cause reading comprehension difficulties for second year EFL learners?

It is important to note that most of the teachers agree that the complexity of texts is due to the implicit meaning, difficult sentence structures, text cohesion, and text

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organization, or difficult vocabulary. However, as was asserted by the major number of the second EFL learners, that syntactic complexity is affecting their reading comprehension because it enables them to be more exposed to language features, it hurdles their accuracy and creates more deficiencies in reading, and allows them to practice the constructions dealt with earlier, or it makes the text more demanding of time and focus. However, teachers claimed that the reasons behind learners' difficulties with syntactic complexity during reading comprehension are their L1/L2 differences, proficiency levels, and their inadequate exposure to different text genres and structures. In other side, teachers claimed that EFL learners' reading comprehension is also affected by a number of syntactic levels, which are the level of coordination, subordination, and the level of phrasal complexity.

Research Question 04: What are the relevant instructions that EFL learners need to know how to navigate complex text?

Fundamentally, as it is mentioned before that most of EFL learners face complexities with the text that provided during the reading class, and the texts of their tests and exams are including different constructions (familiar and unfamiliar ones). EFL teachers replying that course sessions' text are not complex at all, and they are acceptable and suitable according to the level of the learners. Meanwhile, learners claimed that they prefer their teacher to facilitate the complex syntactic structures for them before reading by paraphrasing them in simple form, reducing the amount of complex constructions in the text, or translating them to their target language. The EFL teachers indicated that they are helping their students to cope with syntactic complexity while reading through exposing them to different text types and genres, explaining the difficult words in Arabic, and reducing the amount of complex constructions.

To sum up, through the analysis of both students and teachers' questionnaire responses, and discussing their findings that are answered the four research questions. It can be deduced that syntactic text complexity is one of the main factors that affect EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the field work of our investigation. However, the data that were collected by both of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire were collected and classified in tables or graphs. After that, the results which are obtained from

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the data tools are analyzed qualitatively. Moreover, all the items' findings were summarized and discussed together. At the end of that, all the significant knowledge that is constructed from this work was used to answer the main research questions, which aim explore the effect of syntactic text complexity on the EFL learners' reading comprehension.

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General Conclusion

To deduce, this investigation tends to discover the effect of syntactic text complexity on the EFL learners' reading comprehension. Typically, this study aims to examine the validity of the research through answering this study principle questions. Since, it hypothesized that if a text constructed with complex syntactic structures, learners' reading comprehension will be affected.

Basically, the content of this research is divided into three chapters. Meanwhile, both of the first two chapters cover its theoretical part; as well as, the third one presents the field work of this research. Fundamentally, the first chapter gives a closer look at the significant elements of the reading skill and reading comprehension. Generally, it highlighted an overview of reading skills, and then it focuses on reading comprehension. However, the second chapter is mainly related to the factors which affect the reading comprehension, and then it shifted to text complexity to focus more on the syntactic complexity. Besides, the third one is presented the field work of this research study. Although, this part is consisted on analyzing and interpreting the data gathered from the two data collecting tools which are the students' questionnaire, and teachers' questionnaire.

Methodologically, this research is conducted by a qualitative descriptive method; under that, it used two data collecting instruments to confirm the research main hypothesis and objectives. The first questionnaire was administered to forty L2 EFL learners. Furthermore, the second one was conducted to seven teachers at Mohamed khidher Biskra University to get their insight views and attitudes toward this investigation.

Based on the results that were obtained from analyzing, interpreting and discussing the data gathered findings, the fundamental research questions were answered. Overall, the current study confirmed that syntactic text complexity is negatively affecting the EFL learners' reading comprehension.

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Recommendations

On the basis of the results obtained from the present study, we would like to make some recommendations that we hope will help EFL learners overcome their reading comprehension difficulties.

For teachers:

- Teachers should be aware of their students of their learner' syntactic knowledge.
- Teachers should provide additional materials for independent student reading.
- Teachers have to check their students' full comprehension of the particular printed material
- Teachers should mind to select the appropriate complex texts for their student during reading classes for minimizing their reading comprehension difficulty.
- Teachers have to cover all the different factors that affect their learners reading comprehension.
- Teachers have to mindful their learners about reading significance in their educational career.
- Teachers have to use a various strategies to help their learners to understand complex texts.

