

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Faculty of Arabic Language Arts & Foreign Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Branch of English Studies



**Importance of Background knowledge in Enhancing English as Foreign
Language Learner's Reading Comprehension**

A case study of second year LMD students of Mohamed Kheider University

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master's in
sciences of language at Mohammed Kheider of Biskra.

Supervised by

Mrs. Rabehi- Aayache Salima

Submitted by

Miss. Mimoune Soundes

Board of examiners

Chair: Mrs. Nachoua Hassina, MA-Mohammed Kheider University - Biskra

Examiner: Ahmed Bashar, PhD-Mohammed Kheider University - Biskra

Examiner: Mrs. Amina Zohra Mebarki, MA-Mohammed Kheider University - Biskra

June, 2015

Declaration

I hereby declare that this master thesis entitled Importance of Background knowledge in Enhancing EFL learners Reading Comprehension: Case Study Second Year LMD Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, and Supervised by **Rabehi Ayache Salima** is my own work all the sources that I have used and/ or quoted have duly been indicated and acknowledged in both in text citation and bibliography.

Dedication

I dedicate this work.

To my **Parents, Toufik and Moufida**

To my brothers: **Fadi and Ridha**

To my grandfather: **Mimoune Mobarak**

To my aunts: **Asma, Abla , Amel**

To my cousins: **Meryem, Fatima, Imen, Amina, Salsabil.**

To my friends : Hasiba, Warda, Rasha , Amel, Souhila.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I thank God, the almighty who strengthened me and provided me with help and courage to fulfill this work. I would like to announce special thanks to my supervisor **Rabehi Ayache Salima**

“Shall I compare you to a candle that

Kept on enlightening the path of knowledge for me...

You are more generous, you are much greater”

I would like also, to present my special thanks to the members of the jury **Dr. Bashar Ahmed, Mrs. Nachoua Khireddine Hasina , and Miss Mebarki Amina Zohra.**

Abstract

Reading is one of the most important skills to acquire knowledge. The present work is intended to investigate the importance of background knowledge in enhancing EFL learners' reading comprehension. This study aims at suggesting for both teachers and students some reading strategies, principles and techniques in addition to which are the most essential components of background knowledge that may serve for better text comprehension. In the present study, we hypothesize that if teachers activate EFL learners' prior knowledge using some strategies as making student predict, asking them questions, discussing with them, and brainstorming, this can enhance reading comprehension. To accomplish this descriptive study, we designed two questionnaires and administered them to both teachers and second year LMD students of the branch of English language at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra to collect comprehensive information. Moreover, classroom observation was used with the same sample. The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires and the classroom observation leads us to confirm that prior knowledge activation through the above mentioned strategies enhances EFL readers' comprehension as stated in the hypothesis. The main findings of this research are: there is a positive relationship between the two variables; reading comprehension and background knowledge, and there are some basic strategies that may contribute in the process of activating learners' previous knowledge.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

SL: Second Language

NS: Native Speaker

L1: First Language

Q: Question

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

List of Tables

Table 1: Classification of Reading Skills.....	10
Table 2: Reading Comprehension Strategies.....	20
Table 3: Reading Comprehension Strategies.....	21
Table 4: Parts of Speech in English.....	35
Table 5: Some Important Conjunction that EFL Readers Need to Know.....	36
Table 6: Important Phrasal Verbs.....	37
Table 7: Narrative and Expository Text.....	44
Table 8: Students 'Gender.....	53
Table 9: students' age	54
Table 10: Choice to Study English.....	54
Table 11: Students' Level of English.....	56
Table 12: Students' Attitude toward Reading.....	56
Table 13: Students' Reading	57
Table 14: Students' Reading in English.....	57
Table 15: Teachers' Encouragement	58
Table 16: Students' use of reading strategies.....	59
Table 17: Models of Reading.....	60
Table 18: Students Procedure when Reading in English.....	60
Table 19: Causes that Makes a Text Difficult to comprehend for Students	61
Table 20: Students' Use of Background Knowledge.....	62

Table 21: kinds of the Used Background Knowledge.....	63
Table21: Students Attitudes towards the Importance of Background Knowledge.....	64
Table 22: Teacher Use of Strategies to Activate Students’ Background Knowledge.....	65
Table23: Teachers’ AcademicDegree	67
Table 24: Experience in Teaching English	68
Table 25: Students Value the Importance of the Reading Skill.....	69
Table 26: Students Need of Reading Comprehension Courses.....	70
Table 27: The Preferred Reading Model.....	70
Table 28: Teachers’ Encouragements of Student to use Reading Strategies.....	71
Table 29: Teachers Attitudes towards Students’ Use of their Background Knowledge....	72
Table 30: Teachers’ Attitudes about The Importance of Background Knowledge	73
Table 31: Teachers’ Order of Background Knowledge Components.....	74
Table 32: Teachers’ Use of Strategies to Activate Students’ Background Knowledge.....	75

List of Graphs

Graph 01: Students Gender	53
Graph 02: Students' Age	54
Graph 03: choice to study English	55
Graph 04: Students' Level of English	55
Graph 05: Students' Attitude toward Reading.....	56
Graph 06: Students Reading	57
Graph 07: Students' Reading English	58
Graph08: Teachers' Encouragement.....	58
Graph09: Students' Use of Reading Strategies	59
Graph10: Models of Reading.....	60
Graph 11: Students Procedure when Reading in English.....	61
Graph12: Causes that Makes a Text Difficult to comprehend for Students.....	61
Graph13: Students' Use of Background Knowledge	62
Graph14: Kinds of the Used Background Knowledge	63
Graph 15: Students attitudes towards the importance of background knowledge	64
Graph16: Teacher Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge...	65
Graph 17: Teachers' Academic Degree	68
Graph 18: Experience in Teaching English.....	68

Graph 19: Students Value the Importance of the Reading Skill.....	69
Graph 20: Students Need of Reading Comprehension Courses.....	70
Graph 21: The Preferred Reading Model.....	71
Graph 22: Teachers' Encouragements of Student to use Reading Strategies.....	74
Graph 23: Teachers Attitudes towards Students' Use of their Background Knowledge..	75
Graph 24: Teachers' Attitudes about the Importance of Background Knowledge.....	76
Graph 25: Teachers' Order of Background Knowledge Components.....	77
Graph26: Teachers' Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge.....	78

List of Figures

Figure 1: Levels of Reading Comprehension.....	26
Figure 2: Research – Based Instruction in Reading.....	33
Figure 3: An Example of Brainstorming for the Word School	49

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1: Prior Knowledge and Reading Comprehension.....	29
--	----

Table Contents

Declaration.....	XII
Dedication	II
Acknowledgement.....	XII
Abstract.....	XII
List of Abbreviations.....	XII.
List of Tables.....	XII
List of Graphs.....	XII
List of Figures.....	XII
List of Diagrams.....	XII
General Introduction.....	1
Introduction	1
1-Statement of the Problem.....	2
2-Aim of the Study.....	2
3-Significance of the Study.....	2
4-Research Questions	3
5- Research Hypothesis.....	3
6-Data Collection Tools.....	3
7-Population and Sample.....	4
8-Limitations of the Present Study.....	4
9-Structure of the Study.....	4

I.Chapter One: Reading and Reading Comprehension

I. Introduction.....	5
I.1. Historical overview about reading skill.....	6
I.1.1 Grammar- Translation Method (GTM).....	6
I.1.2 Audio- Lingual Method/ The Army Method.....	6
I.1.3Content- Based Instruction.....	6
I .1.4 Communicative Approach.....	6
I.2. Definition of Reading.....	7
I.3. Types of Reading.....	8
I.3.1 Intensive Reading.....	8
I .3.1.1 How to Read Intensively.....	9
I .3.2Extensive Reading.....	9
I.4. Classification of Reading Skills.....	10
I.5. Models of Reading.....	11
I .5.1Bottom-up Model.....	11
I .5.1.1 Criticism of the Bottom- up Model.....	12
I .5.2 Top-down Model.....	12
I .5.2.1 Criticism of the Top- down Model.....	13
I .5.3The Interactive Model.....	13
I.6. Reading Fluency.....	14
I.6.1The Three Major Components of Reading Fluency.....	15
I. 7. Aloud Reading.....	15
I.8. Silent Reading.....	16

I.9. Reading comprehension.....	16
I.10. Reading Comprehension Definition.....	17
I.11. Characteristics of Good Readers.....	18
I.12. Reading Comprehension Strategies.....	18
I.12.1 Definition of Reading Comprehension Strategies.....	18
I. 13. Reading Comprehension Techniques.....	22
I.13.1. SQ3R Reading	22
I.13.1.1. The 3R in SQ3R.....	22
I. 14. Principles for Effective Reading Comprehension.....	23
I.15. Factors Affecting Foreign Language Reading Comprehension.....	24
I.16. Levels of Reading Comprehension.....	26
I.17. Conclusion.....	27
 II.Chapter Two: The Background Knowledge	
II Introduction.....	28
II.1. Background Knowledge in EFL Reading Comprehension.....	29
II.2. Schema Theory.....	30
II.2.1. Formal Schema	30
II.2.2. Content Schema.....	30
II.2.3. The role of schema in reading comprehension.....	31
II .3. The Importance of Phonological / Phonemic Awareness in Reading	31
II.3.1. Definition	32
II.3.2. The Importance Phonemic Awareness in Reading Comprehension.....	32

II.3.3.The Importance of Phonological Awareness in Reading Comprehension.....	33
II.4.Importance of Vocabulary Background Knowledge in Reading	34
II.4.1.Some Important Phrasal Verbs that EFL Readers Need to Know	37
II.4.2.Practical Applications of Teaching Vocabulary.....	38
II.5.The Importance of Grammar Rules Knowledge in Reading	38
II.5.1Definition.....	38
II.5.2Practical Applications of Teaching Grammar through Reading.....	40
II.6.The Importance of Sociocultural Knowledge in Reading	40
II.6.1Practical Applications.....	42
II.7.The Importance of Genre Background Knowledge in Reading	43
II.7.2. Genre (Text Types).....	44
II.7.2.1. Expository Text.....	44
II.7.2.2.The Narrative Text.....	44
II.7.2.3Descriptive Text.....	45
II.7.2.4.Argumentative Text.....	45
II.7.2.5.Compare and Contrast Text.....	46
II.8. Strategies to Activate Learners Background knowledge in Reading.....	46
II.8.1Activating Prior Knowledge through Prediction in Reading.....	46
II.8.2.Activating Prior Knowledge through Asking Questions in Reading.....	47

II.8.3.Activating Prior Knowledge through Discussion in Reading	48
II.8.4.Activating Prior Knowledge through Brainstorming in Reading.....	48
II.9.Conclusion.....	49

Chapter Three: Field of Investigation

III. Introduction.....	51
III.1. Students’ Questionnaire.....	51
III. 1.1 Aim of the Questionnaire.....	51
III. 1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire.....	51
III. 1.3 Description of the Questionnaire.....	52
III. 1.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire	54
III. 2. Teachers Questionnaire.....	67
III 2.1 Aim of Questionnaire.....	67
III 2.2 Administration of the Questionnaire.....	67
III 2.3 Description of the Questionnaire.....	67
III 2.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	68
III Conclusion.....	77
III .3. Classroom Observation Analysis.....	78
III .3.2.Description of Classroom Observation.....	78
III.3.2.1. Session One	79
III .3.2.2 Session Two.....	79
III.3.2.3. Session Three.....	80
III .3.2.4.Conclusion	81

General Conclusion..... 82

Recommendations.....83

Bibliography..... 84

Webliography.....90

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire. 92

Appendix2: Teachers' Questionnaire95

Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Check List.....98

Appendix 4: Classroom Observation Texts Materials

General Introduction

Introduction

In learning a language, there are four skills that we need to master (listening, speaking, writing and, reading). Reading is an essential skill that plays a significant role in enhancing language proficiency. Through reading, a reader intentionally constructs meaning to form a deeper understanding of concepts and information presented in the printed text; however, EFL students in general endure serious reading comprehension difficulties which are mostly caused by the lack of reading fluency. This can be noticed through the great amount of time and effort they use when they read. The majority of EFL learners tend to struggle with word –by-word reading stumbling at every unknown word or structure because they have inadequate vocabulary and background knowledge with which to connect and link new ideas to previous ones. This firmly hinder the readers general comprehension of what they read and make them stop on each word which may not be completely principal to the over understanding of the written piece.

This work is for all EFL teachers at the University Mohamed Kheider of Biskra who teach LMD students who have a problem in the reading comprehension process such as limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, inadequate use of effective reading strategies and, weaknesses in processing information. The emphasis of the present research is on the importance of those teachers to assist their students in activating, building, and using their background knowledge to make linkage between what they know before and what they read. The current research attempts to describe the two variables: Background knowledge as independent variable and EFL LMD learners reading comprehension as the dependent variable.

1- Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is an interactive process that occurs before, during and, after a person reads a particular piece of writing. It is attained through successful interaction between the reader and the text. In fact, EFL learners depend on reading to enlarge their knowledge of a foreign language which is rarely used outside the classroom. Therefore, novice readers are most of the time handicapped by insufficient background of the domain of the text (the used vocabulary and concepts related to specific field of study) and, the knowledge of the text structure and type (grammar rules.) this negatively affects their efficiency and causes reading understanding deficiencies that are not easy to overcome. For these reasons, this study stresses basically on how activating EFL learner's prior knowledge can improve their reading comprehension procedure.

2- Aim of the Study

The main objective of this research is to arouse teachers' of English consciousness about the importance of developing student's abilities in tackling texts. This through improving learner's linguistic, schematic knowledge and enable them to achieve the fluency stage in reading comprehension by extracting meaning out of a text, because the more the reader brings, the more the text will be comprehended .

3- Significance of the Study

Concerning foreign language teaching, the research attempts to reveal the significant role of background knowledge activation on reading comprehension. It is highly recommended that besides reading skills, vocabulary, and grammar, content should be included in teaching reading to learners of foreign languages. The benefits of text previewing are cognitive as well as emotional. In other words, prior knowledge through text previewing helps learners of English as a foreign language understand the

informational text as it increases their engagement and make them confident that they know something about the topic before they begin reading.

4- Research Questions

Four main questions are involved in this study:

1. What is the nature of the correlation between background knowledge and reading comprehension?
2. What is the importance of background knowledge in enhancing the students' reading comprehension?
3. What are the necessary components of background knowledge for effective reading comprehension?
4. How can EFL teachers activate their students' background knowledge in their reading?

5- Research Hypothesis

Someone who engages in reading without knowing beforehand what he is reading about will not get the whole message of the text. Thus, in the conduction of the present study, we hypothesize that if teachers activate EFL learners' prior knowledge using some strategies as making student predict, asking them questions, discussing with them, and brainstorming this is likely to enhance reading comprehension.

6- Data Collection Tools

The most important methods of collecting needs analysis data in qualitative research are interviews, observation and questionnaires. Questionnaire and classroom observation are used to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. In this sense, two main questionnaires; one to the teachers and the other one for second year LMD students of English at the University Mohamed Kheider of Biskra and to attend reading skill classes to get clear idea.

7- Population and Sample

The population which is used in conducting this research is the second year LMD students of English it is not randomly selected; however, it is chosen because they are neither novice learner of English nor graduated, also for the reason that they will have a lesson of reading comprehension class . The total number of those students is 445 the selected sample refers' to 50 of those students.

8-Limitations of the Present Study

Like any other study, the research work has a certain limitations. Some of these are related to the nature of the study itself, others are due to the conditions under which the study is conducted. Due to many reasons, this study contains potential limitations that moderate the implications of the research findings. The first limitation concerns the nature of the topic, which is vague and complex; however, we tried hard to present the most important aspects in a simple and comprehensive way. The second limitation is related to the conditions under which the study is conducted as it was mentioned before in the research tools classroom observation; however, many teachers of second year LMD student did not use reading comprehension skill in oral expression session. In the conduction of this research the researcher have the opportunity to attend only three sessions .

9- Structure of the Study

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first and second chapters review the related literature about reading skill and background knowledge. The third chapter is the practical part of the study. It provides a detailed analysis of both teachers and students' questionnaires in addition to the analysis of classroom observation.

Chapter One Reading and Reading Comprehension Skill

Introduction

Receptive skills (reading and listening) are vital in the process of learning a new language, through which people try to extract the exact meaning from the written or spoken speech. Understanding and attention are two main factors that contribute in receptive skills under the purpose of achieving comprehension

The concern in this simple research is shed on reading skill which has long been investigated by many researchers. It was seen traditionally as passive activity in which readers do not use intellectual efforts. Through time, this thought has changed to that it is important for the reader to use his prior knowledge, experiences, attitudes to respond appropriately to the text material.

It is through reading that EFL students may acquire much of their knowledge and understanding of the different subject areas. The present chapter is interested on presenting reading skill its definition, types, models, and other three related topic (reading fluency, silent, and loud reading) in addition to reading comprehension issues particularly with definitions, strategies, principles, and techniques. Tankersley (2003:1) admitted that

“The art of teaching reading is like weaving a beautiful tapestry. Like every tapestry, reading knowledge is made up of tightly woven, strong foundational threads. Each thread must be present to make the tapestry strong, able to with stand lifelong use, and functional through all seasons.”

Tankersley made an eloquent analogy through which he see that teaching reading is like the craft of weaving, he added that it is very important to be well informed about the process of reading and its steps so, the more the reader uses his knowledge the more his tapestry will be solid and may face the hard conditions.

I. 1. Historical Overview about Reading Skill

Throughout history, there had been different approaches and methods to enhance teaching languages. The reading skill considered as either principle or secondary skill. It depends on the particular approach or method. Here are four of the main methods and approaches of learning perspectives towards reading skill.

I. 1.1. Grammar – Translation Method (GTM)

it was the first language teaching method in history. Teacher used this method to teach Latin and ancient Greek. The main emphasis was on written skill and translation of sentences, passages, and text from foreign or second languages to L1. Lems, *et al.* clarified the process which is applied in the Grammar Translation Method “Once learners understand the specific grammar rules embedded in various reading passages, they begin writing in the target Language” (2010:10) Lems, *et al.* This quotation aim at demonstrating that in these method learners extract the rules of grammar from different texts they read first, then, they start to write.

I.1.2. Audio- Lingual Method / The Army Method

Audiolingualism is a language learning method which follows the behaviourist school in which the priority is on listening and speaking skills. Advocators of this method assumed that learning is a matter of habit to develop student’s habits requires repetition. And the memorization of dialogues is through language drills. Reading and writing are viewed as secondary skills.

I.1.3. Content- Based Instruction

it address foreign language learner by training them to be highly skilled and socially integrated in the foreign language country learners should focus on real life tasks.

I.1.4. Communicative Approach it puts communicative competence at centre emphasis and it concern itself with encouraging fluency over accuracy. Reading and the use of authentic materials is essential to develop communicative competence.

1.2. Definition of Reading

Giving clear, straightforward definition of reading is not an easy matter. In most general terms, we may say that reading involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between them. It was stated that peoples of different cultures and civilizations have been reading since writing symbols and pictograms were created some 5,000 years ago.

The first Quran verse addresses the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was “Read...” Reading was and still considered as a complex process that involves cognitive and linguistic capacities. Reading skill requires for the reader to do multiple of actions at the same time such as looking, recognizing, deciphering, and understanding. Richards (1997:15) identified reading as: “Reading is what happens when we look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text” from this definition, we distinguish that the primary objective of a reader is to have the ability of decoding the meaning of the message in the text and translate the writers’ ideas accurately. He added in the same issue that reading in second language is a dynamic process in which readers make use of background knowledge, grammatical and vocabulary consciousness and real words knowledge furthermore, their own personal purposes, to reach the comprehension of the text. Pang *et al.* (2003: 6) assumed that:

“Ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables us to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature, and do everyday things that are part and parcel of modern life, such as, reading the newspapers, job listings, instruction manuals, maps and so on.” Here the writer wanted to emphasize on the role of enjoying reading in extending human mind for new ideas and opinions.

Broadly speaking, Reading is regarded as process through which the reader decodes the written peace to deduce meaning.

I.3. Types of Reading

The reading skill issue has become priority in second or foreign language classrooms. Reading instruction; therefore, is an essential component that teachers of English need to be aware of it in their lesson activities. This can be achieved by training learners with the way of how to deal with a given text and, explain for them the different steps required for effective reading.

Teachers know that learning to read in second or foreign language is not an easy task for their students. It is favorable for the teacher to provide a relaxed atmosphere and forge positive attitudes towards reading, in order to make it easy for them to cover the basic pillars of successful reading one of these pillars is to acknowledge their learners about the several types of reading, which are intensive and extensive reading. Singh (2006: 223) wrote “In intensive reading, a child learns to read, in extensive reading, a child practices what he has learnt.” Singh wanted to distinguish that each type has its functions and he believed that the child start by intensive reading then he/she turn to extensive reading.

I .3.1 Intensive Reading

In the intensive reading, the reader interest is on the complete and detailed understanding language structure rather than on the text .It requires for the reader to use dictionary at every unknown word ,it is also called ‘careful reading’ it is efficient process to build vocabulary and grammar in learning a foreign or second language . Richard *et al.* (2002:299)described it as follows : “In intensive reading, instruction is more teachers – centered in that teachers are more center stage in what is happening in the classroom. They do lots of talking and decide what skills or strategies to teach” this quotation reveals the role of the teacher in intensive reading class.

I .3.1.1 How to Read Intensively

The process of reading with the intensive type requires a certain points to be followed as the following steps which were delivered by The Learning Center:

- A) Start at the beginning. Underline any unfamiliar words or phrases.
- B) If the text is relatively easy, underline, highlight or make brief notes.
- C) If the text is difficult, read it through at least once (depending on the level of difficulty)
- D) Be alert to the main ideas. Each paragraph should have a main idea, usually contained in the topic sentence.
- E) When you finish, go back to unfamiliar vocabulary. (The Learning Center, 2011:1)

I .3.2 Extensive Reading

In this type, the main objective is to promote a positive attitude towards reading by encouraging the learners to use reading strategies, and not only seeking a new amount of vocabulary but also the comprehension of the text meaning. It is also called (reading for fluency). Hedge mentioned that “extensive reading differs with the learner’s motivation and school resources” (2003:218). He added that it enables the learners to achieve their independency through reading in class or at home. From this belief, Hedge wants to raise a fundamental concept which is students’ freedom to choose independently what they want to read and stop whenever they feel that the material is above their level or it does not fit their interest. The role of the teacher here is just as a guide. He/she encourages students to be active in learning from the text. Extensive reading does not oblige the reader to stop at every single detail; however, it attends to get the overall sense and what the writer is trying to inform with the assistance of the key context to understand what is obscure. According to Singh “The main aim of extensive reading is to create an interest in reading for pleasure. Extensive reading should encourage the pupils to visualize what is read so as to make reading of prose a living experience” (2006 :223). This quotation raises the important role

of visualization in strengthening reading comprehension. Proficient readers are those who can use their mental capacities in creating images and characters and link them with the given text.

I.4. Classification of Reading Skills

There is little consensus in the terminology used to describe the skills, as well as the content of taxonomies. Mag Phil gave a selection of typical taxonomies that may help EFL students in their reading.

Table 1: Classification of Reading Skills (Mag Phil and Melevica , 2010: 3)

Davies 1968	Munby 1978
Identifying word meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing inferences • Identifying writer’s technique • Recognizing mood of passage • Finding answers to question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing script of language • Decoding meaning & use of familiar lexical items • Understanding : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explicit & implicit information ➤ Conceptual meaning ➤ Communicative value of sentences ➤ Relations within sentences & between parts of text. • Recognizing : discourse indicators and main information • Basic reference skills • Skimming and scanning
Lunzer et al 1979	Grabe 1991
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word meaning in context • Literal comprehension • Drawing inferences • Interpretation of metaphor • Finding main ideas • Forming judgments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic recognition skills • Vocabulary and structural knowledge • Formal discourse structure knowledge • Content/ word background knowledge • Synthesis and evaluation skills • Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring

I.5. Models of Reading

Earlier to introduce the various models of reading, it is important to define the concept of a model which was viewed by Davies 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 ” (1995:57). Reading system approves three basic models used by a reader to construct meaning from printed text .Those models take place to simplify deciphering of the present information. The first trend advocates were influenced by the behaviorist theory that depend on stimulus- response, such a word in a text is considered as stimulus and the recognition of this word is the response . This model is named as the Bottom-up.

The other scholars, who are convinced by the cognitive psychology, developed what they labeled as the Top-down model, and the third direction believe on the combination of the two previously mentioned models that is known as the Interactive model.

I .5.1 Bottom- up Model

This model is closely associated with the name Gough (1972) who suggested 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 believed that the reader is not a guesser Gough “He plods through the sentence, letter by letter, word by word” (as cited in Clapham, 1996:14)

The current model emphasizes that reading occurs when the reader moves from part to whole such as from words to sentences, paragraphs, etc. Konza.(2003:1) tried to identify this model as: “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.” It means that reading begins from the identification of the smallest and simplest units (words) to more complex structure of language in series of sequential steps.

Reading in Bottom- up model is also described by Browne (1998: 52) that it focuses on perception, storage and retrieval of grammar structure rules to be deciphered from a text. Teachers who believe that bottom-up theories fully explain how children become readers often teach them first: they begin instruction by introducing names and letter sounds, progress to pronouncing whole words, then show students' ways of connecting word meanings to understand the text.

I .5.1.1.Criticism of the Bottom- up Model

There are other researchers who evaluated the Bottom- up model and they discovered some of the merits and weaknesses in it such as the following:

- Readers do not read words letter by letter in left –to- right fashion; they do process all the letters of words.
- Word identification is mediated by phonological recording; however, readers can access some words through a visual route. Readers still need to use a phonological recording process for other words.
- The ability to identify words automatically and effortlessly is critical, but not sufficient, for reading comprehension (Paul, 2009:272)

I. 5.2. Top – Down Model

The top- down theory explains the information processing during the reading task differently from the first model. It depends mainly on the reader's ability to infer the meaning of the word using the reader's prior knowledge which plays a major role in the comprehension. This background knowledge includes what the reader brings to the text such as his linguistic structure knowledge, his knowledge of the text type, his information about the topic of the text, and his knowledge of word meaning according to the text context. Farrel (2009:18) gave an explanation of top- down model

“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”

I .5.2.1 Criticism of the Top – Down Model

The top- down model is also not empty of some negative points as the following criticisms presented by Paul:

- These models do not adequately explain how young children learn to read.
- There is no adequate explanation of what skilled readers do whenever there is breakdown in comprehension.
- One of the major weaknesses is the dependency on context for comprehension. It has been demonstrated that context does not accelerate the identification of words, nor does it accelerate the derivation of word meanings.
- Models fail to notice that difficulties in use of contextual cues during reading for identification purposes are not strongly related to reading comprehension problems that exist in readers (Paul, 2009:272).

I .5.3 The Interactive Model

Each of the two above models has shown deficiencies in covering the full reading comprehension process that is why the interactive model has been introduced. This model finds that it is necessary for readers to use both Bottom- up model and Top down model in parallel neither neglect language structure nor put aside guessing meaning. Rumelhart 1985(as cited in Konza 2003:9) putted forward the view 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 comprehension”. In other words, for this current model readers become proficient when they make a balance between lower level it deals with (linguistic

components) and higher level which is related to background knowledge to interpret the accurate written text meaning.

The main objective of the interactive model is to assist student to be more independent in reading through, creating a relaxed atmosphere that each one uses his own preferred strategy of extracting meaning from a text.

I.6. Reading Fluency

Reading fluency has been a center core of different research. In advance of consulting a number of opinions related to this issue, it is appropriate to define the concept of fluency Nizegorodcew (2007:34) suggested that: “Fluency encompasses control of the acquired knowledge with broad respect for intended meaning” Nizegorodcew suggestion reveals that learners who lack the necessary foundations for developing decoding skills are likely to succeed in fluency. It was also defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (2001) as smoothness, easiness and accuracy in speaking. What can be noticed from this definition that fluency is viewed as being characterized by smoothness, easiness and accuracy in all the language skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading.)

Fluency is regarded as one of the primary component of reading as it is mentioned by Taguchi, *et al.*(2004:1) “Good reading ability is virtually impossible in the absence of fast and accurate word recognition skills and reading fluency" Pikulski (2006:73) at the same Vain defined reading fluency as the following

“Reading fluency is a developmental process that refers to efficient, effective decoding skills that permit a reader to comprehend text. There is a reciprocal relationship between decoding and comprehension. Fluency is manifested in accurate, rapid and expressive oral reading and is applied during and makes possible, silent reading comprehension”

This is meaningful definition in which the writer tried to make a bridge between reading fluency expressive oral reading and comprehension to allow the reader to receive, interpret, and draw meaning from the passage fluently and correctly in both silent and loud reading.

I.6.1 The Three Major Components of Reading Fluency

1-Word accuracy: accurate word recognition is important in building fluency when reading. Hudson *et al* defined the word Reading accuracy as "the reader's ability to recognize or decode words correctly" (2005:703).

2- Prosody: It is reading with expression it is explained by Timothy as "When readers embed appropriate volume, tone, emphasis, phrasing, and other elements in oral expression, they are giving evidence of actively interpreting or constructing meaning from the passage" (n.d.: 4) we can deduce from this explanation, that in order to possess fluency in reading it is important to apply some oral expression elements. One of these elements is using the appropriate volume and pitch of sound when reading.

3- Rate: Fluent readers read at an appropriate rate of speed Hudson *et al* (2005:702) assume that "reading rate is a prerequisite for good comprehension". Fluency in reading imposes for the reader to be aware to read with speed however, without affecting their reading comprehension.

I.7. Aloud Reading

Reading aloud is one of the ways of reading it has got an important value in building student's text comprehension. This process can be applied in second or foreign language classrooms either teacher reads for his students and they follow him/her or a student read for his teacher and peers loudly. It is through reading aloud students develop their linguistic, phonological, rhythm and intonation aspect and be more accustomed with the target language sounds and symbols. Hickman and Sharolyn clarified this assumption that through reading aloud teacher creates for his learners' opportunities to enlarge their comprehension in different procedures. They support this by an example a student who read a text loudly they use their prior knowledge while engaging with the new language skills (2009: 25).

Reading aloud activity can also have positive effect on building a strong personality of students for example; using reading dialogues or short speeches loudly and sharing them with their colleagues maintain the social sense of the learners.

As conclusion of this activity it is essential to mention that reading loudly is often associated with seriousness in fact it is the contrary, reading loudly is enjoyable and interesting at the same time in which the teacher can read and play the role of characters in a dialogues and student hear how he/she articulate this can build their fluency.

I.8. Silent Reading

Silent reading is significant way of concentration that enables the reader to go beyond the text and read between lines what the writer intend to mention indirectly. Reading silently allows the reader to skip difficult or less important word and concentrate on more important details. This concentration leads to comprehension of the text more than reading loudly. Carrasquillo (2002:99) identified this activity in classrooms as “Guided silent reading provides an opportunity for students to work at high cognitive levels by identifying cause- and- effect relationships, making inferences and prediction, and applying other critical thinking skills as their comprehension is also supported” Carrasquillo wanted to direct the attention on the guidance of the teacher for silent reading class, in which the teacher gives for his student all the necessary instruction that assist them during their reading furthermore, it makes them succeed in deciphering the implied meaning and get as much as possible of compressive input . This can be achieved only if the student is interested and use his brain in manipulating information systematically in order to deduce the logical connection between words, sentences, and paragraphs of the text.

I.9. Reading Comprehension

Before embarking to identify reading comprehension it is appropriate to define the two concepts separately first.

Comprehension Almasi (2012:113) sought it as “a constructive process that involves constructing a text base and integrating it with prior knowledge to create a situation model” It means that building comprehension requires using one’s prior knowledge and make connections with the new information. Comprehension can be challenged task, sometimes words are understood separately, however the entire comprehension is not achieved because of less capacity of going beyond the words.

Reading it is perceived by Harmer (2001:153) as “an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain, the eyes receive and the brain then has to work out the significance of these messages”. From this assumption it is clear that Harmer see reading as an activity that is basically performed by the two organs the eye which function as receiver (visualization of the text words) beside to this the cognitive process (manipulation of the text content).

I.10. Reading Comprehension Definition

In the early phase of learning reading skill, the main emphasis is stressed on recognizing words it is called (learning to read stage) in which readers move from letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs. After this, a new stage is introduced that is known as reading to learn, readers here are well equipped by the necessary principals now they use the preexisting knowledge to scaffold the meaning from a given text this is what reading comprehension is interested.

Reading is not only one of the four basic skills Williams (1984:2) defined reading as: “the process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written”. He explained that the key word in this definition is “understands”; because understanding or comprehension is the central point in reading.

Schumm (2006) postulated that the comprehension process includes understanding of words and how those words are applied to produce meaning. This comprehension involves taking into consideration the context when analyzing or evaluating the text components such as words, sentences, and paragraphs throughout reading beside to this Schumm gave

importance to the integration of background knowledge in constructing the accurate sense (As cited in Schumm 2006:223) Dolores (1980) wrote: *“If there is no comprehension, there is no reading”* Dolores Here stressed on the significant role of comprehension on reading.

I.11. Characteristics of Good Readers

Good readers are those who exhibit particular strategies when they read Barbara (2009:98) gave ten main features of effective reader:

- 1- Reads actively (thinks about what is being read).
- 2- Reads for a purpose (goal- oriented).
- 3- Previews text (structure, relevant sections).
- 4- Predicts while reading.
- 5- Reads selectively (focusing on what is important)
- 6- Constructs, revises, and questions meanings while reading.
- 7- Determines meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts.
- 8- Uses prior Knowledge to help understand the text.
- 9- Monitors understanding.
- 10- Adjusts reading rate and approach based genre.

I.12. Reading Comprehension Strategies

Most EFL/ESL learners often fall in some troubles in reading a certain text. They always struggle with to achieve comprehension of the content. Numerous psychologists and researchers, assume that those who demonstrate deficiency in reading may lack the reading strategies that may assist them to overcome their reading problems.

I.12.1 Definition of Reading Comprehension Strategies

Reading strategies are helpful for learners because they enable them to succeed in understanding what they read Mc Namara (2007:6) stated that:

“A reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension”

Mc Namara added in another work that “reading strategies are essential, not only to successful comprehension, but to overcoming problems and becoming better reader and comprehender” (2009:34). These strategies are tools that open the door for readers to the comprehension of the text material. The following strategies are chosen from the array of strategies examined by researchers.

Many researchers believe that successful reading comprehension requires three systematic stages that readers need to have insights about them which are prior to read the purpose here is to prepare the readers to encounter the reading process, during reading is when readers are more actively involved, and after reading now readers deeply focus on information of the text , in order to be more familiar with a text based on these different steps. Paris (1996) (cited in Hundson, 2007:108) present text –processing strategies to promote reading comprehension. He suggested the following table

Table 2: Reading Comprehension Strategies Hundson (2007:108)

Pre- reading	While – reading	Post- reading strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Establishing a 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 known about the topic. 11- Predicting what might be read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 9- Comparing what is read with what is known. 10- Evaluating value of what is being learned. 11- Rereading text or skipping ahead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

The present table also demonstrates other reading comprehension strategies that hopefully improve learners reading comprehension which are given by Beal *et al.*

Table 3: Reading Comprehension Strategies. (n.d:1)

<p style="text-align: center;">Infer</p> <p>How do I read between the lines? When the answers are “right there,” good readers draw conclusions based on background knowledge and clues in the text. Ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder why... • I wonder how... • I wonder if... <p>Find information from the text that might be clues to the answers and use these with your background knowledge for possible answers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Determine Importance</p> <p>What’s the big idea? So what? Good readers look for things that help them identify big ideas and why they are important. Look at text features for clues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles and headings • Bold print • Pictures and captions • Graphs and charts • Chapter objectives and questions <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The big idea is... ❖ Most important information is... ❖ So far I’ve learned... ❖ The author is saying... ❖ This idea is similar to... 	<p style="text-align: center;">Synthesize</p> <p>How do I use what I’ve read to create my own ideas? Good readers combine new information from their reading with existing knowledge in order to form new ideas or interpretations. Synthesis is creating a single understanding from a variety of sources. Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast what I’m reading with what I already know or other sources of information. • Think of new ways to use this information. • Can connections I make across this text help me to create new generalizations or new perspectives?
<p style="text-align: center;">Make Connections</p> <p>What connections do I make as I read? Good readers notice pieces of text that relate to or remind them of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their lives, past experiences, and prior knowledge • Other books, articles, movies, songs, or pieces of writing • Events, people, or issues <p>Tips: That reminds me of...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This made me think of... ❖ I read another book that... ❖ This is different from... I remember when... 	<p style="text-align: center;">Visualize</p> <p>Good readers create pictures in their minds while they read. While reading, note places where you get a clear picture in your mind that helps you understand the text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can picture... • I can see the... • I can visualize... • The movie in my head Shows... <p>Use your senses to connect the characters, events, and ideas to clarify the picture in your head.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can taste/hear/smell the... • I can feel the 	<p style="text-align: center;">Ask Questions</p> <p>Good readers ask questions before, during, and after reading to better understand the author and the meaning of the text. Ask questions of the author, yourself, and the text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the author trying to say? • What is the message of this piece? • Do I know something about his topic? • What do I think I will learn from this text? • How could this be explained to someone else? • What predictions do I have about this Reading ?

I.13. Reading Comprehension Techniques

There is a range of reading comprehension techniques used by the learner to construct meaning from the written material and one of them is the SQ3R technique.

I.13.1. SQ3R Reading

SQ3R is a process that learners can use to read a text in details. It helps readers when they need to fully understand written information. This system was created by Francis Pleasant Robinson in the 1960. There are five stages in this process. Jones in (2004: 67) divided this technique into two parts the first part involves Survey and Question and the second part include the 3R.

1- Survey

Surveying a document requires that you get a sense for how the document is set up prior to reading it looking at the whole text before embarking into details. Read the title, subheadings, the boldfaced words, the introduction, and summary. It is like getting an overview to decide whether it is helpful or not.

2- Question

When the student surveys he/ she makes a note of any questions that comes to mind. Use question words as Who wrote this text? What he/ she talks about? Where (the place)? When was written? Why(the purpose)? And How? Then scan to find answers for the questions she/ he created.

I.13.1.1. The 3R in SQ3R

1- Read

The student starts reading, but not obligatory from the first page read only what is relevant for him/ her, make sure that he/she understands main important points. Take breaks in between if necessary.

2- Record The student paraphrases the passage using his / her notes in his /her own

words. If he / she feel unable to recall the information he/she may look over the information for another time.

3- Review

Here the student goes back to the text and makes sure that what he /she paraphrased is correct reviewing phase can helps the student to check how much has he/she really Comprehended. During this stage new question may arise.

I.14. Principles for Effective Reading Comprehension

Harmer (2007:101) provided the most six significant principles that should be employed by teachers to increase the opportunities of comprehension.

Principle 1: Encourage students to read as often and as much as possible.

It is proved that students who read regularly are more comprehender than those who do not read .Teachers have to emphasis on developing extensive reading skill.

Principle 2: Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

During the reading task teacher should do their best to involve his/her learner and ensure that all of them are engaged and motivated to read.

Principle 3: Encourage students to respond to the content of a text (and explore their feelings about it), not just concentrate on its construction.

Students should be aware of both the structure of the text which include the number of paragraphs, the type sentences, and the use of pronounbeside to this, the message of the text, is just as important as this. For example support them to construct understanding through using their background knowledge and the new information.

Principle 4: Prediction is major factor in reading comprehension. It is appropriate for the teacher to provide hints so that students use them in activating their brains to foresee what they are going to read.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic when using intensive reading text.

The teacher should be intelligent and systematic in choosing the reading task, the right question and the appropriate exercise before, during and after reading.

Principle 6: Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

Good teachers are those who can bring the text to life by use the topic of the text and discuss it or if it is possible to make learners play the roles of the characters furthermore the teacher may also employ the text to teach tenses and other useful activities.

I.15. Factors Affecting Foreign Language Reading Comprehension

Reading has been considered as one of the basic and challenging skills whether in learning first, second or foreign language. Understanding of texts is the principle purpose that readers want to achieve, however; many learners fail to comprehend due to multiple factors that hinder the reader to extract and construct meaning from a written piece. Foreign language

Teacher mission is to assist his/her learners whenever he/she observe these factors. Richards (1997:23) suggested six main factors that influence reading in an L2/ FL. Here are four of them.

1- Cognitive Development and Cognitive Style Orientation at Time of Beginning L2 / FL study

The age of the L2/FL learners is debatable issue, a trend of researcher assert that adult learn L2/ FL better of children because they already acquired the basic rules that most languages compose of such as nouns, verbs, sentences in addition to this reading strategies in their first language and the other one assume the opposite that young learner are better. However reading teachers have no control over neither when student start learning FL/L2 nor on student's cognitive development. Another related issue which is learning style, also called cognitive style for example there is visual, auditory, introverted extroverted each learner prefer the suitable for him/ her . The reading teacher task is to assist them in using the appropriate reading strategy according to their learning style.