For students:

- Students should integrate their reading level through practicing intensive reading.
- Students have to require enough knowledge about the different text structures, types and genres to overcome their reading comprehension problems.
- Students must enhance their syntactic knowledge level.
- Students should have background knowledge about all syntactical structure levels.
- Students should learn how to navigate complex text.

For syllabus designers:

- Syllabus designer should offer some extra session for the intensive reading module within the syllabus.

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- Syllabus designers should assign the adequate strategies to teachers for selecting the suitable texts to the learners' level and interest in one hand, and for reaching the lesson objectives in the other hand.

Limitations of the Study

Due to several causes, this research study included particular limitations which were encountered during the implication of the study findings. Therefore, the consequences that resulted from these obstacles have to be considered within the limit of its methods, samples, design, results.

The major difficulties were the limited number of sources because there a few available sources related to the first variable, and the insufficient responses or justification of the respondents. this might be related to the limited time to teach during Covide-19, or the few number of reading teachers responded to the questionnaire. However, this study was done in a short time that is granted by the university administration under these exceptional circumstances. Thus, the results of this research would be much better without these pitfalls.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire, which is designed for the sake of gathering useful information to accomplish a master's dissertation. Through this questionnaire, we attempt to address the effect of syntactic text complexity on EFL learners' reading comprehension. Your collaboration will be a great help for us to gather the needed information for the study. Please, tick (√) in the appropriate box (es) and give full answer(s) whenever it is necessary.

Thank you for your time and contribution.

Researcher's name

Miss. MEBARKI Lynda

Supervised by

Dr. SEGUENI Lamri

2020-2021

Section One: Background Information

Q1. How would you evaluate your present level at English?

- Poor - I definitely need some help
- Acceptable - but I know I could improve
- Good - I could improve with some advanced tips
- Excellent - I do not think I could improve much

Q2. Do you like reading in English in general?

- Yes
- No

Section Two: Reading Skill

Q3. In your opinion, the reading skill is:

- Very important
- Important
- Not important

Justify your answer please

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Q4. How often do you participate to read in your English class?

- Always
- Sometime
- Rarely
- Never

Q5. When you read do you feel:

- Confident
- Motivated
- Hesitated
- Anxious

Justify your answer please

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Q6. What are the difficulties you encounter while reading?

- Slow reading speed
- Poor comprehension when reading material either loudly or silently
- Omission of words while reading
- Reversal of words or letters while reading
- Difficulty decoding syllables or single words

If others, please mention them:

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Q7. How do you overcome your reading problems?

- Avoiding participation to read
- Read carefully
- Re-read to correct mistakes and to develop fluency
- Be patient with unfamiliar forms
- Asking for teacher or mate's assistance

If others, please mention them:

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Q8. Do you ever practice to improve your reading skill?

- Yes
- No

Q9. Do you think that you are a good reader? (Select one response).

- Yes
- No

Why, or why not?

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Q10.In your point of view what are the essential elements that motivate the student to read? (Indicate below).

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.....

Section Three: Reading Comprehension

Q11. When you read a text:

- You try to understand the whole text
- You only look for answers to comprehension questions

Others

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Q12. How many times you need to read the text to get a full understanding of it?

- Once
- Twice
- More

Q13. When you read, can you understand the aim behind reading certain texts easily?

- Yes
- No

Please, justify

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Q14. Do you have the ability to be more engaged with texts which:

- Contain familiar topics
- Made of short paragraphs
- Contain simple vocabulary and constructions
- Guided by simple instructions

If others, please specify them:

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.....

Q15. Do you have the ability to be integrated with different text types and styles of scripts?

- Yes
- No

Q16. In your opinion, texts provided by your teacher in the course are:

- Written in clear and simple language
- Complex and beyond your level
- Well exemplified
- Unclear and ambiguous
- Interesting and exciting
- Uninteresting and dull

Q17. Do you have any reading comprehension difficulties?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what kind of difficulties?