2- Language Proficiency in the L2/ FL

L2/FL proficiency has great influence on reader's comprehension. The more learners master the L2/FL the more she/he can understand the written material. Teachers should select a text in relation to his/ her student level of proficiency. Many researchers in the language learning field hypothesize that learners with less background knowledge of the L2/FL demonstrate more reading problems.

3- Cultural Orientation and Attitudes toward Text and Purpose for Reading

Cultural orientation models the student attitude over a text. Learners who have strong relation with sacred books as Quran or Bible they have the belief that text equal Truth, in the other hand there is learners who use a text to imagine. Synthesis, evaluates, and interprets a text differently.

4- Cultural orientation and the types of reading skills and strategies used in the L1.

In some FL/SL learning contexts student come with different believes, cultural training, reading strategies and educational experiences to the reading class. Richards support this with an example student who prepare for liberal arts college have more emphasis on analyzing, scanning for information ,and reading academic text , but little exposure to scientific works, however; those who are directed to scientific filed focuses more on math and science courses with no experience with literary works Richards (1997:23).

I.16. Levels of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension proceeds in three major levels that readers go through to understand the meaning.

The first level of comprehension is reading "the lines" refers to linguistic comprehension and includes the conventional meanings of lexical and syntactic forms. For example, in English, the lexical item orange is different from the item women and the

syntactic form of interrogative sentence (direct question/ indirect question), declarative sentence, imperative sentence, and exclamatory sentence readers need to be aware of each sentence form.

The second level of comprehension is “reading between lines” in which the reader try to use alternative tools to understand the text for example using reading strategies it is defined by Pollet (2011:8) “ it is the act of making inference in the context of reading” it is the comprehension of language with the assistance of its current context

The third level of comprehension is called “reading beyond lines” at this level readers are able to read beyond the actual information. Pollet(2011:8) describes this level as “Readers not only have literal understanding of the text they are reading, but they make interpretations that can be supported with textual- and extra textual citations” .It includes evaluative judgments on the content or style of the text or critical judgments such as on the logic argument. These levels of understanding are frequently ordered hierarchically in terms of difficulty and value

Figure 1: Levels of Reading Comprehension

1-Reading the lines
2-Reading between the lines
3-Reading beyond the lines

I.17. Conclusion

One of the main aspects that human beings have to learn to deal with during their lifelong is reading. It is useful for language acquisition because the more learners read the more the opportunity of learning language is developed.

In this chapter we discussed the reading process in general and the reading comprehension skill in particular this latter is considered as the core and the essence of reading.

Reading theorists provided vast related elements to reading and reading comprehension for example its' two types, three models , strategies for instance readers who monitor their own reading use strategies to help them when they do not understand something, principles, It was interesting to mention the different factors affecting reading comprehension and, it provide the different levels of reading .

As language future teachers we cannot neglect the importance of reading comprehension on the contrary, we have to incorporate it in our classes and teach learners to get the maximum benefits out of it . At different times, we can use the reading material to teach grammar, vocabulary, punctuation or exploit it for different purposes.

II .Chapter Two the Background Knowledge

Introduction

The most important factor in determining how much readers will comprehend and how well writers will be able to transmit their ideas in a given topic is their level of knowledge about that topic. Background knowledge has a fundamental role whether in first or second or even foreign language reading comprehension. It requires all of natural fallow and organization of the text, syntactic rules, coherence, the use of the language, the choice of vocabulary. In addition, language learners need to be aware of culture, customs, beliefs, norms and attitudes of the (NS) native speaker of this language. This will guide the reader to understand what he/ she reads.

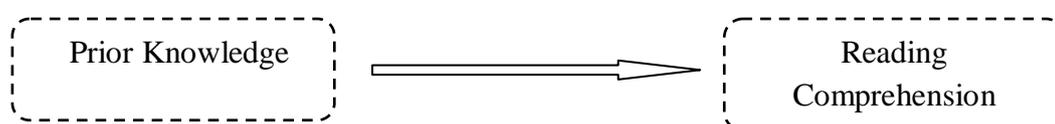
Learning new information is best accomplished through connecting it with previous knowledge that already exists in the brain. Reading teacher can encourage his/her students to develop connections between what they know and what a given text presents. This process proceeds before, during, and after reading. The current procedure may not succeed until the student is able to use and employ this knowledge to achieve comprehension of what he / she reads.

The reader is no longer seen as a passive participant who depends heavily on the linguistic input on the page but rather as someone who is actively engaged using what he/ she previously learned, acquired or experienced throughout his/ her life while reading. The present chapter seeks to provide a simple overview of what is meant by background knowledge in reading comprehension, the definition of schema theory and its types, brief insight about grammar, vocabulary, text genre and sociocultural background knowledge importance in reading. It also sheds light on some effective strategies that help readers to activate background information in reading comprehension process. At the end, this chapter will be closed by a conclusion.

II.1. Background Knowledge in EFL reading comprehension

Background Knowledge has strong relationship with reading comprehension. This means that the more a reader is able to recall his prior information the better he/she succeed in the text comprehension. Scholars and researchers in the field of reading comprehension often use the terms background knowledge, pre-existing knowledge, schematic knowledge and prior information interchangeably to refer to individuals' accumulated store of information, experiences, ideas, assumptions, and beliefs both correct and incorrect no importance whether it is academic or everyday information.

Diagram 1: Prior Knowledge and Reading Comprehension



In relation to teaching reading skill it is clearly demonstrated that teacher who place greater emphasis on helping their learners to activate and use what they know before will improve and facilitate their understanding of the text. It is essential for those learners to be familiar with the text topic for example a learner who does not possess a certain amount of knowledge about farming is unlikely to understand a short story or text which talk about farming. As cited in (Alonya & Akeyo, 2014:406) Browne (2001) claimed that a text does not carry all meaning. The reader brings with him/ her information, knowledge, emotion, and culture that is schemata, to the printed word.

This indicates that the understanding of a text depends on how much related schema readers possess while reading. Consequently, readers' failure or confusion to extract the message of a text is caused by their lack of appropriate information that can fit correctly with the content of the text. A text may seem difficult to understand at the first glance, but once a teacher gives to his students an opportunity to talk about its ambiguous meaning, and allow them to make connection of what they know before and the new information this

will hopefully ensure the comprehension According to many researchers readers who possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of a reading text often understand better than their classmates with low prior knowledge. Previous knowledge is highly correlated with reading comprehension ability. Nuttal (1982:9) argued that

“an author's conveyed message is not there in the text to be suck up by the reader with no effort. In contrast, he should be in an interaction with the text to participate in building an interpretation”.

II.2. Schema Theory

Schema theory is not a modern concept it trace back to the old philosophy. Carrell is a well-known researcher on schema theory who has written various papers on it. Schema theory describes the process by which readers combine their own background knowledge with the new information in a text to comprehend a text appropriately. Schema helps to solve the problems in reading .It reefer's to the conceptual system for understanding knowledge how knowledge is represented and how it is used. Researchers had distinguished two main types of schema the former is termed formal schema and the latter is called content schema.

II.2.1. Formal Schema

Formal schema was defined by Seel (2012: 1873) “refers to the organizational forms of written text. This is the knowledge that one brings to text about structure, syntax, grammar, and vocabulary” .In other words, readers need to know how morphemes are build up into words and words into clauses and sentences. Thus, in reading tasks readers should possess certain language knowledge to succeed in any reading activity.

II.2.2. Content Schema

Content schema was explained by Huang (2009:139) as the key to integrating the information into the reader's new knowledge is partly dependent on the quantity of schematic knowledge of the reader. The possession background knowledge will imply that

the reader has a certain amount of knowledge of the subject of the text or related information due to personal experiences and cultural background. Alderson (2000: 4) stated that "if one knows absolutely nothing about the topic of a text, one will find it difficult to process". So, when a reader has less insight of what the text is about this will lead to less comprehension.

Schema theory refers to the capability of combining ones' own background knowledge with the information in a text. Both content as well as formal schemas have been recognized as capital factors that influence reading comprehension that is why it is crucial for reading teacher to make their learners more familiar with structure in addition to the topic of the text.

II.2.3.The Role of Schema in Reading Comprehension

Anderson (1985) proposed five ways in which a readers' schema affects learning and comprehension (as cited in Mc Cormack. & Susan, 2010:95):

- 1- It allows for information to be filed in slots or niches.
- 2- It allows for selection of important material or main ideas, in situations where close attention to detail is important.
- 3- It enables the reader to make inferences from implied text.
- 4- It allows the reader to determine relevance and irrelevance of information.
- 5- It allows the reader to activate knowledge and reconstruct what is missing by combining the new material with what is previously stored.

As good readers read, they think about what they are reading to understand it, with the consideration of how it fits theirs' schema that they already have developed.

II .3.The Importance of Phonological and Phonemic Awareness in Reading

II.3.1. Definition

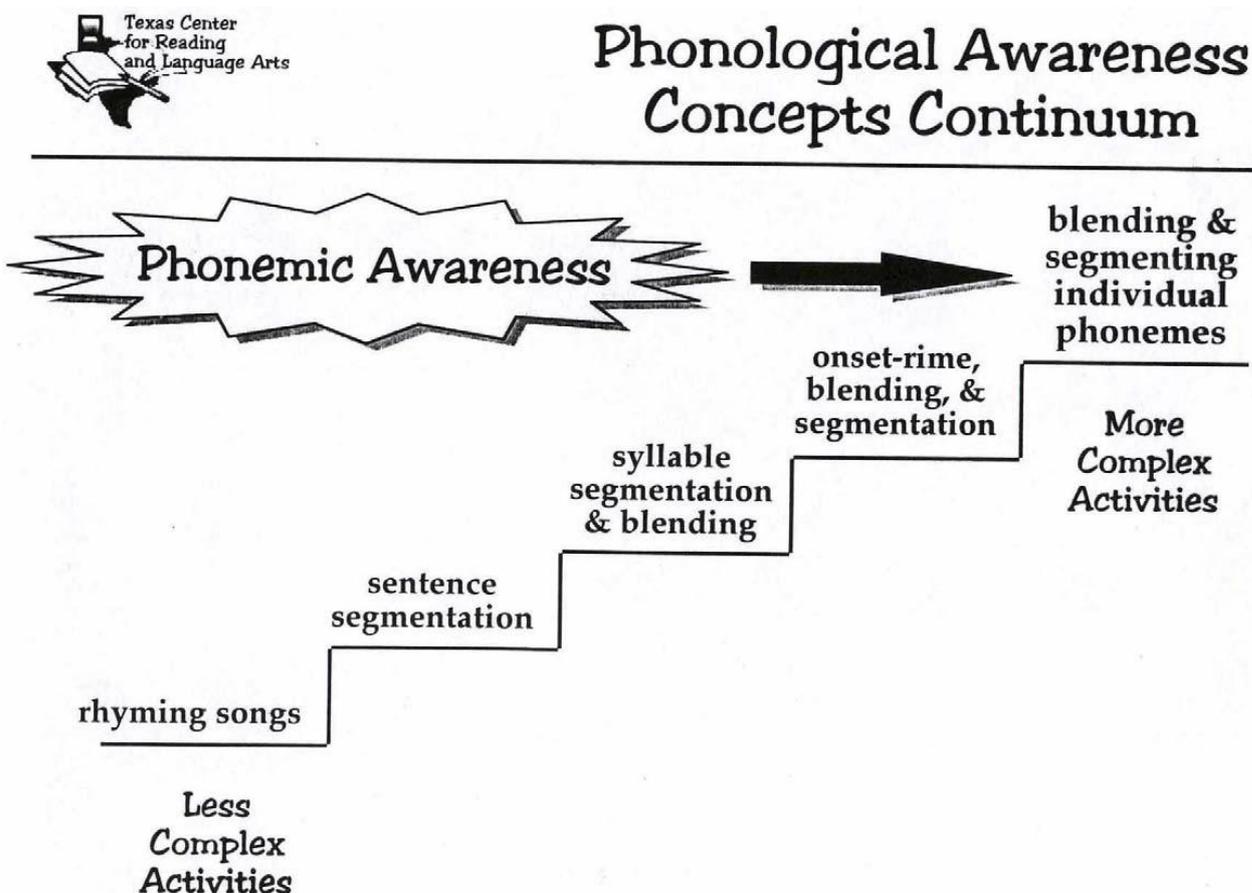
Phonemic and phonological awareness are not interchangeable concepts. The word phonology is derived from Greek language ‘phone’ stands for sound and logos refers to speech it means that phonology deals with the study of speech sound , it attend to answer the question how sounds are organized and combined in a given language ? Hadadad(2005:162) stated that:

“A phoneme is the smallest contrastive unit in the sound system language by which one can distinguish one word from another. It is always written between two slashes”

II.3.2. The Importance Phonemic Awareness in Reading Comprehension

Phonemic awareness is the ability to think about, or manipulate the smallest unit which is phoneme. This phonemic awareness can successfully assist learners in reading to identify syllables which can be divided into parts (The parts are onset and rhyme) in particular word for example the word to.ma.to has three syllabus. Learners who have the ability to identify individual phonemes are much more likely to recognize written words accurately more than those who have a deficiency in this ability.

Figure 2: Research – Based Instruction in Reading. Armbruster, (n.d.:2)



II.3.3. The Importance of Phonological Awareness in Reading Comprehension

Phonological awareness enhances growth in reading comprehension. Teachers should be aware of the important value of teaching their learners how to identify, pronounce and spell a given letter or pattern of language correctly. This will contribute in the development of the learner’s reading comprehension.(Pang *et al*, 2003: 9) gave clear definition of phonological awareness in reading

“Phonological awareness refers to the ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning. Studies of both alphabetic and non-alphabetic languages show that phonological awareness is highly correlated with reading ability.”

Pang *et al*, postulated the strong relationship between Phonological awareness and reading comprehension.

II.4. Importance of Vocabulary Background Knowledge in Reading

Broadly speaking, vocabulary is considered as the total group of words that a person knows. It is taken for granted that anyone who intends to learn a language he/she starts with its words and vocabulary. Oxford Dictionary (2007) defined vocabulary as the total number of words. Receptive vocabulary is developed earlier than the productive vocabulary the former refers to the number of the received words that a person sees or reads where as the latter is the number of produced words (spoken or written). In the same vain recent finding discovered that increasing the number of acquiring new vocabulary accurse more in reading than hearing Wolfe *et al* (2004: 12) said “New word learning for competent readers happens more rapidly through exposure to print than to exposure to conversation”.

The importance of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension has shown an increasing awareness over the resent years. One of the basic difficulties that poor reader’s comprehender fall in is weak vocabulary knowledge. Oakhill *et al.*(2015: 60) believed that “Vocabulary supports reading comprehension, and reading (with good comprehension) supports vocabulary development” This implies that there is a correlation between reading comprehension and the learned vocabulary then, as the learner continues in the reading process this will lead to further vocabulary development. One way of assisting student is to identify for them the most important vocabulary beforehand reading a text. This may removes at least some barriers that hinder learners to understand the text.

Many researchers consider that limited number of vocabulary knowledge stands as an obstacle from the learner’s comprehension Spears (2013: 1) viewed that “Weak vocabulary is major stumbling block for our students. Because, the interrelationship between comprehension and vocabulary is so strong”. Vocabulary is so crucial because usually when learners go abroad, they face some problems to communicate with the native

speakers of the host country to transmit and decode messages due to the lack of rich vocabulary knowledge.

The following table summarizes parts of speech that enable the reader to understand more when they read.

Table 4: Parts of Speech in English. (2006:1)

Noun	Pronoun	Verb
<p>A noun refers to a person, place or thing (object, concept, idea, event). Person: Cindy, staff, tutors, boy Place: Hendersonville, the park, school, North Carolina Thing: book, reading, excellence, Apple Festival, being smart Possessive</p> <hr/> <p><i>singular</i> <i>plural</i> boy's boys' student's students' child's children's</p>	<p>A pronoun takes the place of a noun. Subject: I we you you he/she/it they They went to the store. Object: me us you you him/her/it them I saw them at the store. Possessive: mine ours yours yours his/hers theirs The book is mine.</p>	<p>A verb expresses action, or a state of being/condition. Juan threw the ball. The students study hard. I am a tutor. Maria is ill</p>
<p>Article</p> <p>An adjective that limits or numbers a noun. Definite: the Indefinite: a, an This is the book that you lost. The tutor needs a grammar book</p>	<p>ADJECTIVE</p> <p>Modifies a noun (the red book), pronoun (he is rich) and other adjectives (the dark blue sweater) and indicates: what kind? how many? which one? how much? He has a two-year-old black cat. We have 300 students. I gave her the red book. Bob has a larger house than Tom. Possessive my our your your his/her/its their This is my book</p>	<p>ADVERB</p> <p>Modifies a verb (he learns quickly), adjective (she is very beautiful), and other adverbs (she learns very quickly) and answers: when? where? how much? how? She never arrives on time. The kids are outside. I strongly object! Speak slowly.</p>
<p>PREPOSITION</p> <p>A word that shows the relationship between words: in, on, over, under, between, by, for, at, with, during, into, among, etc. The book is on the table</p>	<p>CONJUNCTION</p> <p>Conjunctions link words or groups of words: and, but, or, nor, either/or, neither/nor, not only/but also, both/and. Karen and Howard are tutors.</p>	<p>INTERJECTION</p> <p>Words used to express emotion or catch attention: ah, oh, ouch, hey, help, wow, ugh, good grief. Hey! Pay attention!</p>

When students read to learn, they need to learn new vocabulary in order to gain new knowledge. Readers cannot understand what they are reading unless they know how sentences of the text are linked and what is the function of these connecting words. The next table attends to present and clarify the importance of teaching learners those linking word in order to enhance their reading comprehension.

Table 5: Some Important Conjunction that EFL Readers Need to Know. (McCarthy *et al* 2010: 30)

Conjunction	Function	Example
And	Tells you more	We got home and went to bed.
But	Shows a contrast	They are rich, but they aren't happy.
Because	Answers the question why?	We went home because we were tired.
So	Tells you the results	We went home early, so we missed the end of the concert.
When	Answers the questions when or at what time?	We went home when it started to rain.
Before	Answers the question what happened first?	We went home before the concert ended.
After	Answers the question what happened next?	We went home after the singer sang his first song.
Although	Tells you something is surprising	Although we did not really want to, we went home.
If	Something needs to happen for something else to happen	If we get tired, we'll go home

Thus, conjunctions are closely related to reading comprehension because, they plays a fascinating role in combining words and sentences to express a coherent text.

II.4.1. Some Important Phrasal Verbs that EFL Readers Need to Know

Phrasal verbs are also a part of vocabulary knowledge. It is a prerequisite for EFL learners to learn the most frequently used ones. The next table introduces some of them.

Table 6: Important Phrasal Verbs. Usman (2014 :1)

N.	Phrasal verbs	Meaning	Sentence
1.	Back up	Support	Since he was unemployed, I financially backed him up.
2.	Ask for	To provoke a negative reaction.	Your non-serious attitude is asking for trouble.
3.	Aware of	To know something	Are you aware of the recent earthquake in Japan?
4.	Admit to	To acknowledge or confess something	The son admitted his mistake to his father.
5.	Agree with	To be favourable	The burger I ate didn't agree with my stomach as I am feeling pain now.
6.	Back out	Fail to keep an arrangement or promise.	He had promised us to take to the museum but he backed out.
7.	Ask after	Enquire about someones's health, how life is going.	I asked after my grandfather on phone.
8.	Accuse of	Being blamed of something.	He was accused of stealing cars.
9.	Abide by	Accept or follow a decision or rule	We must abide by traffic rules.
10.	Come from	Country, town or family to which you belong.	He comes from a poor family.
11.	Bring up	To raise a child	The orphan child was brought up by his uncle.
12.	Laugh at	To ridicule someone	The boys laughed at his torn shoes.
13.	Stand for	Accept or tolerate a behavior	We cannot stand for his rudeness any more.
14.	Fix up	Make an arrangement	Since he was sick, I fixed up a meeting with the doctor for him.

II.4.2. Practical Applications of Teaching Vocabulary

It is well known fact, that good readers are those who accumulate a well set of vocabulary knowledge. Many teachers have a desire to make their learners acquire much new vocabulary to better understand what they read easily. Pang *et al.* (2003: 12) provided those teachers with some practical applications in order to gain new vocabulary knowledge through reading.

- Vocabulary should be taught directly and indirectly. Direct instruction includes giving word definitions and pre-teaching of vocabulary before reading a text. Indirect methods refer to incidental vocabulary learning, e.g. mentioning, extensive reading and exposure to language-rich contexts.
- Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items (e.g. through speaking, listening and writing) are important. This should ideally be done in connection with authentic learning tasks.
- Vocabulary learning should involve active engagement in tasks, e.g. learning new vocabulary by doing a class project.
- Word definitions in texts aid vocabulary development.
- Multiple methods, not dependence on a single method, will result in better vocabulary learning.

II.5. The Importance of Grammar Rules Knowledge in Reading

II.5.1 Definition

All languages have grammar, and each language has its own grammar. Grammar was defined by (Schellekens, 2007: 28) as “*the term that teachers and learners use to refer to the way that language is organized*” It refers to the collection of rules which are used to create words and sentences. That is to say that thanks to grammar we can produce unlimited number of utterances and sentences with a limited a number of words and sounds. If readers have insights about how unites and structure of language are combined.

This will increase the opportunity of understanding the printed text properly. Knowing the rules of grammar is important because it facilitates more for the reader to decipher the meaning. Researchers agree that it is more effective to teach punctuation, sentence structure, and the tenses are most beneficial procedure of helping students.

EFL teachers should prioritize and provide instruction on the grammatical elements that most affect their student's ability to read effectively. Teachers can see through his/her student's loud reading which aspects of language structure that make trouble for them for example if a teacher observes that many of his students do not respect punctuation when they read marks such as:

- Period (full stop) (.) which serves many functions for example to end a sentence.
- Comma (,) the comma is used to make the internal structure of a sentence clear.
- Question mark (?) it follows a direct question as: what is meant by grammar rules?
- Exclamation mark (!) is used to express emotions or indicate unusual emphasis such as: Be quite!
- Colon (:) the colon is a formal way to introduce a list or add a clarification for the written piece .
- Semicolon (;) most often functions to closely related independent clauses that are not connected by coordinating conjunction or to join independent clauses that are linked by a conjunctive adverb.
- Quotation marks (“ ”) are most commonly used to enclose direct quotations.
Example: My favorite story, “Leaving No Footprint” by Clare West.

This enables the teacher to elucidate his student's insufficient grammar knowledge. In addition to this, teacher may use the text in multiple successful ways for example to teach his/her student tenses he/she can ask them in which tense the text is written by extracting examples or, he/she may even deliver a course of regular and irregular verb moreover to this, he/ she can present a lesson of how to build a correct question through a text. Based

on the reading task teachers can predict the necessary lesson that his student need to perform better when they read.

II.5.2 Practical Applications of Teaching Grammar through Reading

Subasini, & kokilavani (2013:57) suggested some of beneficial process for teachers who want to improve their students grammar development .

1. Teaching concepts on subject, verb, sentence, clause, phrase, and related concepts for Editing
2. Teaching style though sentence combining and sentence generating.
3. Teaching sentence sense through the manipulation of syntactic elements
4. Teaching punctuation and mechanics for convention, clarity and style.

The importance of grammatical knowledge cannot be neglected. EFL teachers should enrich this knowledge because it makes learners use well structured language and gain more self confidence when they read.

II.6. The Importance of Sociocultural Knowledge in Reading

As a second or foreign language readers need to have linguistic background they need also to be aware of the target language culture. The concept of culture has been the concern of many different disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, literature and other branches of study. Two fundamental views of culture have emerged: the humanistic and the anthropological.

- 1- **The humanistic** view: culture captures the cultural heritage as model of refinement, an exclusive collection of community “s masterpieces in literature, fine arts, music, ect.
- 2- **The anthropological:** refers to the overall way of life of community or society

Researchers have differentiated between the term culture with big “C” and culture with small “c”. The difference is demonstrated in: culture with big “C” comprise: literature, art, refinement or sophistication within society. Whereas culture with small “c”

refers to: beliefs, behaviors and values of a group of people. One definition of culture by Geertz (1973: 89) implied that “a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life”. Another definition of culture given by Yule (2006: 216) “it can be defined as socially acquired knowledge the kind of knowledge that, like our first language, we initially acquire without conscious awareness”

There is a strong bond between culture and language. Every language has its’ particular cultural conventions. Language is the mirror that reflects the customs, experiences, values, laws, and other cultural aspect of a community or society. That is why many EFL or SL learners who master grammar, vocabulary, and all the necessary linguistic component but, they fail to achieve a complete comprehension of what a native speaker means. It is because of, the insufficient social and cultural background knowledge. Thus, as much as a learner possess social and cultural information such as how native speakers address each other, make a request, take turn and pass it .Furthermore EFL and SL learners should be aware that the behavior which is appropriate in his culture may be considered as rude in another culture.

Reading in a language which is not the learner's L1 is a source of considerable comprehension difficulties and one of those difficulties is the lack of information of L2 culture. That is why teaching different aspect of culture increases learner’s awareness towards knowledge that corresponds to the target language society. Teachers should integrate some essential patterns of culture and help their student to overcome ethnocentrism. Reading text which talks about behaviors, customs, and traditions that conduct the live of those people is very important to enhance students reading comprehension.

EFL or SL classroom teachers should give a great value to the importance of sociocultural knowledge because; it gives guidance to learners to understand more what

they read. Teacher cannot ask his student to immigrate and develop intercultural understanding. However, they can support them by basic information about the norms and convention of native speakers to be more tolerant toward this culture.

Some of those etiquettes and manners of English people are: they do not like to be asked personal questions as “how much money do you earn?” they also, prefer to maintain a space when they take a part in conversation, most of them believe in ghosts each 31 of October they celebrate Halloween, a feast of dead. Many of them are superstitious for example the horseshoe symbolize good – luck that is why some people put them on their front door and they hate the number thirteen, in addition to this, there are popular traditional British dishes as “The Sunday Roast” “Bacon Roly – Poly”.

Thus as mentioned before if a learner meet unfamiliar cultural aspect this will effect negatively his reading comprehension.

II.6.1 Practical Applications

Pang *et al.*(2003:19) provided EFL teachers with some practical applications in order to make their learners more exposed to the target language culture.

- Choose reading materials that are culturally appropriate. However, it is also important to remember that television, movies and pop culture may be widespread in many places, except for remote, rural communities. This may broaden the choice of appropriate materials.
- Choosing reading materials that draw on students’ lives, experiences and interests is a good starting point.
- Some common, high-frequency words in one culture may refer to unfamiliar concepts for students from another culture. Examples of American English words include: prom; snowboard; spam (food); dirt (soil); potluck.
- Sensitivity to cultural factors also means taking time to discuss and explain unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary.

- In foreign-language teaching, it is helpful to present cultural information in the students' native language. This serves as background knowledge before the students attempt to read in the foreign language.

As it was presented by the author, there are different procedures that EFL teacher should provide to his/her learners to encourage them to be more tolerated and respectful toward this culture.

II.7.The Importance of Genre (text types) Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension

Any piece of writing should have a meaningful message to convey for this reason; writers are recommended to respect certain rules. One of those rules is text type or genre, each type have a specific purpose to achieve. The way a text is written, its style, structure, and characteristics that keep it distinct from another text. Genre is a term which was identified by Swales (1990: 33) "Genre is quite easily used to refer to a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspiration"

It is crucial for EFL teachers to teach their learners that there are different kinds of text because when a reader has previous knowledge about each text type functions and features this will guide him/ her in identifying the organization of the text. There are specific markers for each type of text for example, the expression once upon time refer basically to the narrative text type. In addition to this teachers should inform those learners that every text genre has its particular opening (introduction), middle (body paragraphs), and the end (conclusion). All of these text types background knowledge contribute to scaffold learners reading comprehension.

II.7.2. Genre (Text Types)

There are five main text types; Expository text, Narrative text, descriptive text, Argumentative text, and Compare and contrast text.

II.7.2.1. Expository Text: it is when the writer presents information and does not argue if he/she is for or against.

Those are some of the features of expository text; it always begins with anecdote or saying to motivate the reader to read it in full. It develops the topic using available sentences that inform the reader about the text subject. Each paragraph of the expository text should cover one particular idea. The simple present tense is more appropriate to present different information. Facilitate right communication with the reader by implementing simple word. (Gangal, 2011: 221)

II.7.2.2. The Narrative Text: it is when the writer tells a story or recalls an experience or event. The writer here answers a set of questions as: What happened? When did it happen? Who was involved? Where did the event / experience happen? How did it happen? Why did it happen?

Those are some of the features of narrative text (Gangal, 2011: 222) the important events and incidents are organized in chronological order. Use transitional expressions that indicate time order. Support the reader with the essential background information of the events to make it clearer. It is very worthy, to support these descriptions of both narrative text and expository text with a table which contain their main other names, essentials features, and basic structure. It was delivered by Mc Cormack & Susan.

Table 7: Narrative and Expository Text. Mc Cormack & Susan (2010: 134)

Type of text	Also known as	Common genres	Surface Features	Basic text structure
Expository	Nonfiction informational These texts have true information about real things.	Trade books Reference books Textbooks Magazine articles Newspaper articles	Cover Author Title Graphs/tables Boldface or italics for vocabulary photographs	Classification Sequence Comparison-contrast Cause- effect Problem- solution
Narrative	Fiction story These texts have stories that are made up or imaginative.	Picture books Short stories Novels Historical fiction Science fiction Realistic fiction Fables Fairy tales	Cover Author Title page Story text structure illustrations	Setting (time/ place) Problem(s) Solution(s) Resolution Consequence(s)

II.7.2.3 Descriptive Text: the main purpose of descriptive text is to give comprehensible description of an object, phenomenon or event.

Those are some features of descriptive text which were given by Gangal (2011: 222); the writer first chooses the person or phenomenon that he wants to write about then, he justify why he choose it particularly. The writer should have enough details to make description fruitful and meaningful. The descriptive text is written in simple present tense.

II.7.2.4. Argumentative Text: Strong argumentative text present relevant evidence that supports an argument and convinces the audience of a particular stance. This type of text provides the reader with a thorough overview of a topic, covering all facets, but also attempts to persuade the reader into agreeing with the author's point of view. The effectiveness of this type of essay depends on the author's ability to support his opinion. The argumentative text should support a particular view in a debatable issue. As such, it is important that a writer do not chooses a topic that is not arguable

II.7.2.5.Compare and Contrast Text: Compare/contrast text structure is a way writers organize text when they need to compare how things are alike and contrast how they are different. Compare and Contrast is a text structure or pattern of organization where the similarities and differences of two or more things are explored. Words used to make similarities and differences, such as (for similarities) also, additionally, just as, as if, as though, like, and similarly; and (for differences) but, yet, only, although, whereas, in contrast, conversely, however, on the other hand, rather, instead, in spite of, and nevertheless.

II.8. Strategies to Activate Learners Background knowledge in Reading

The importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension depends heavily on how to activate and use this knowledge because if the reader posses a good amount of information but he/ she cannot activate that knowledge will be less important. EFL teachers may utilize different types of strategies to activate their learners' background knowledge before embarking on reading session to achieve comprehension. These strategies are effective and beneficial in pre, in and, after reading phases some of them are as follows making student predict, asking them questions, discussing with them, and brainstorming.

II.8.1Activating Prior Knowledge through Prediction in Reading

Prediction in general is a word which refers always to the future when a person foretell based on what he thinks or observes. Prediction strategy in reading is when the reader thinks about what will occur next in a given text or story. Farrell (2009: 39) demonstrated that:

“Prediction is linked to the strategy of activating prior knowledge. Prediction creates anticipation and gets student thinking about previous experience they may have had about the topic.”

From the above quotation it is clearly stated that the main source of reader's prediction is their previous existing knowledge.

It is through prediction readers will be able to call the stored information and connect it with the text. There some elements which are included in the text that facilitate for the reader to predict what he/ she will read such as the title, pictures, and, graphs. Though, second language learners are not able to predict at the beginning stage of reading with much accuracy since their background knowledge is limited teachers should encourage their student to predict what will happen next or what the writer means by using a certain vocabulary. Since the comprehension of the text is the main objective of both teachers and learners they should use this strategy of prediction in order to see after reading if their prediction accurate or not. Activating prior knowledge through prediction will increase the opportunity of comprehension.

II.8.2.Activating Prior Knowledge through Asking Questions in Reading

Asking and answering questions is a major tool of learning. EFL Teachers may use this strategy of asking a set of questions for their students to activate their background knowledge. Those questions act as a guide and support for the reader because it invites him/ her to think and guess what is the right answer might be in the same vain Taboda & John (2006:4) said that

“When asking questions, students are involved in multiple processes requiring deeper interaction with text. During questioning, students ponder relationships among different aspects of the text”.

It is important for effective teacher to ask questions which are at the level of his/her learners because if those questions are difficult or silly they become useless. The importance of this strategy lay on stimulating learners to activate what they know before and not on evaluating their levels as it was mentioned by Blachowicz, & Donna (2008: 124) “This kind of questioning is not a testing but a modeling and activation of students’

own thinking” Blachowicz, & Donna meant by this explanation that those type of questions are not applied to find out learners abilities; however, their ultimate aim is to refresh and activate learners background knowledge.

II.8.3.Activating Prior Knowledge through Discussion in Reading

Discussion is another kind of strategies which refer to either the interaction between the teacher and his/her learners or learners between each other about a given text. This strategy helps learners to activate their background knowledge and have chance to be prepared to read with more comprehension. Urquhart & Dana (2012:1) demonstrated that:

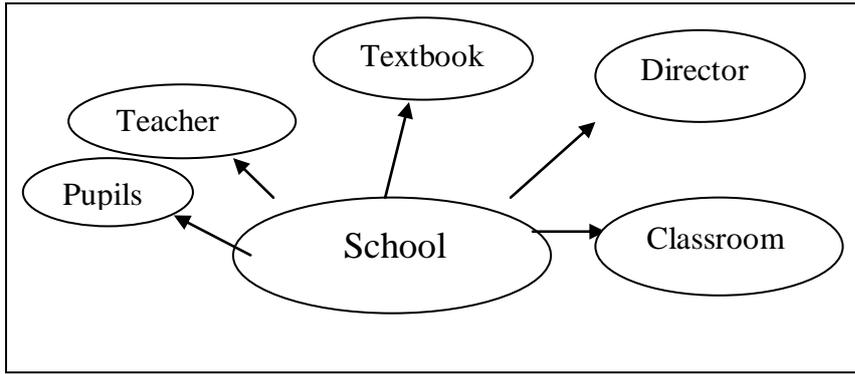
“Rich discussions about text have the potential to increase students’ abilities to analyze what they read, to think critically, to engage students, and to improve students’ conceptual understanding and learning – all of which can lead to improve reading comprehension”

It is through discussion students who already know something about the topic or the type of the text can share their knowledge with their classmates so they assist the remaining student to feel more interested and motivated to read. In fact conducting an effective discussion about a particular text is not an easy task that is why many teachers fail to control this discussion. It needs more effort to make it successful.

II.8.4.Activating Prior Knowledge through Brainstorming in Reading

The process of brainstorming entails as it was stated by Ur “a simple pooling of ideas”(1996:2) Brainstorming can be a worthy practice to activate the prior knowledge of students. It provides readers with more readiness to go on reading with confidence and no fear. It is mainly the first thing of the pre-reading prior knowledge activation strategies. Through this strategy, readers are likely to bring all what is in his brain which he may think it is linked to the text's topic.

Figure 3: An Example of Brainstorming for the Word School



The introduced figure, present the way of how to brainstorm ideas from a word. From the noun, school students can generate nouns that refers' to the same field such as; teacher, textbook, classroom, director, pupils.

II.9.Conclusion

As it was explained throughout this second chapter, second or foreign language reading comprehension implies that the reader is able to arrive to reasonable interpretation of what is written in a given text. This interpretation relies heavily on what the reader knows before as prior knowledge.

The necessary background knowledge that teachers need to assist their learners to improve it is very broad, it comprises a large number of phonological and morphological and grammatical rules in addition to rich vocabulary store, more familiarity with the cultural norms of the target language, and other basic information about the organization and the type of texts ;however, the effective teacher is the one who is aware of the recent level of his/ her learners and what are the most important information that make their reading comprehension more meaningful.

III. Chapter Three Field of Investigation

III. Introduction

After presenting two chapters of literature review, the next step of any research design is to move to something more practical. As long as our research is concerned, the importance of background knowledge on enhancing EFL learners reading comprehension. The descriptive method is the most suitable method for this research nature.

The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used for eliciting information from some target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. Kothari (2004:100) gave a definition to this data collection tool “A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms”. In this study, we have made use of two questionnaires (1) the teachers’ questionnaire is designed for teachers who are believed to be in good position for providing data relevant to our study. (2)The students’ questionnaire is designed for inviting students to support us with information on their actual state of learning. When the questionnaire is well prepared, it enables the researcher to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture. This chapter, then, clarifies the research design in terms of the aim, the administration and the description. Moreover, it also contains the analysis of students’ and teachers’ questionnaires.

III.1.Students’ Questionnaire

III. 1.1. Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is mainly designed to diagnose the students’ points of views towards the importance of background knowledge on enhancing EFL learners reading comprehension.

III. 1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

We have administered the questionnaire to second year LMD students of English at University of Mohamed Kheider of Biskra. We have selected five groups out of ten and ten

students from each group. From fifty questionnaires which were administered to students a forty eight of them which were submitted.

It is worthy to mention that the administration of questionnaires took place in April 2015, at Bataybi rooms. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were clear enough in order to help the students' understand and thus, provide appropriate answers.

III.1.3 Description of the Questionnaire

In designing the present self-completed questionnaire(see Appendix 1) for research purposes, the items required answers with dichotomies (yes/no question), or picking up the most appropriate answer from a series of options, or open questions asking the students to give their opinions or to explain their choices. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section is about personal background information, the second section is related to reading comprehension and, the third section tries to reveal the students attitudes about the importance of background knowledge on enhancing EFL learners reading comprehension.

III.1.3.1 Section 01: Personal Background Information (Q 1- Q 4)

This section of the questionnaire is intended to find out the learners' gender (Q 1),Age (Q2), their choice to study English if it was personal or imposed (Q3) in addition to how they perceive their levels in English,05 rating options were proposed Ranged from very good to very poor (Q 4).

III.1.3.2 Section Two: Reading Comprehension (Q 5 – Q 12)

This section seeks information about some aspects of the reading skill. In the first place, students are asked to pick the appropriate answer if they like reading a lot, a little, or not at all (Q5). (Q6) asks students how often do they read? If it is frequently,

sometimes, or rarely. The Next question(Q7) attempts to ask students how often do they read in English? If it is frequently, sometimes, or rarely . (Q8) students are asked whether Their teachers encourage them to read frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never. The following question (Q9) seeks to know how often do students use reading strategies (paraphrase, infer, Make connection between the text and prior knowledge, visualize, ask questions ect.) if it is Frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never. (Q10) looks for the preferred model of reading if it is the Bottom- up, Top – down model or the Interactive Model. (Q11) seeks to know Whether students read word by word or in group of words. The last question in this section (12) try to answer what makes a text difficult to comprehend three options are delivered: the first one, is when it contains difficult or unfamiliar words, the second one is When it reflects a culture that is different from theirs and the third one is about giving Students freedom to add others difficulties.

III.1.3.3 Section Three: The Importance of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension (Q 13 – Q18)

The first question of this section seeks students to answer with yes or no the following question As you read, do you usually use what you know before as background knowledge to understand? (Q13). If the student answered the previous question(Q13) with yes (Q 14) wants to identify what kind of background knowledge do they use seven option are mentioned :phonemic and phonological background knowledge, Grammatical background knowledge ,vocabulary background knowledge ,sociocultural background knowledge ,text genre background knowledge, all of them, or Others. (Q15) seeks student to give their point of view whether they agree that background knowledge have great importance in reading comprehension? Picking up the most appropriate answer from a series of options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. (Q16) try to find out if teachers use certain strategies to activate their

students' background knowledge. (Q17) is an open question asking the students if they had answered with yes the previous question what kind of strategies did their teachers used. The last question (Q18) gives the students the opportunity to add their comment or suggestion.