- The inability to recognize the types of text,
- The inability to connect background
- Knowledge with new one,
- The inability to understand complex sentences,
- The inability to understand new vocabulary,
- Lack of attention
- All of them

Others

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.....

Q18. Would you specify the main reasons behind your reading comprehension difficulties?

- Having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies,
- Having poor vocabulary,
- Having poor background knowledge,
- Facing a difficulty in recalling previous knowledge, and
- Learning in disorganized and noisy environments.
- Lack of exposure to different text genres and to
- different text structures,
- All of them

Others

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.....

Q19. Do you consider that your syntactic knowledge is adequate enough for complete text comprehension?

- Yes
- No

Section Five: Syntactic Complexity

Q20. Do you find that texts contain complex syntactic structures?

- Yes
- No

Q21. Which of the following levels of syntax affect(s) your reading comprehension?

- The level of words
- The level of phrases
- The level of clauses
- All of them

Q22. Does your teacher simplify the complex syntactic structures in the text for you before reading?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how do you prefer your teacher to facilitate the complex syntactic structures for you before reading?

- Translating them to Arabic
- Paraphrasing them in simple form
- Reducing the amount of complex constructions in the text
- All of them

If others, please specify

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Q23. Regarding the texts of your tests and exams, do they include:

- Only the constructions you have been exposed to
- Different constructions (familiar and unfamiliar ones)

Q24. Do you think that syntactic complexity affects your reading comprehension?

- Yes
- No

If yes, is that because:

- It Enables us to be more exposed to language features
- It Hurdles our accuracy and creates more deficiencies in reading
- It Allows us to practice the constructions dealt with earlier
- It Makes the text more demanding of time and focus

Please, write any other comments or suggestions about how syntactic complexity affects your reading comprehension while reading a text.

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Appendix 2: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are mostly welcome to contribute in this study by answering the following questions through which, we aim to explore your attitudes towards the effect of syntactic text complexity on EFL learners' reading comprehension. Therefore, we would be so grateful if you provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Be sure that your answers will be anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your time, effort and collaboration.

Prepared by:

Lynda MEBARKI

Supervised by:

Dr. SEGUENI Lamri

Academic Year: 2020-2021

Section One: Personal Information

Q1. Would you specify your degree?

- Master
- Magister
- Doctorate

Q2. How long have you been teaching EFL at university?

- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Section Two: The Reading Skill

Q1. As a teacher of English language, which language skill(s) do you focus on more?

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Reading
- All of them

Justify your answer, please

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Q2. From your experience as a teacher of English language, do you think that there is a relationship between reading and EFL learners' language proficiency?

- Yes
- No

Please specify what kind of relationship exists between them

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Q3. What do you think of having good reading skills?

- Compulsory
- Preferable
- Optional

Justify your answer please

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Q4. Do you encourage your students to read?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please say how?

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Q5.How do you find teaching reading?

- An easy task
- A hard task

Please justify

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Q6. Do you think that time allocated to teaching reading is enough to develop students' reading skills and strategies?

- Yes
- No

Q7. When your students face unfamiliar words during the reading tasks you advise them to: (You may choose more than one option).

- Skip them over
- Use the dictionary
- Recall information
- Use background knowledge
- Ask for clarification

If others, please specify

.....
.....

Section Three: Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Q1. For what purpose do you assign reading tasks?

- To gain vocabulary from a context
- To make students better readers
- To develop critical thinking skills
- To develop key reading sub-skills (skimming, scanning)
- To apply specific skills and strategies to interact in Communicative post-reading tasks
- All of them

Others, please specify

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.....

Q2. In your opinion, reading comprehension comprises: (You may choose more than one option).

- Decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion
- Reasoning and background knowledge
- Working memory and attention
- Generating answers and conclusions
- Determining Author's purpose and understanding point of views
- All of them

If others, please specify them:

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Q3. Do your students have reading comprehension difficulties?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many of them have reading comprehension difficulties?

- a) All of them
- Most of them
- Some of them

Q4. What kind of difficulties do your students face most? (You may choose more than one option).