III.1.4 Data Collection and Analysis of Students Questionnaire

III. Section 01: Personal Background

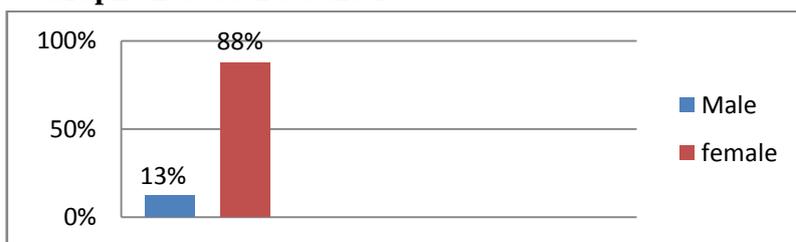
Information

Q1:

Table8: Students' Gender

Gender	Subjects	%
Male	6	13%
Female	42	88%
Total	48	100%

Graph 01: Students Gender



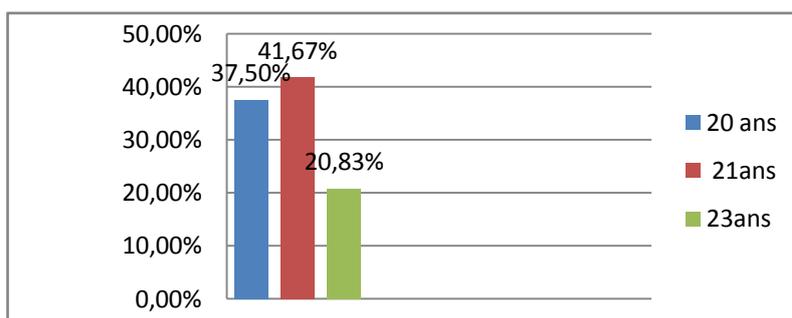
A quick glance at this table will reveal that female students' number is forty two (88%) which outnumber male. We have recorded just six male (13%). This may be due to the fact that female are dominant in education especially in the Department of letters and languages.

Q2: Age

Table9: students' Age

Options	Subjects	%
20 years	18	37,50%
21years	20	41,67%
23 years	10	20,83%
Total	48	100,00%

Graph 02: Students' Age



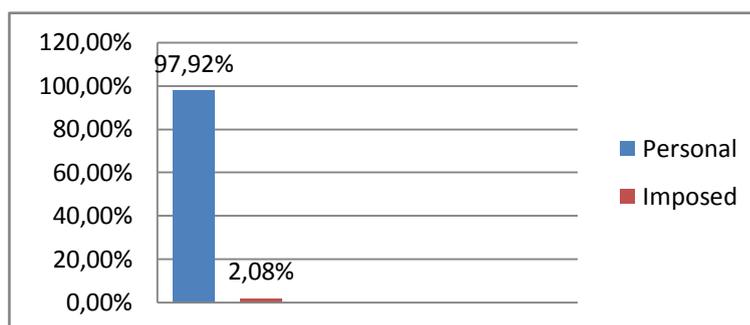
The data show that the majority of the students have approximately Same age Which is from 20 to 23. Students who have 20 years present(37,50%) and Students who have 21 present (41, 67%) and finally students who have 23 present (20, 83%). The factor of age affects the cohesiveness of classroom because learners with merely same ages may share the same Perspectives and same experiences and background knowledge. This can facilitate more the Comprehension of the text.

Q3: Your Choice to study English was :

Table 10: Choice to Study English

Options	Subjects	%
Personal	47	97,92%
Imposed	1	2,08%
Total	48	100 %

Graph 03: choice to study English



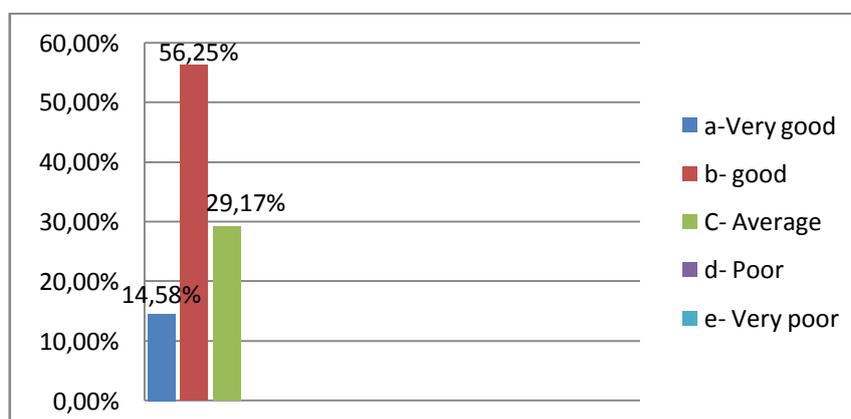
All in all, the results show that the majority of the students (97%) choose to study English personally without any imposition. The other category fair (2, 08%). This question is not asked randomly, in fact it aims to see if students are motivated to learn more about the English language and have the ability to enlarge their background knowledge in English because there is strong relationship between the comprehension of the text and the positive attitude of the students.

Q 4: Students' Level of English

Table 11: Students' Level of English

Option	Subjects	%
a- Very good	7	14,58%
b- good	27	56,25%
c- Average	14	29,17%
d- Poor	0	0,00%
e- Very poor	0	0,00%
Total	48	100%

Graph 04: Students' Level of English



To answer this question, students are expected to rank themselves from very good to very poor. As the table demonstrates that (14, 58%) of them perceive themselves as very good students. (56, 25%) who have admitted that their level is good and (29, 17%) of them said that their level is average. We have noticed that no one of them concedes himself/herself neither has got poor nor very poor level in English. To sum up, this question tried to ensure that when students comprehend a text is a result of having a good level.

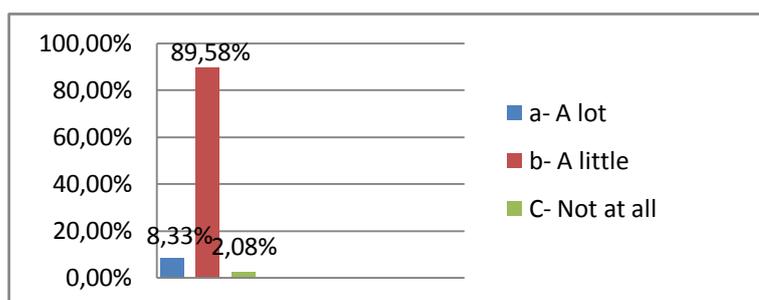
Section 02: Reading Comprehension

Q 5 -Do you like Reading?

Table 12: Students' Attitude toward Reading

Options	Subjects	%
a- A lot	4	8,33%
b- A little	43	89,58%
C- Not at all	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph 05: Students' Attitude toward Reading



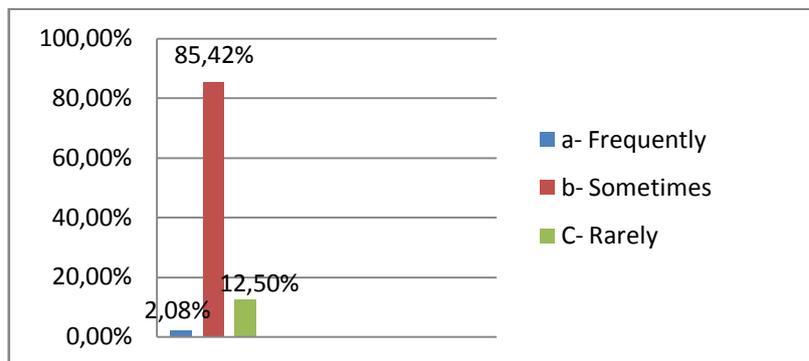
This item of information sheds light on students' attitudes towards reading skill in general. only (8, 33%) have indicated that they like reading a lot .The majority of students (89, 58%) have selected the item a little and (2, 08%) said that they don't like reading at all. This may reveal that many students do not give much importance to the reading skill.

Q 6- How often do you read?

Table 13: Students' Reading

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	1	2,08%
b-Sometimes	41	85,42%
C-Rarely	6	12,50%
Total	48	100%

Graph 06: Students Reading



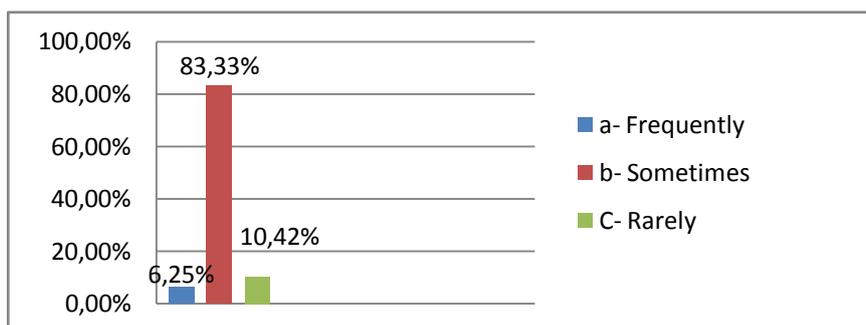
The above statistics reveals that (85, 42%) of those students selected the option of sometimes. Only (2, 08%) answered that they read frequently and (12, 50%) who rarely read. From this question we want to know how much of students are aware of the importance of this skill in their daily lives. From these answers it is important to notice that students who frequently read have large amount of previous information because each time they read they gain new information.

Q 7- How often do you read in English?

Table 14: Students' Reading in English

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	3	6,25%
b-Sometimes	40	83,33%
C-Rarely	5	10,42%
Total	48	100%

Graph 07 : Students' Reading English



This question aims at determining whether those students are interested to read in English language. The results show that:(83, 33%) who read sometimes in English and (6, 25%) read frequently in addition to, (10, 42%) of students said that they rarely read in English. Apparently those who read frequently in English have much more background knowledge

Q 8- How often does your teacher encourage you to read?

Table 15: Teachers' Encouragement

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	14	29,17%
b-Sometimes	26	54,17%
C-Rarely	7	14,58%
d-Never	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph08: Teachers' Encouragement



Students are asked if their teachers' support them to develop their reading skill both inside and outside the classrooms. The results show that (54, 17%) of student who admitted

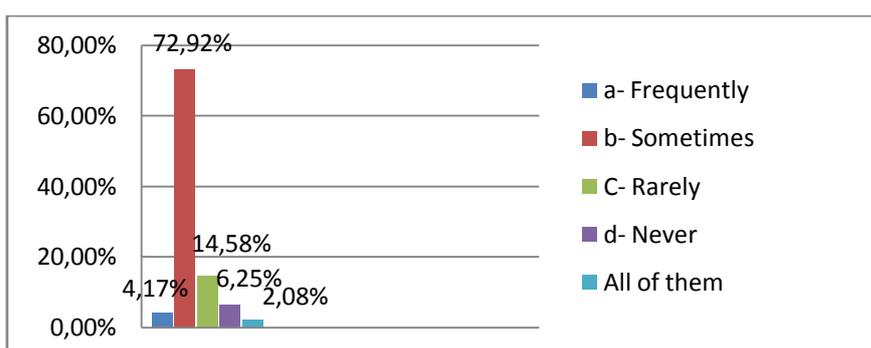
that it is sometimes when their teacher does it and (29, 17%) who admitted that it is frequently when it happened. There are other students (14, 58%) who stated that it is rarely when their teachers do this. We have recorded just (2, 08%) of them disapprove this and that their teacher never encourages them to read. In the same vein, Bobrow (2006:131) said that *“The teacher promotes student reading that extends beyond the core curriculum by providing daily opportunities for self- selected reading and frequent opportunities for sharing what is read.”*

Q 9- How often do you use reading strategies (paraphrase, infer, make connection between The text and prior knowledge, visualize, ask questions ect.

Table16: Students’ Use of Reading Strategies

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	2	4,17%
b-Sometimes	35	72,92%
C-Rarely	7	14,58%
d- Never	3	6,25%
All of them	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph09: Students’ Use of Reading Strategies



According to the result of table (72, 92%) of students claim that they sometimes use reading strategies and (4, 17%) of them said that they use them frequently furthermore, there are (6, 25%) who have answered this question with rarely also, there are about (6, 25%) who never use those strategies. and finally, (2, 08%) who have selected the option

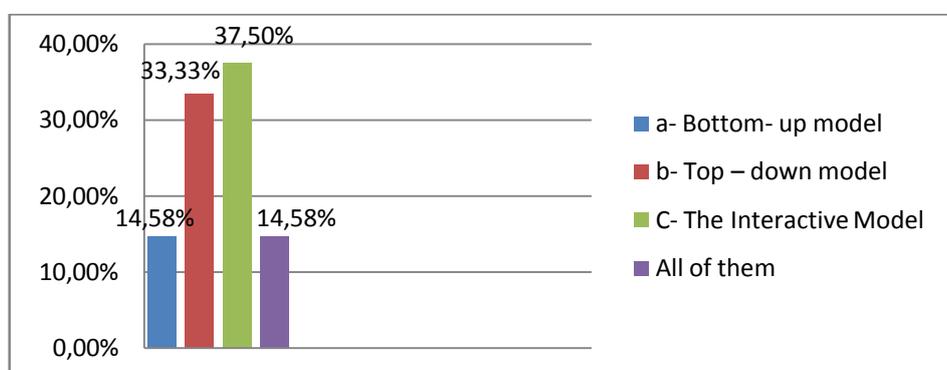
All of them. We deduce from those answers that much of students ignore reading strategies.

Q 10 Which model do you prefer to use when reading?

Table17: Models of Reading

Options	Subjects	%
a- Bottom- up model	7	14,58%
b-Top – down model	16	33,33%
C-The Interactive Model	18	37,50%
All of them	7	14,58%
Total	48	100%

Graph10: Models of Reading



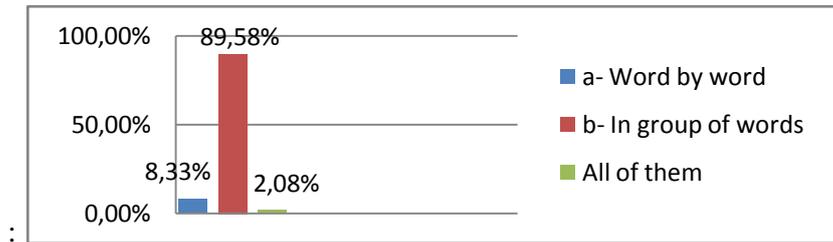
As it was mentioned before in the literature review (chapter one) there are three models of reading. This question opts for determining which model of reading is most used by those students. We have recorded about (14, 58%) of students who have selected Bottom-up model whereas, (33, 33%) of students use the Top – down model and, (37, 50%) prefer the Interactive Model because it is the most significant. Beside to these answers there are students (14, 58%) who claimed that they use all of them.

Q 11- How do you tend to read in English?

Table 18: Students Procedure when Reading in English

Options	Subjects	%
a- Word by word	4	8,33%
b- In group of words	43	89,58%
All of them	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph 11: Students Procedure when Reading in English



The collected data from this question reveals that (8, 33%) of students read word by word whereas, (89,58%) of students read in group of words this may be due to their objectives to understand the text in general and save time and efforts. (2, 08%) use both of them, it depends on the nature and the purpose of their reading.

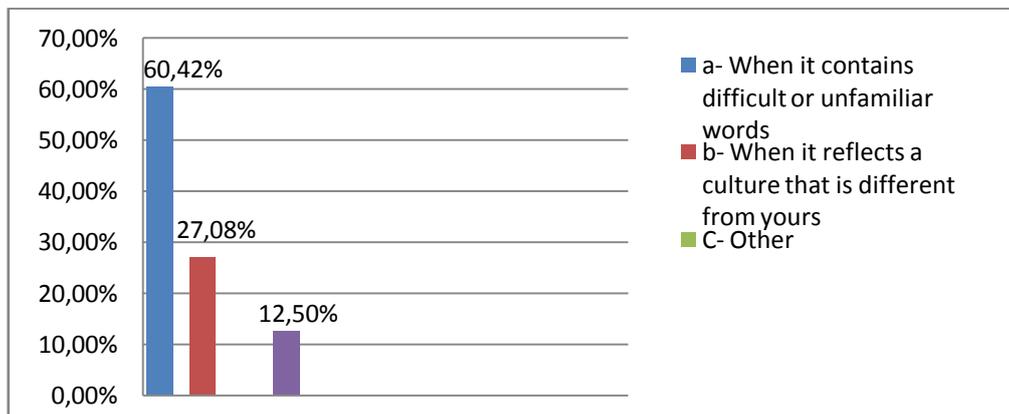
Q 12- What makes a text difficult to comprehend for you?

(You can tick both boxes if necessary.)

Table19: Causes that Makes a Text Difficult to Comprehend for Students

Options	Subjects	%
a- When it contains difficult or unfamiliar words	29	60,42%
b-When it reflects a culture that is different from yours	13	27,08%
C-Other	0	0,00%
a+b	6	12,50%
Total	48	100%

Graph12: Causes that Makes a Text Difficult to comprehend for Students



As last table 12 and graph12 demonstrates, a great number of students (60, 42%) do not understand a text when it contains difficult or unfamiliar words which is the result of the students' poor vocabulary .On the other hand, there are students (27, 08%) who face another kind of problems which is when the text reflects a culture that is different from theirs. There are students (12, 50%) who suffer from both of these problems. From this question, we can conclude that it is very important for students to have background knowledge to understand the text better.

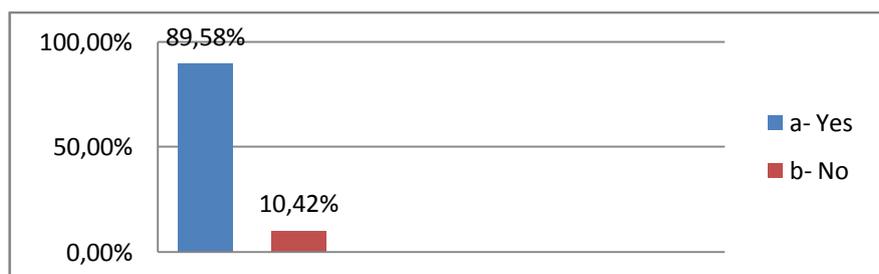
Section 03: The importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension.

Q 13 -As you read, do you usually use what you know before as background knowledge to understand?

Table 20: Students' Use of Background Knowledge

Options	Subjects	%
a- Yes	43	89,58%
b-No	5	10,42%
Total	48	100%

Graph13: Students' Use of Background Knowledge



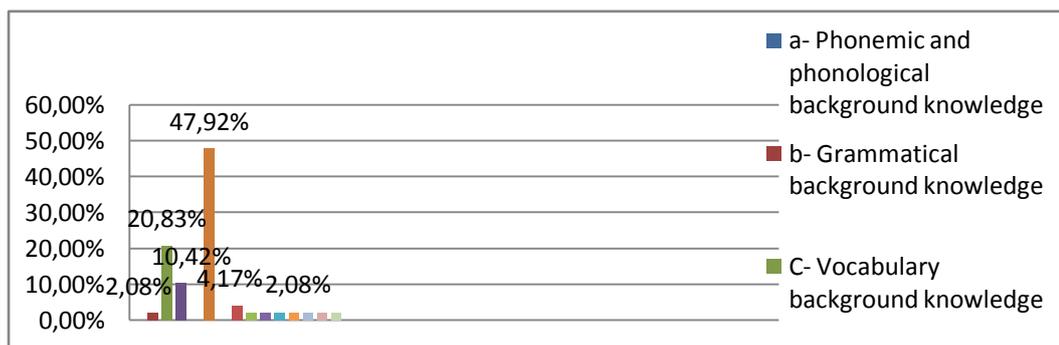
It is very necessary for readers to have a repertoire of background knowledge in order to consult it whenever it recommends. The current question tends to investigate whether those students use what they already possess as background knowledge to understand a text or not. Absolutely the result is as it was predicted: the majority of those students (89, 58%) have answered with yes; however, there are few of them (10, 42%) who said no they do not use their previous knowledge.

Q14- If yes, what kind of background knowledge do you use?

Table 21: kinds of the Used Background Knowledge

Options	Subjects	%
a- Phonemic and phonological background knowledge	0	0,00%
b-Grammatical background knowledge	1	2,08%
C-Vocabulary background knowledge	10	20,83%
d- Sociocultural background knowledge	5	10,42%
f- Text genre background knowledge	0	0,00%
g-		
f- All of them	23	47,92%
g- Others	0	0,00%
B+c	2	4,17%
E+f	1	2,08%
C+d	1	2,08%
B+c+f	1	2,08%
A+c+e	1	2,08%
C+d+e	1	2,08%
A+b+c+d+e+f	1	2,08%
All of them	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph14: Kinds of the Used Background Knowledge



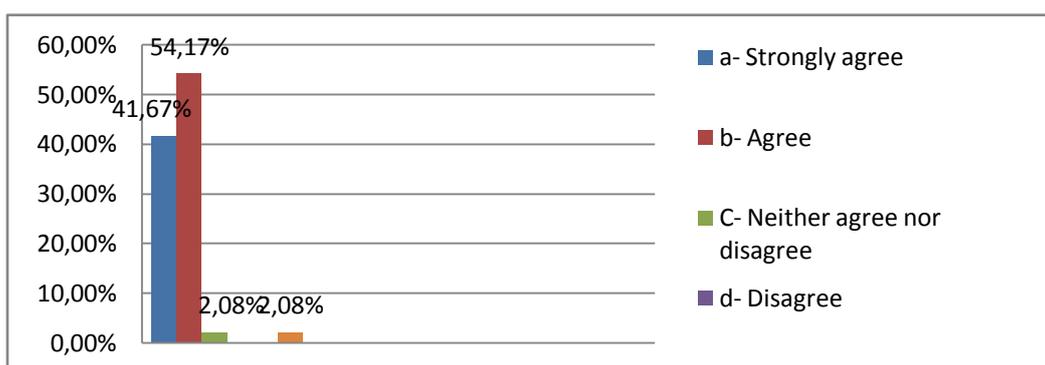
The examination of this question reveals that most of the students (47,92%) use all of the Given options and (20, 83%) of students who use in the first place their vocabulary background knowledge some of them (10, 42%) said that they use their sociocultural background knowledge. Others (4, 17%) choose the two options B+C. (2,08%) who use E+F in addition to another (2,08%) who selected the option C+D the same percentage for B+C+F, A+C+E, C+D+E, and A+B+C+D+E+F.

Q 15- Do you agree that background knowledge have great importance in reading comprehension?

Table21: Students Attitudes towards the Importance of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension

Options	Subjects	%
a- Strongly agree	20	41,67%
b-Agree	26	54,17%
C-Neither agree nor disagree	1	2,08%
d- Disagree	0	0,00%
e- Strongly disagree	0	0,00%
f- All of them	1	2,08%
Total	48	100%

Graph 15: Students Attitudes towards the Importance of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension



It is clear from the table and the graph 15 that most of students (41,67%) strongly agree and (54,17%) agree about the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension. (2, 08%) have no point of view; they prefer to choose the option neither agree nor disagree. No one is disagreeing or strongly disagree. Moreover to this there is

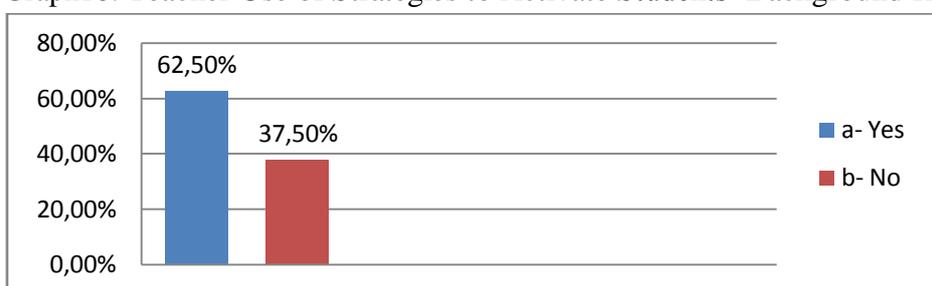
(2, 08%) who selected the option all of them.

Q 16- Does your teacher use certain strategies to activate your background knowledge?

Table 22: Teacher Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge

Options	Subjects	%
a- Yes	30	62,50%
b-No	18	37,50%
Total	48	100%

Graph16: Teacher Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge



From the above data collection, we can deduce that most of student (62, 50%) had answered with yes on the other place there are students who claim that their teachers do not use certain strategies to make their student background knowledge be activated.

Q 17-If yes, what kind of strategies does he /she use?

In fact, this question tries to see if teachers use certain strategies to activate students' background knowledge however; most of students did not answer this question. Only few of them mentioned that their teachers ask them a number of questions or give them a chance to brainstorm what they know about the topic of the text.

Q 18- Do you like to add any comment or suggestion?

Students did not give us comments or suggestions. Only few, of them said that they liked the topic of our research.

III.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The current questionnaire was delivered to oral expression teachers of second year LMD students' branch of English in order, to achieve a more reliable and comprehensive information.

III.2.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

It is necessary to consider the teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the importance of having previous information such as vocabulary, grammar, and text type in enhancing the students' reading comprehension. Besides, aims at investigating whether EFL teachers are aware of some strategies that help them to activate their students' background knowledge.

III.2.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

Our target sample consists of five teachers of oral expression in the branch of English at the University of Mohamed Kheider in Biskra.

The questionnaire was delivered to (05) teachers; however, only (4); teachers have handed back their questionnaires.

III 2.3. Description of the Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire is made up of (11) questions and classified under (4) sections each focusing on a particular aspect. It involves different types of questions: "closed" and "open-ended" questions. Closed questions require the teacher to answer by Yes or No or to tick up the right answers from a set of options, and open-ended questions which require from the teachers to provide their justifications and comments.

Section 01: Personal Background Information(Q 1- Q2)

The first section aims at collecting information about the sample. The first question (Q1) seeks information about the teachers' degrees. In (Q2), teachers are asked to give the numbers of years they have been teaching English; i.e. their teaching experience.

Section 02: Teachers' Perception of the Reading Comprehension skill(Q3-Q6)

In this section, teachers were asked whether their students value the importance of the reading skill (Q3). It is followed by giving the explanation of the answer. In (Q4) teachers were required to state to what extent their students need reading comprehension courses. This question requires the teachers to give their justification. (Q5) seeks to know which model of reading teachers use in their classrooms. The last question in this section (Q6) asked the teachers to specify the appropriate answer about how often they encourage their students to use reading strategies.

Section 03: The Importance of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension. (Q7-Q10)

In the current section, teachers were asked in (Q7) if their students use what they have as background knowledge when they read. (Q8) respondents were asked to pick the most appropriate answer that reflects their opinions. (Q9) asked them to order the options from 1 to 5 according to their importance. (Q10) this question wanted to reveal if those teachers use certain strategies such as : prediction, brainstorming to activate students' background knowledge . Finally (Q11) gave them the opportunity to add their comments or suggestions.

III.2.4 Analysis and Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaires

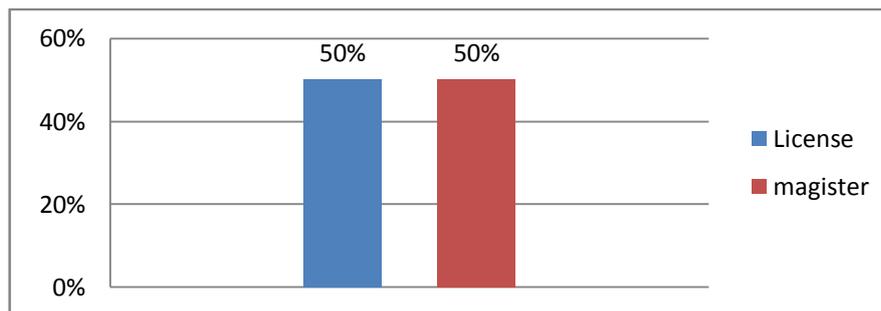
Section 01: Personal Background Information(Q 1- Q2)

1- What is the Teachers' Academic Degree ?

Table23: Teachers' Academic Degree

Options	Subjects	%
License	2	50%
Magister	2	50%
Master	0	0%
PHD	0	0%
Total	4	100%

Graph 17: Teachers' Academic Degree



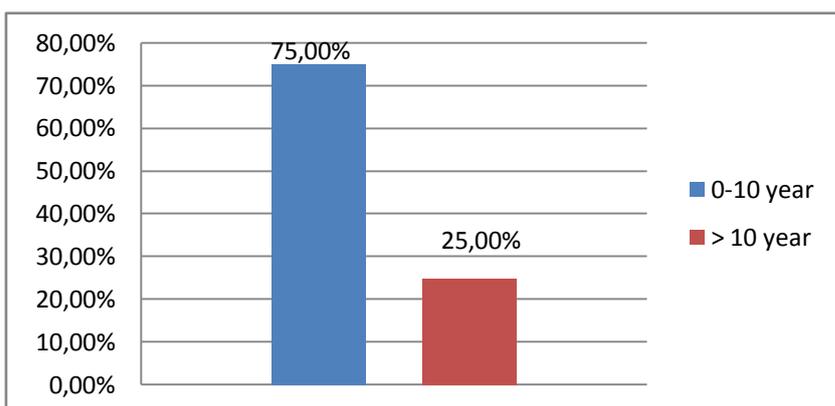
As the table indicates, there are only two levels teachers who have license are (50%) and the others have magister degree (50 %). The absence of teachers with doctorate degree in our sample is due to the fact that they are of a limited number so, they have many responsibilities.

2- How long have you been teaching English?

Table 24: Experience in Teaching English

Options	Subjects	%
0-10 year	3	75,00%
+10 year	1	25,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph 18: Experience in Teaching English



Teachers, here, are required to give in numbers how many years they have been teaching English i.e. their teaching experience. The most experienced teacher has been teaching English for more than 10 years are (25%) and the other teachers have been

teaching English less than ten years (75%). In fact, this variation in experience was intended when we selected the sample. We believe that teachers from different generations and, different experiences would have different perspectives and different teaching strategies.

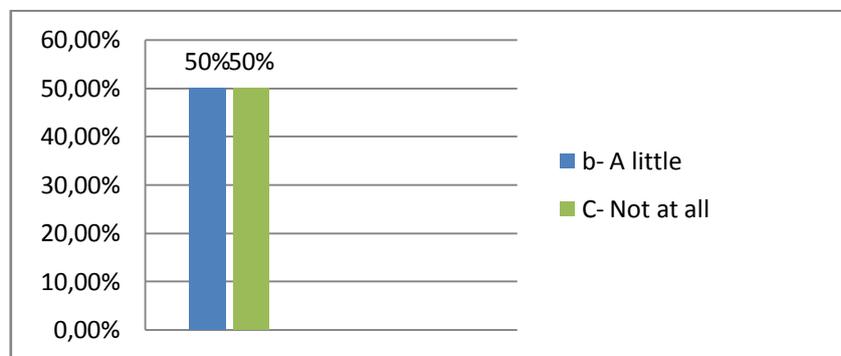
Section tow: Reading comprehension

3- According to your experience of teaching reading to what extent do you think your Students value the Importance of the reading skill?

Table 25: Students Value the Importance of the Reading Skill

Options	Subjects	%
a- A lot	0	0,00%
b- A little	2	50,00%
C- Not at all	2	50,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph 19: Students Value the Importance of the Reading Skill



If we lend ourselves to these results, it seems that (50%) of teachers think that students value the importance of reading only a little and the other (50%) declare that students do not value the importance of reading skill at all . Teachers’ explanation of their answer turn around those students seemed bored and not interested during the reading session. From this result it is very important for teachers to warn of danger and try to encourage students

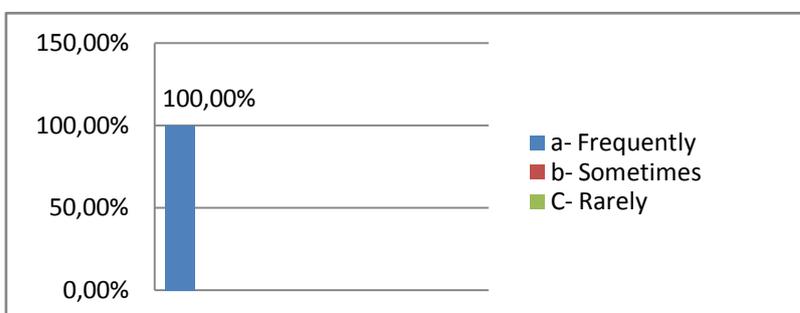
to read. This can be through: choosing topics that stimulate student's needs, create a good atmosphere for reading, because reading is an essential source of knowledge.

4- To what extent do you think students need more reading comprehension Courses?

Table 26: Students Need of Reading Comprehension Courses

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	4	100,00%
b- Sometimes	0	0,00%
C- Rarely	0	0,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph 20: Students' Need of Reading Comprehension Courses



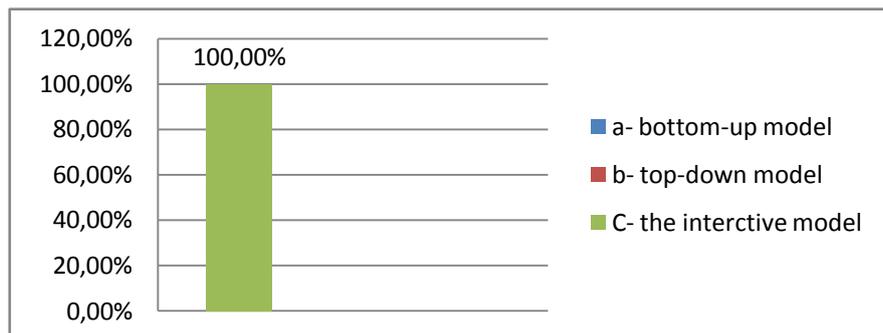
It is clear from the results that all teachers (100%) agree that it is important to deliver reading comprehension courses frequently. Teachers justified their answers that it is through reading that students have the opportunity to learn more new vocabulary, Grammar structure, and pronunciation, enlarge their information of different topics, and practice reading comprehension strategies. Those answers serve our study because It is through reading that students can develop their background knowledge.

5- Which model of reading do you prefer to use with your students?

Table 27: The Preferred Reading Model

Options	Subjects	%
a- bottom-up model	0	0%
b- top-down model	0	0%
c- the interactive model	4	100%
Total	4	100%

Graph 21: The Preferred Reading Model



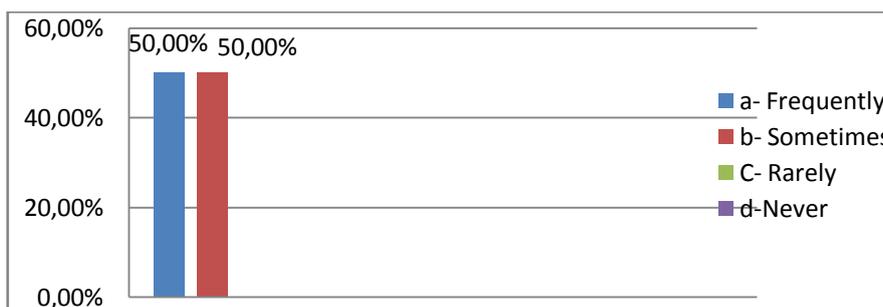
This question aims at determining which model of reading is preferred by teachers. The entire sample of teachers (100%) admitted that they use the interactive model because it suits their objectives and it encourages students to use their own strengths to gain understanding and new information. This model allows the reader to bring his/ her own background knowledge to the text and to interact with others to build meaning. (This model and the other models are more explained in the literature review)

6- How often do you encourage your students to use reading strategies (paraphrase, infer, make connection between the text and prior knowledge , visualize , ask questions ect)

Table 28: Teachers’ Encouragements of Student to use Reading Strategies

Options	Subjects	%
a- Frequently	2	50%
b- Sometimes	2	50%
C- Rarely	0	0%
d- Never	0	0%
Total	4	100%

Graph 22: Teachers’ Encouragements of Student to use Reading Strategies



The results illustrated above, show that more than half of teachers value their important role in encouraging students to apply reading strategies. Half (50%) of the sample believes that it is essential to encourage them frequently and the other half (50%) supports their student to use reading strategies sometimes. The use of reading strategies is a crucial factor for increasing the comprehension because through those strategies students can review and relate what they are learning to what they already know.

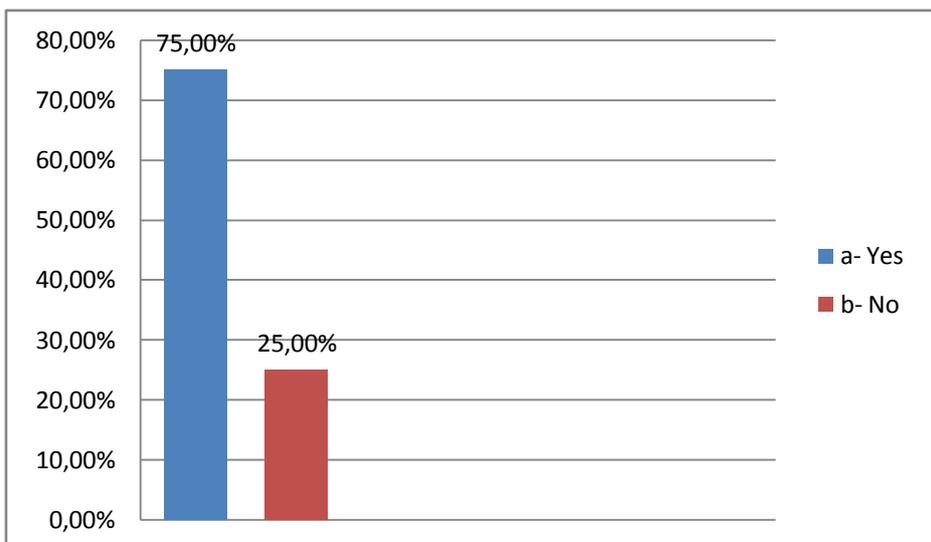
Section Three: The Importance of Background knowledge in Reading Comprehension.

7- As your student read, do they usually use what they know before as background knowledge to understand?

Table 29: Teachers Attitudes towards Students’ Use of their Background Knowledge

Options	Subjects	%
a- Yes	3	75,00%
b- No	1	25,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph 23: Teachers’ Attitudes towards Students’ Use of their Background Knowledge



The present question-item attempts to investigate teachers’ attitudes towards their students’ use of their background knowledge. The majority of teachers (75%) agree and

answer with yes; however, the remaining (25%) of the teachers answer with no. The interpretation of this result is related to the teachers themselves because if teachers use some strategies to activate their students' background knowledge as making them predict, discuss with them about the topic or the unclear points, brainstorm, and ask them questions, this can without doubt make students think and use what they have as previous information.

8- Do you agree that background knowledge can enhance student reading comprehension?

Table 30: Teachers' Attitudes about The Importance of Background Knowledge

Option	Subjects	%
a- strongly agree	3	75%
b- agree	1	25%
C- neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
d- disagree	0	0%
e- strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	4	100%

Graph 24: Teachers' Attitudes about The Importance of Background Knowledge



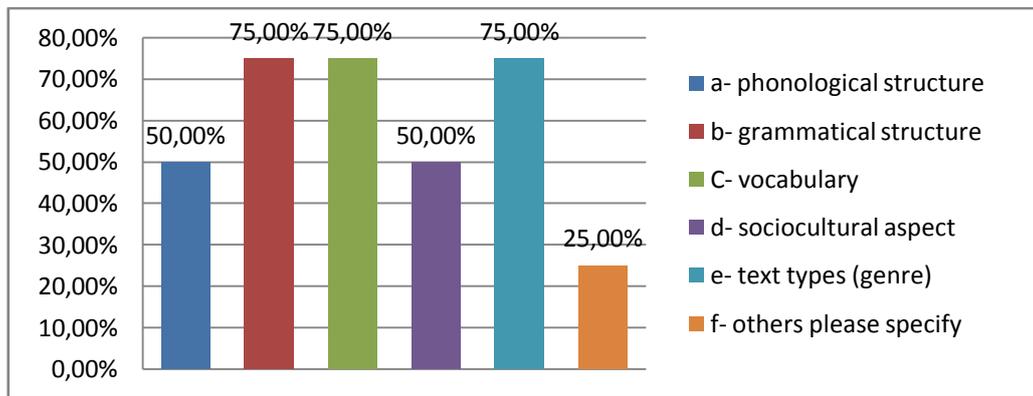
The statistics above reveal that most of teachers (75%) strongly agree with the important role of background knowledge on enhancing students' reading comprehension. The other (25%) of teachers agree. These answers contribute in revealing the effectiveness and the significance of our research topic.

9- What criteria do you take into account to choose the material? Mark from 1 to 5 (1: most important; 5: least important).

Table 31: Teachers’ Order of Background Knowledge Components

Options	Subjects	%
a- phonological structure	2	50,00%
b- grammatical structure	3	75,00%
C- vocabulary	3	75,00%
d- sociocultural aspect	2	50,00%
e- text types (genre)	3	75,00%
f- others please specify	1	25,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph 25: Teachers’ Order of Background Knowledge Components



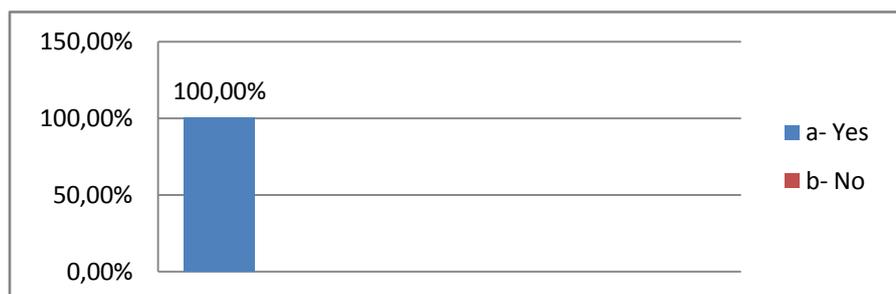
Subjects are, therefore, asked to rank the given components of background knowledge according to their importance. In the first place, the same percentage (75%) for each of these vocabulary, grammatical structure, and text types (genre). The second place (50%) is for phonological structure and sociocultural aspect. The third one gives the chance for teachers to add other components. Only one of the teachers (25%) who ticked this option but she did not suggested any others components. The current question aims to detect what are the most important elements of background knowledge that teachers should give more interest in the reading sessions.