- The inability to recognize the types of text
- The inability to connect background Knowledge with new one,
- The inability to understand complex sentences,
- The inability to understand new vocabulary,
- Lack of attention
- All of them

If others, please specify

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Q5. Which one of these following can be the main reason behind students' reading comprehension difficulties? You may choose more than one option.

- Lack of exposure to different text genres and to different text structures
- Having poor reading and reading comprehension strategies,
- Having poor vocabulary,
- Having poor background knowledge, and
- Learning in disorganized and noisy environments.
- All of them

If others, please specify

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Q6. What is the main factor affecting EFL learners' reading comprehension?

- a) Environmental influences
 - Learners' interest and motivation
 - Learners' linguistic competence
 - Text length and complexity
 - All of them

Q7. Among the following text variables, which of them control EFL learners' reading comprehension?

- Text type and genre
- Text topic and content
- Text linguistic variables
- Text length
- All of them

Section Four: Syntactic Complexity

Q1. Do you think that secondyear EFL students struggle mainly with:

- Complex vocabulary
- Complex sentence structures
- Ideas and text content

If others, please specify

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Q2. Regarding syntax, do you find that the texts provided in the course session are:

- Very complex
- Somehow complex
- Not complex at all

Please, justify your answer:

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Q3. In your opinion, what make(s) a text complex?

- Difficult vocabulary
- Difficult sentence structures
- Text cohesion
- Text organization
- Implicit meaning
- All of them

Others, please specify

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Q4. Do you think that students face difficulties with syntactic complexity when they read because of?

- L1/ L2 differences
- Poor instruction
- Their proficiency levels
- Inadequate exposure to different text genres and structures
- Texts constructions

If others, please mention them:

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.....

Q.5 Which of the following levels of syntax affect(s) your reading comprehension?

- The level of coordination
- The level of subordination
- The level of phrasal complexity
- All of them

Q6. How can syntactic complexity affect EFL learners' reading comprehension?

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Q7. What do you do to help your students cope with syntactic complexity while reading?

- Exposing them to different text types and genres
- Exposing them to different and difficult sentence structures
- Explaining the difficult words in Arabic
- Reducing the amount of complex constructions

Others, please specify

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If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free

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Thank you for your time, effort and collaboration.

المخلص

يواجه معظم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الجزائرية كلغة أجنبية تحديات بسبب التعقيد التركيبي للنصوص المحددة خلال فصل اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يؤثر بشكل خاص على مستوى فهم القراءة. لذلك، فإن الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة الدقيقة هو استكشاف تأثير تعقيد النص التركيبي على اللغة الإنجليزية كفهم القراءة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وبناء على ذلك، يفترض أنه إذا تم بناء النصوص، التي يتم توفيرها للمتعلمين خلال فصل اللغة الإنجليزية مع هياكل بناء معقدة سيتأثر فهم القراءة للمتعلمين. من الناحية المنهجية، من أجل التحقق من صحة الفرضية الحالية، يتم إعطاء طريقة نوعية في إطار هذه الدراسة الوصفية لجمع وتحليل المعلومات التي تم جمعها. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم اختيار أداتين لجمع البيانات للتحقق من صحة هذا الافتراض. تم تصميم استبيان الطلاب وتوزيعه عبر الإنترنت على مجموعة فيسبوك إلى أربعين ترخيصاً اثنين من المتطوعين بالسنة الثانية ليسونس كمتطوعين لجمع مواقفهم والبيانات ذات الصلة حول تجربتهم الشخصية مع صعوبات فهم القراءة. وعلاوة على ذلك، تم توزيع استبيان المعلمين على سبعة معلمين في جامعة محمد خضر بسكرة لجمع أفكارهم ومواقفهم تجاه العوامل التي تؤثر على فهم المتعلمين للقراءة. وقد أثبتت النتائج التي توصلت إليها أدوات جمع البيانات أن تعقيد الهياكل التركيبية للنص يؤثر على عملية فهم القراءة. وبالتالي، فإن جميع النتائج التي نتجت عن هذه الدراسة حققت صحة الفرضية المذكورة. وبالتالي، فإن تعقيد النص التركيبي يؤثر سلباً على فهم طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية لما يقرؤونه من نصوص.