10- Do you use certain strategies to activate your student’s background knowledge? (Prediction, debate and discussion, semantic mapping brainstorming , and previewing)

Table 32: Teachers' Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge

Options	Subjects	%
a- Yes	4	100,00%
b- No	0	0,00%
Total	4	100%

Graph26: Teachers' Use of Strategies to Activate Students' Background Knowledge



The statistics related to this item shows that, all teachers (100%) use certain strategies as making students predict what will happen in the story, made a debate about the title or the author, in addition to asking students to write down what they know about the topic. All of these serve to activate students' background knowledge when they read. This answer indicates that in the first place, teachers are aware of the effectiveness of these strategies in the reading comprehension.

11- Would you like to add any comments or suggestion?

One of the teachers encourages us to complete the work and she admitted that she is enthusiastic to see the result

Conclusion

This chapter is an attempt to investigate whether background knowledge is a significant factor for developing students' reading comprehension through two questionnaires one for students and the other for teachers. The questionnaires' analysis revealed information about the teachers and students attitudes towards our research topic both of them, agree that a reader with limited or poor previous information will absolutely defect his/ her text comprehension.

Therefore, a fundamental assumption sums up the situation: that if stakeholders and students work hand in hand to scaffold a solid base of background knowledge that is composed of a rich repertoire of vocabulary, grammatical structure, text types, insightful information of sociocultural aspects, also phonological and phonemic awareness, this will enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension

III .3.Classroom Observation

III .3.1.Introduction

Classroom observation is a process of examining the teaching and learning phenomena by which the observer sits in one or more classroom sessions, records the instructor's teaching practices and student actions. It gives for the observer the opportunity to gather a live data from naturally occurring situation. Wajnryb (1992: 1) described the act of observation in the classroom as “Being in the classroom as an observer opens up a range of experiences which can become part of the raw material of a teacher’s professional growth.” From this quotation we deduce that classroom observation is very beneficial for the training teachers it can help them in their future teaching career

III .3.2.Description of Classroom Observation

This method of collecting information can be structured or unstructured. The first one requires for the observer before attending the class, he/she must prepare what he/ she will observe, i.e, what are the main categories that he/she wants to observe. The second one is unstructured observation in which the researcher needs to observe first what is happening in the classroom and then he/she decides what the important elements to his / her research are. The current classroom observation is structured observation because I had selected in advance the important categories that we want to observe which are in correlation with our research topic (the importance of background knowledge in enhancing EFL learners reading comprehension). I had organized a checklist (see appendix) which comprises all the necessary components that we wanted to observe.

During this academic year 2015, I had the opportunity to attend only three session of oral expression in which they take a reading comprehension skill.

III.3.2.1. Session One

The first session was with second year LMD students of Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, group 7. It was on 16/11/2014 at the laboratory from 9: 40 till 11:10 the session of oral expression. The title was “sleep” (see appendix) the teacher gave the text to her students. The teacher asked her students to read silently then she asked them to read out loud one by one within this time the teacher tried to correct some errors made by her students for example in their pronunciations . During this time, I was taking some notes and made a tick in my checklist.

The first thing that I had observed was that students were familiar with the text topic and vocabulary, only few words were unclear for them such as lucid, syndrome ,every one of them intended to know more by either asking the teacher or their classmate .

The type of text was expository and it was simple not easy and not difficult that is why I could not observe that they struggle with the text structure. The only comment that I wrote about grammar was: students did not master well the final “s” rule.

I had observed that those students had problems with English names as the name “Gackenbach” may be this happened because those students were in phase of culture chock that is why they were laughing.

After that, the teacher gave her students some activities to strengthen their text comprehension. The first activity was true or false and she ordered them to underline the part of the text that gave them the correct answers. The second activity was a collection of questions about the text.

III .3.2.2Session Two

The second session that I had attended was on 27/11/2014 with group 5 at battaybi room 9, from 11:20 till 12:50. The teacher tried first to prepare the atmosphere of the classroom by talking and having fun with students and, then she gave her students a text its' entitled

“The lottery”(see appendix), it was a kind of short story written by Shirley Jackson which talk about a great day of public lottery on “ June 20th”.

Throughout this session, I tried to use my observation checklist and tick in the appropriate place whenever I observe that those students use one of the components of background knowledge during their reading.

As students read, I observed that they have a difficulty in understanding this story even when they had repeated it several times because they are novice learners and this text was above their levels. They did not understand many words, expression and, names may be this happened because, they had no contact or background knowledge about the sociocultural aspect of those people who are English of course. I noticed also that students do not master the rules of the final “ed” and “s”. In addition, students did not respect the punctuation marks when they were reading. At the end, the teacher supported her students with comprehension quiz to make the text clearer.

III .3.2.3.Session Three

This reading session took place at the laboratory on 12/04/2015 from 09:40 till 11:10 with group 7. The text title was “Who wants to be“millionaire” students were very enthusiastic to read and see if the title reflects the content and to know what the events are. The teacher asked her students to read one by one.

In fact the text talked about a popular television quiz show which is “Who wants to be a millionaire” (see appendix) in which some years ago there was a man his name is Charles who participated in this television show, he planned with his wife and a man to cheat and won money but, they were caught by the television control and they were given prison sentences of 18 months.

The instructor created an environment that was prepared for learning in which all the students appeared to feel at ease due to her warm, friendly personality and also because she was approachable and appeared to possess a genuine interest in hearing her students'

opinions. One thing that I learned from this instructor is related to planning and adapting those plans to fit the students' needs. Students show more interest to this topic because of two things first, they have a certain amount of information about this text (its vocabulary, sentence structure and, text type.) second, the teachers' efforts to activate students' background knowledge by asking them questions to strengthen their comprehension.

III .3.2.4.Conclusion

From this classroom observation, the results show that as much as the teacher prepare and plan his reading session and promote his/ her learners' autonomy through making them aware of the importance of activating their background knowledge, reading strategies and techniques as the teacher succeeds in raising his learners' comprehension of the given text.

General Conclusion

The present work is entitled as importance of background knowledge on enhancing EFL learners reading comprehension. It is composed of three chapters the first and second chapters review the related literature about reading skill and background knowledge. The third chapter is the practical part of the study. It provides a detailed analysis of both teachers and students' questionnaires in addition to the analysis of classroom observation.

The main findings of this research are: there is a positive relationship between the two variables; reading comprehension and background knowledge, and there are some basic strategies that may contribute in the process of activating learners' previous knowledge.

Teachers of English as a foreign language are in a constant search of what may help their learners increase their reading comprehension. We have suggested for them a proposition is to enrich and activate students' background knowledge through some strategies in order to, achieve more texts' comprehension. EFL teachers, educators, course designers as well as researchers have to take into consideration the value of this suggestion in improving EFL learners' reading comprehension.

After all what we have said, the results of this research go hand in hand with our research hypothesis and the research questions were answered throughout this study. Henceforth, we can say that there is a positive association between **Prior knowledge** and **Reading comprehension**.

Recommendations

The findings of this research urged the researcher to give those suggestions for further research.

- 1-** Activating learners' background knowledge through the suggested strategies: asking questions, discussion, prediction, and brainstorming are proved to be helpful in enhancing EFL readers' comprehension. For the replication of this research, it is advisable to choose one strategy and investigate its' effects on EFL reading comprehension.
- 2-** It is agreed among cognitive psychologists that prior knowledge activation effects learners' achievements in general. The present study proved that it is an important variable which affects the reading skill. From this, we may suppose that it do have effects on other language skills listening, writing, and speaking.
- 3-** In order to investigate the situation more thoroughly, future research can conduct an experiment by choosing a sample and test them through several exercises.

Bibliography

- Alderson, C.J. (2000). *Assessing reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Almasi, J. & Susan, K. (2012). *Teaching strategic process in reading*. New York: the Guilford Press.
- Barbara, J. et al. (2009). *Essentials of evidence-based academic interventions*. New Jersey: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.
- Blachowicz, C. & Donna, O. (2008). *Reading comprehension: strategies for independent learners*. United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data.
- Bobrow, J., Beth A., Karen S., Rhonda B., Chris C., & Dana G. (2006). *Cliffs test prep rica*. United States of America: Wiley Publishing, Inc.
- Browne, A. (1998). *Teaching reading in the early years*. Great Britain: Athenaeum Press.
- Carrasquillo, A. & Vivian R. (2002). *Language minority students in mainstream classroom*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press.
- Clapham, C. (1996). *The Development of IELTS; A study of the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, F. (1995). *Introducing reading*. London: English Penguin.
- Farrel, T. (2009). *Teaching reading to English language learners*. United States of America: Crown Press.

- Jones, D.(2004). *Painless reading comprehension*. New York: Library of Congress Cataloging-in – Publication Data.
- Haddad, A. (2005). *English; phonetic cores intended as a distance teaching course for middle school teachers*. Constantine: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English language teaching*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- (2007). *How to teach English*. England : Pearson Education.
- Hedge, T.R. (2003) *Teaching & learning in the language classroom*. UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hickman,P.& Sharolyn D.(2009). *Dynamic read – aloud strategies for English learners: building language and literacy in the primary grades*. Chicago: Library of Congress.
- Hudson, R., Lane, H., & Pullen, P.(2005).*Reading fluency assessment and instruction: what, why and how?* .The International Reading Association.
- Hundson,T. (2007).*Teaching second language reading*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Huang,Q. (2009). *Background knowledge and reading teaching*. China :Asian Social Sciences. Vol.5, No, 5
- Gangal. J. (2011). *A Practical course for developing writing skills in English*. New Delhi: Eastern Economy Edition.

- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Konza, D.(2003). *Teaching children with reading difficulties*. Australia: Thomson Social Science Press.
- Kothari, C. (2004). *Research methodology; methods & techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International (p) Limited publishers.
- Lems, K., Leah D., & Tenena M. (2010). *Teaching reading to English language learners; insights from Linguistics*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Mag, Phil & Melevica .(2010). *Reading skills and reading comprehension in English for specific purpose*. Serbia: University of kragujevac.
- McCarthy, M..(2010). *Basic vocabulary in use*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mc Cormack, R.L.& Susan L.P.(2010). *Teaching reading; strategies & resources for grades K-6*. New York : The Guilford Press.
- Mc Namara, D. (2007). *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories Interventions, and Technologies*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- (2009). *Perspectives on Language and literacy*. The International Dyslexia Association.
- Nizegorodcew, A.(2007). *Input instructed L2 learners; The relevance of relevance*. Great Britain: Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data.
- Nuttal, C.(1982). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

- Oakhill, J., Kate C., & Carsten E. (2015). *Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A Handbook*. New York: Rutledge.
- Oxford Student's Dictionary. (2007). New Edition. Oxford University Press.
- The Concise Oxford English Dictionary. (2001). Tenth Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Pang, E , Angaluki M. , Elizabeth B. ,& Micheal L. (2003). *Teaching reading* .France: Sadag, Bellegarde.
- Paul, P. (2009). *Language and deafness*. United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging-in- Publication Data.
- Pikulski, J.& Chard, D.(2003). *Fluency the bridge from decoding to reading comprehension*. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Pollet, K. (2011). *Reading between lines inferencing*. Marion: Peaces of Learning Press.
- Richards, C. J.(1997). *From reader to reading teacher: Issues and Strategies for Second Language Classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- & Renandya, W. (2002) .*Methodology in language teaching : An Anthropology of current Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schumm, J.(2006). *Reading assessment and instruction for all learners*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Schellekens, P. (2007). *The oxford ESOL handbook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Seel, N. (2012). *Encyclopedia of the sciences of learning*. New York: Springer Science.

- Singh,R . (2006). *Teaching of English*. New Delhi: Lotus Press.
- Spears, D.(2013).*Improving reading skill; contemporary readings for college students*.
New York: Mc Graw-Hill Companies.
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis; English in academic and research setting* .New York:
Cambridge university press.
- Taboda,A. & John, T.(2006). *Contributions of student questioning and prior knowledge to
construction of knowledge from reading information text*. Journal of Literacy
Research. 38(1), 1–35.
- Tankersley, k.(2003). *The Threads of reading: strategies for literacy development*. United
States of America: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Taylor, B., Graves, M., & Broek, P. (2000). *Reading for meaning*. New York: Teachers
College Press.
- The Concise Oxford English Dictionary. (2001).Tenth Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Timothy,V.(n.d). *Assessing reading fluency*. Hawaii :Pacific Resources for Education and
Learning.
- Ur, R. (1996). *A Course in language teaching practice and theory*. Cambridge University
Press.
- Urquhart, V. & Dana, F. (2012). *Teaching reading in the content areas: If Not Me, The
Who?*.United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging –in- Publication
Data.

Wajnryb, R.(1992). *Classroom observation tasks; a resource book for language teachers and trainers*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, E. (1984). *Reading in the language classroom*. London: Mc Milan Publisher.

Wolfe, P., Pamela N. (2004). *Building the reading brain, Prek-3*.United States of America: Crown Pres.

Yule, G. (2006). *The Study of language*. Oxford University Press.

Webliography

Alonya,S. & Akeyo, C.(2014). *An Investigation into the classroom strategies employed for reading comprehension ability in secondary schools in Kisumu North, Kisumu country.Kenya*. Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy studies (JETERAPS), 5(4)(ISSN:2141-6990), 405-409. Retrieved February 8/2015, Source:jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.com

Armbruster , B.(n.d.).*Research – based instruction in reading*. Chicago: University of Illinois.Retrieved21/02/2015

Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/read/rb/rbreading.pdf>.

Beal,Keene,&Tovani. (n.d.).Reading comprehension strategies. Retrieved 12/12/2014 from Scholastic. Source: <http://www.scholastic.com>

Parts of Speech.(2006). *BRLC/Program ESL/materials /Parts of speech. 11-06 CJ*Retrieved21/02/2015.Source:<http://seaofredink.blogspot.com/2006/01/quick-grammar-cheat-sheet.html>

Pang,E. (2003). *Teaching reading*. international academy of education, 6.Retrieved 19/11/ 2014 from <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications>.

Subasini, M.& kokilavani, B.(2013).Significance of grammar in technical English. International journal of English literature and culture pp. pp. 56-58. Retrieved From <http://www.academicresearchjournals.org/IJELC/Index.htm>

The Learning Centre.(2011). *Reading effectively*. The University of New South Wales. Retrieved 23/11/2014 from <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>.

Taguchi, E., Takayasu-Mass, M. & Gorsuch, G.J. (2004). *Developing reading fluency in EFL: How assisted repeated reading and extensive reading affect fluency development*. Volume 16, No. 2. Retrieved 09/12/2014 from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl>

Usman, R. (2014). *Important phrasal verbs List*. Published on 14 décembre 2014
Retrieved 08/03/2015 from: <http://fr.slideshare.net/ranamutk/phrasal-verbs-list-1>

Appendix 1

Mohamed Kheider University, Biskra Faculty of Letters and Languages Department of Foreign Languages

Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire intends to provide a comprehensive data about student's attitudes towards the importance of background knowledge in enhancing English Language Learners reading comprehension as part of a master dissertation. Thank you very much for taking the time to answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box or by making a full statement if necessary. Your answer will be kept anonymous and your cooperation will be of a great help.

Please answer the following questions:

Section 01: Personal Background Information

1- Gender

a. Male

b. Female

2- Ageyears old

3- Your choice to study English was :

a- Personal

b- Imposed

4- Do you consider your level in English?

a-Very good b- good c- Average d- Poor e- Very poor

Section 02: Reading Comprehension

5- Do you like reading?

a-A lot

b-A little

c- Not at all

6- How often do you read?

a-Frequently

b-Sometimes

c-Rarely

7- How often do you read in English?

a-Frequently b-Sometimes c-Rarely

8- How often does your teacher encourage you to read?

a-Frequently b-Sometimes c-Rarely d-Never

9- How often do you use reading strategies (paraphrase, infer, make connection between the text and prior knowledge, visualize, ask questions ect.)

a-Frequently b-Sometimes c-Rarely d-Never

10- Which model do you prefer to use when reading?

a- Bottom- up model b- Top – down model The Interactive Model

11- How do you tend to read in English?

a -Word by word b - In group of words

12- What makes a text difficult to comprehend for you? (*You can tick both boxes if necessary.*)

a. When it contains difficult or unfamiliar words

b. When it reflects a culture that is different from yours

d. Other

Section 03: The importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension.

13- As you read, do you usually use what you know before as background knowledge to understand?

a- Yes b-No

14- If yes, what kind of background knowledge do you use?

a- Phonemic and phonological background knowledge

b- Grammatical background knowledge

c- Vocabulary background knowledge

d- Sociocultural background knowledge

e- Text genre background knowledge

f- All of them

g- Others.....

15- Do you agree that background knowledge have great importance in reading comprehension?

a- Strongly agree b- Agree c- Neither agree nor disagree

d- Disagree e-Strongly disagree

16- Does your teacher use certain strategies to activate your background knowledge?

a-Yes b- No

17- If yes, what kind of strategies does he /she use

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

18- You like to add any comment or suggestion?

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

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix 2

Mohamed Kheider University, Biskra Faculty of Letters and Languages Department of Foreign Languages

Dear Teachers, You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your thoughts about the importance of background knowledge on EFL reading comprehension Please, mark (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer(s) if necessary.

Section One: Personal Information

- 1- Degree
a- License
b- Magister
c- Master
d- PhD

- 2- How long have you been teaching English?Year(s)

Section two: Reading Comprehension

- 3- According to your experience of teaching reading to what extent do you think your students value the importance of the reading skill?

a-A lot b-A little c-Not at all

Please explain.....

- 4- To what extent do you think your students need more reading comprehension courses?

a-Frequently b-Sometimes c-Rarely

Please, justify your answer:

- 5- Which model of reading do you prefer most to use with your students?

a-Yes

b- No

Section four: Suggestions and Comments

II- Would you like to add any comment or suggestion?

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

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix 3

Observation check-list

Teacher: University: Grade: Date:

Observer: Lesson Observed: Start: Finish:

N	Categories	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
01	-Students use of their phonological background			
02	knowledge.			
	-Students use of their vocabulary background			
03	knowledge.			
	-Students use their of grammatical background			
04	knowledge.			
	- Students use of their sociocultural background			
05	knowledge.			
	- Students use of their text types background			
06	knowledge.			
	-Students use of their phonological and phonemic background			
	knowledge			

"The Lottery"

by Shirley Jackson

The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green. The people of the village began to gather in the square, between the post office and the bank, around ten o'clock; in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 20th, but in this village, where there were only about three hundred people, the whole lottery took less than two hours, so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning and still be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner.

The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play, and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones; Bobby and Harry Jones and Dickie Delacroix – the villagers pronounced this name "Dellacroy" – eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys, and the very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.

Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes. They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed. The women, wearing faded house dresses and sweaters, came shortly after their menfolk. They greeted one another and exchanged bits of gossip as they went to join their husbands. Soon the women, standing by their husbands, began to call to their children, and the children came reluctantly, having to be called four or five times. Bobby Martin ducked under his mother's grasping hand and ran, laughing, back to the pile of stones. His father spoke up sharply, and Bobby came quickly and took his place between his father and his oldest brother.

The lottery was conducted – as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program – by Mr. Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic activities. He was a round-faced, jovial man and he ran the coal business, and people were sorry for him, because he had no children and his wife was a scold. When he arrived in the square, carrying the black wooden box, there was a murmur of conversation among the villagers, and he waved and called, "Little late today, folks." The postmaster, Mr. Graves, followed him, carrying a three-legged stool, and the stool was put in the center of the square and Mr. Summers set the black box down on it. The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool, and when Mr. Summers said, "Some of you fellows want to give me a hand?" there was a hesitation before two men, Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter, came forward to hold the box steady on the stool while Mr. Summers stirred up the papers inside it.

The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town, was born. Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new box, but no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box. There was a story that the present box had been made with some pieces of the box that had preceded it, the one that had been constructed when the first people settled down to make a village here. Every year, after the lottery, Mr. Summers began talking again about a new box, but every year the subject was allowed to fade off without anything's

being done. The black box grew shabbier each year; by now it was no longer completely black but splintered badly along one side to show the original wood color, and in some places faded or stained.

Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter, held the black box securely on the stool until Mr. Summers had stirred the papers thoroughly with his hand. Because so much of the ritual had been forgotten or discarded, Mr. Summers had been successful in having slips of paper substituted for the chips of wood that had been used for generations. Chips of wood, Mr. Summers had argued, had been all very well when the village was tiny, but now that the population was more than three hundred and likely to keep on growing, it was necessary to use something that would fit more easily into the black box. The night before the lottery, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves made up the slips of paper and put them in the box, and it was then taken to the safe of Mr. Summers' coal company and locked up until Mr. Summers was ready to take it to the square next morning. The rest of the year, the box was put away, sometimes one place, sometimes another; it had spent one year in Mr. Graves's barn and another year underfoot in the post office, and sometimes it was set on a shelf in the Martin grocery and left there.

There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open. There were the lists to make up – of heads of families, heads of households in each family, members of each household in each family. There was the proper swearing-in of Mr. Summers by the postmaster, as the official of the lottery; at one time, some people remembered, there had been a recital of some sort, performed by the official of the lottery, a perfunctory, tuneless chant that had been rattled off duly each year; some people believed that the official of the lottery used to stand just so when he said or sang it, others believed that he was supposed to walk among the people, but years and years ago this part of the ritual had been allowed to lapse. There had been, also, a ritual salute, which the official of the lottery had had to use in addressing each person who came up to draw from the box, but this also had changed with time, until now it was felt necessary only for the official to speak to each person approaching. Mr. Summers was very good at all this; in his clean white shirt and blue jeans, with one hand resting carelessly on the black box, he seemed very proper and important as he talked interminably to Mr. Graves and the Martins.

Just as Mr. Summers finally left off talking and turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson came hurriedly along the path to the square, her sweater thrown over her shoulders, and slid into place in the back of the crowd. "Clean forgot what day it was," she said to Mrs. Delacroix, who stood next to her, and they both laughed softly. "Thought my old man was out back stacking wood," Mrs. Hutchinson went on, "and then I looked out the window and the kids was gone, and then I remembered it was the twenty-seventh and came a-running. "She dried her hands on her apron, and Mrs. Delacroix said, "You're in time, though. They're still talking away up there."

Mrs. Hutchinson craned her neck to see through the crowd and found her husband and children standing near the front. She tapped Mrs. Delacroix on the arm as a farewell and began to make her way through the crowd. The people separated good-humoredly to let her through; two or three people said, in voices just loud enough to be heard across the crowd, "Here comes your, Missus, Hutchinson," and "Bill, she made it after all." Mrs. Hutchinson reached her husband, and Mr. Summers, who had been waiting, said cheerfully, "Thought we were going to have to get on without you, Tessie." Mrs. Hutchinson said, grinning, "Wouldn't have me leave m'dishes in the sink, now, would you, Joe?" and soft laughter ran through the crowd as the people stirred back into position after Mrs. Hutchinson's arrival.

"Well, now." Mr. Summers said soberly, "guess we better get started, get this over with, so's we can go back to work. Anybody ain't here?"

"Dunbar," several people said. "Dunbar, Dunbar."

Mr. Summers consulted his list. "Clyde Dunbar," he said. "That's right. He's broke his leg, hasn't he? Who's drawing for him?"

"Me, I guess," a woman said, and Mr. Summers turned to look at her. "Wife draws for her husband," Mr. Summers said. "Don't you have a grown boy to do it for you, Janey?" Although Mr. Summers and everyone else in the village knew the answer perfectly well, it was the business of the official of the lottery to ask such questions formally. Mr. Summers waited with an expression of polite interest while Mrs. Dunbar answered.

"Horace's not but sixteen yet," Mrs. Dunbar said regretfully. "Guess I gotta fill in for the old man this year."

"Right," Mr. Summers said. He made a note on the list he was holding. Then he asked, "Watson boy drawing this year?"

A tall boy in the crowd raised his hand. "Here," he said. "I'm drawing for m'mother and me." He blinked his eyes nervously and ducked his head as several voices in the crowd said things like "Good fellow, Jack," and "Glad to see your mother's got a man to do it."

"Well," Mr. Summers said, "guess that's everyone. Old Man Warner make it?"

"Here," a voice said, and Mr. Summers nodded.

A sudden hush fell on the crowd as Mr. Summers cleared his throat and looked at the list. "All ready?" he called. "Now, I'll read the names – heads of families first – and the men come up and take a paper out of the box. Keep the paper folded in your hand without looking at it until everyone has had a turn. Everything clear?"

The people had done it so many times that they only half listened to the directions; most of them were quiet, wetting their lips, not looking around. Then Mr. Summers raised one hand high and said, "Adams." A man disengaged himself from the crowd and came forward. "Hi, Steve," Mr. Summers said, and Mr. Adams said, "Hi, Joe." They grinned at one another humorlessly and nervously. Then Mr. Adams reached into the black box and took out a folded paper. He held it firmly by one corner as he turned and went hastily back to his place in the crowd, where he stood a little apart from his family, not looking down at his hand.

"Allen," Mr. Summers said. "Anderson . . . Bentham."

"Seems like there's no time at all between lotteries any more," Mrs. Delacroix said to Mrs. Graves in the back row. "Seems like we got through with the last one only last week."

"Time sure goes fast," Mrs. Graves said.

"Clark. . . Delacroix"

"There goes my old man," Mrs. Delacroix said. She held her breath while her husband went forward.

"Dunbar," Mr. Summers said, and Mrs. Dunbar went steadily to the box while one of the women said, "Go on, Janey," and another said, "There she goes."

"We're next," Mrs. Graves said. She watched while Mr. Graves came around from the side of the box, greeted Mr. Summers gravely and selected a slip of paper from the box. By now, all through the crowd there were men holding the small folded papers in their large hands, turning them over and over nervously. Mrs. Dunbar and her two sons stood together, Mrs. Dunbar holding the slip of paper.

"Harburt . . . Hutchinson."

"Get up there, Bill," Mrs. Hutchinson said, and the people near her laughed.

"Jones."

"They do say," Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, "that over in the north village they're talking of giving up the lottery."

Old Man Warner snorted. "Pack of crazy fools," he said. "Listening to the young folks, nothing's good enough for *them*. Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live *that* way for a while. Used to be a saying about 'Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.' First thing you know, we'd all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There's

always been a lottery," he added petulantly. "Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody."

"Some places have already quit lotteries," Mrs. Adams said.

"Nothing but trouble in *that*," Old Man Warner said stoutly. "Pack of young fools."

"Martin." And Bobby Martin watched his father go forward. "Overdyke.... Percy."

"I wish they'd hurry," Mrs. Dunbar said to her older son. "I wish they'd hurry."

"They're almost through," her son said.

"You get ready to run tell Dad," Mrs. Dunbar said.

Mr. Summers called his own name and then stepped forward precisely and selected a slip from the box. Then he called, "Warner."

"Seventy-seventh year I been in the lottery," Old Man Warner said as he went through the crowd. "Seventy-seventh time."

"Watson." The tall boy came awkwardly through the crowd. Someone said, "Don't be nervous, Jack," and Mr. Summers said, "Take your time, son."

"Zanini."

After that, there was a long pause, a breathless pause, until Mr. Summers, holding his slip of paper in the air, said, "All right, fellows." For a minute, no one moved, and then all the slips of paper were opened. Suddenly, all the women began to speak at once, saying, "Who is it?", "Who's got it?", "Is it the Dunbars?", "Is it the Watsons?" Then the voices began to say, "It's Hutchinson. It's Bill," "Bill Hutchinson got it."

"Go tell your father," Mrs. Dunbar said to her older son.

People began to look around to see the Hutchinsons. Bill Hutchinson was standing quiet, staring down at the paper in his hand. Suddenly, Tessie Hutchinson shouted to Mr. Summers, "You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair."

"Be a good sport, Tessie." Mrs. Delacroix called, and Mrs. Graves said, "All of us took the same chance."

"Shut up, Tessie," Bill Hutchinson said.

"Well, everyone," Mr. Summers said, "that was done pretty fast, and now we've got to be hurrying a little more to get done in time." He consulted his next list. "Bill," he said, "you draw for the Hutchinson family. You got any other households in the Hutchinsons?"

"There's Don and Eva," Mrs. Hutchinson yelled. "Make *them* take their chance!"

"Daughters draw with their husbands' families, Tessie," Mr. Summers said gently. "You know that as well as anyone else."

"It wasn't *fair*," Tessie said.

"I guess not, Joe," Bill Hutchinson said regretfully. "My daughter draws with her husband's family, that's only fair. And I've got no other family except the kids."

"Then, as far as drawing for families is concerned, it's you," Mr. Summers said in explanation, "and as far as drawing for households is concerned, that's you, too. Right?"

"Right," Bill Hutchinson said.

"How many kids, Bill?" Mr. Summers asked formally.

"Three," Bill Hutchinson said. "There's Bill, Jr., and Nancy, and little Dave. And Tessie and me."

"All right, then," Mr. Summers said. "Harry, you got their tickets back?"

Mr. Graves nodded and held up the slips of paper. "Put them in the box, then," Mr. Summers directed. "Take Bill's and put it in."

"I think we ought to start over," Mrs. Hutchinson said, as quietly as she could. "I tell you it wasn't *fair*. You didn't give him time enough to choose. *Everybody* saw that."

Mr. Graves had selected the five slips and put them in the box, and he dropped all the papers but those onto the ground, where the breeze caught them and lifted them off.

"Listen, everybody," Mrs. Hutchinson was saying to the people around her.

"Ready, Bill?" Mr. Summers asked, and Bill Hutchinson, with one quick glance around at his wife and children, nodded.

"Remember," Mr. Summers said, "take the slips and keep them folded until each person has taken one. Harry, you help little Dave." Mr. Graves took the hand of the little boy, who came willingly with him up to the box. "Take a paper out of the box, Davy," Mr. Summers said. Davy put his hand into the box and laughed. "Take just *one* paper," Mr. Summers said. "Harry, you hold it for him." Mr. Graves took the child's hand and removed the folded paper from the tight fist and held it while little Dave stood next to him and looked up at him wonderingly.

"Nancy next," Mr. Summers said. Nancy was twelve, and her school friends breathed heavily as she went forward switching her skirt, and took a slip daintily from the box. "Bill, Jr.," Mr. Summers said, and Billy, his face red and his feet overlarge, nearly knocked the box over as he got a paper out. "Tessie," Mr. Summers said. She hesitated for a minute, looking around defiantly, and then set her lips and went up to the box. She snatched a paper out and held it behind her.

"Bill," Mr. Summers said, and Bill Hutchinson reached into the box and felt around, bringing his hand out at last with the slip of paper in it.

The crowd was quiet. A girl whispered, "I hope it's not Nancy," and the sound of the whisper reached the edges of the crowd.

"It's not the way it used to be." Old Man Warner said clearly. "People ain't the way they used to be."

"All right," Mr. Summers said. "Open the papers. Harry, you open little Dave's."

Mr. Graves opened the slip of paper and there was a general sigh through the crowd as he held it up and everyone could see that it was blank. Nancy and Bill, Jr., opened theirs at the same time, and both beamed and laughed, turning around to the crowd and holding their slips of paper above their heads.

"Tessie," Mr. Summers said. There was a pause, and then Mr. Summers looked at Bill Hutchinson, and Bill unfolded his paper and showed it. It was blank.

"It's Tessie," Mr. Summers said, and his voice was hushed. "Show us her paper, Bill."

Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of paper out of her hand. It had a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal company office. Bill Hutchinson held it up, and there was a stir in the crowd.

"All right, folks," Mr. Summers said. "Let's finish quickly."

Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones. The pile of stones the boys had made earlier was ready; there were stones on the ground with the blowing scraps of paper that had come out of the box. Mrs. Delacroix selected a stone so large she had to pick it up with both hands and turned to Mrs. Dunbar. "Come on," she said. "Hurry up."

Mrs. Dunbar had small stones in both hands, and she said, gasping for breath, "I can't run at all. You'll have to go ahead and I'll catch up with you."

The children had stones already, and someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles.

Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of a cleared space by now, and she held her hands out desperately as the villagers moved in on her. "It isn't fair," she said. A stone hit her on the side of the head.

Old Man Warner was saying, "Come on, come on, everyone." Steve Adams was in the front of the crowd of villagers, with Mrs. Graves beside him.

"It isn't fair, it isn't right," Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her.

Name: _____

Date: _____

"The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson Comprehension Quiz

Multiple Choice

Identify the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

- ___ 1. In what season does this story take place?
 - a. summer ✓
 - b. spring
 - c. fall
 - d. winter
- ___ 2. At what time does the lottery begin, and about how long will it last?
 - a. 1:00pm-5:00pm
 - b. 10:00am-10:00am on the next day
 - c. 10:00am-noon
 - d. noon-sunset
- ___ 3. What do the little boys gather before the lottery begins?
 - a. fruit
 - b. pieces of paper
 - c. sack lunches
 - d. stones
- ___ 4. Who conducts the lottery?
 - a. Mr. Adams
 - b. Mr. Summers
 - c. Mr. Graves ✓
 - d. Old Man Warner ✓
- ___ 5. Which best describes the black box in which the lottery slips are held?
 - a. elaborately ornate and heavily jeweled
 - b. newly painted with carved designs
 - c. shabby, faded, and broken on one side
 - d. very plain with a heavy metal lock
- ___ 6. What do the villagers use as lottery tokens?
 - a. pieces of paper
 - b. chips of wood
 - c. painted stones
 - d. colored marbles
- ___ 7. Who is the late arrival to the lottery?
 - a. Mrs. Delacroix
 - b. Baxter Martin
 - c. Tessie Hutchinson
 - d. Nancy Hutchinson
- ___ 8. Why can't Clyde Dunbar attend the lottery?
 - a. He has a broken leg.
 - b. He is too young to attend.
 - c. He is out of town.
 - d. He is in jail.
- ___ 9. Who believes that the lottery is being conducted incorrectly?
 - a. Mr. Summers
 - b. Old Man Warner
 - c. Davey Hutchinson
 - d. Mrs. Delacroix
- ___ 10. How old is Old Man Warner?
 - a. It doesn't say
 - b. at least 77 years old
 - c. no more than 50 years old
 - d. 30 years older than Mr. Graves
- ___ 11. Which person is the first to get the black lottery token?
 - a. Bill Hutchinson
 - b. Bobby Martin
 - c. Joe Summers
 - d. Mr. Zanini
- ___ 12. How are Don and Eva related to Tessie and Bill Hutchinson?
 - a. They are best friends.
 - b. They are eldest son and daughter.
 - c. They are their daughter and son-in-law.
 - d. They are cousins.
- ___ 13. What is Tessie's objection to the lottery?
 - a. It takes too long.
 - b. Bill didn't have time to choose well.
 - c. It's not the way it used to be.
 - d. She didn't win any money.
- ___ 14. What is given to Davey Hutchinson at the end of the story?
 - a. stones
 - b. candy
 - c. another chance to win
 - d. marbles

The narrator is omniscient The Third Person.

Reading: coughing for a million

9 Read the extract from the book *Judging Crime* by Peter Hedley. Who or what is:

a ... *Who wants to be a millionaire*?

.....

b ... Chris Tarrant?

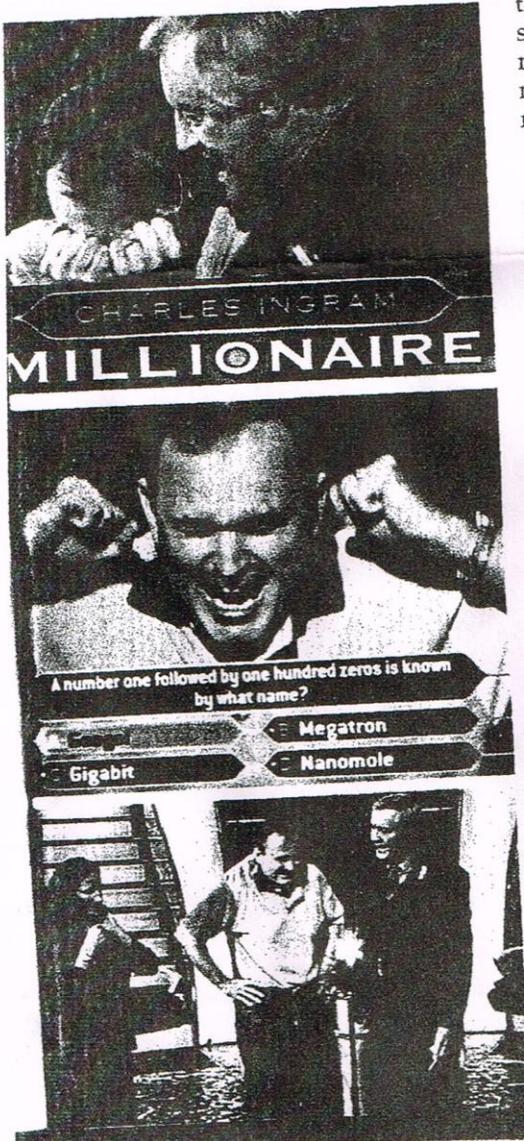
.....

c ... Charles Ingram?

.....

d ... Tecwen Whittock?

.....



Who wants to be a millionaire? has been one of the most popular television quiz shows, not only in Britain, but also around the world. In the show, the host asks a question and gives the contestant four possible answers. If the contestant gets the right answer, they win the money – say £100 – and then go on to the next question for, say, £250. The money increases for each question until, if the contestant has answered all the other questions correctly, the prize for the final question is one million pounds.

In this extract from a show some years ago, the host of the show is television personality Chris Tarrant. Answering the questions is an ex-army officer, Charles Ingram.

TARRANT: What kind of garment is an 'Anthony Eden'? An overcoat, hat, shoe, tie?

INGRAM: I think it is a hat.
A cough from the audience.

INGRAM: Again I'm not sure. I think it is ...
Coughing from the audience.

INGRAM: I am sure it is a hat. Am I sure?
Coughing from the audience.

INGRAM: Yes, hat, it's a hat.

That answer – the name for a peculiar type of British hat that nobody wears anymore – earned Charles Ingram £250,000. Two questions later, he had won a million pounds, and the audience in the studio went crazy. But something wasn't quite right. As he progressed through the various stages, Charles Ingram didn't really seem very sure of himself; he obviously didn't know the answer at first, so he must have been very good at guessing. Unless he wasn't guessing. To many in the audience that night, it seemed as if he kept changing his mind and frequently repeated an answer as if waiting for a signal.

He was.

Charles Ingram's wife Diana was in the audience, and so too was a man with the extraordinary name of Tecwen Whittock. At first, people might have been sympathetic about Tecwen. He had a bad cough. But a man sitting next to him in the audience noticed that there was something strange about the cough. It was too loud, and it wasn't very regular. It only happened occasionally, almost as if he was coughing on purpose.

He was.

The three of them, Charles Ingram, Diana Ingram and Tecwen Whittock, had planned the whole thing. Whittock coughed to tell Charles when he had the correct answer. They began to notice it in the television control room, but at first they didn't believe it. In the end, though, it was just too obvious, and when tapes from the programme were played to a court in London a year later, there was no doubt. Charles and Diana Ingram were guilty of cheating on a game show. They were given prison sentences of 18 months and fined £15,000 each. Tecwen Whittock was sentenced to 12 months in prison and fined £10,000. None of them actually went to prison, however, because the sentences were 'suspended' – that means that they would not go to prison unless they committed another crime.

Did the Ingrams and Tecwen Whittock get an appropriate sentence? How 'bad' is it to cheat a television quiz show in which winning money is a matter of chance anyway? It is crimes like this that challenge our notions of what is right and what is wrong, and since administering justice in the courts means that we have to decide on how serious something is (is robbery more or less serious than driving too fast, for example), the case of the cheating Ingrams is an excellent one to consider.

Three things you (probably) didn't know about



Everybody loves it. Everybody needs it. No-one seems to get enough of it. We all know that most people need eight hours sleep, and that REM* sleep is when you have most dreams, but here are three questions about sleep which you may not know the answer to:

- How can video games help us control our dreams?
- What is Sleeping Beauty Syndrome?
- What did our ancestors use to do in the middle of the night (which we don't)?

Living your dreams

A university psychologist in Canada believes that people who play video games are more likely to be able to control their own dreams. Jayne Gackenbach studied the dreams of regular video gamers and non-gamers and found that people who frequently played video games experienced 'lucid' dreams more often. A lucid dream is one in which we are aware that we are dreaming. In a lucid dream, the dreamer is sometimes able to control or influence what is happening to them in the dream – very similar to controlling the action of a character in a video game.

'Dreams and video games are both parallel universes,' says Gackenbach, 'Gamers spend hours a day in a virtual reality and they are used to controlling their game environments, and this seems to help them to do the same when they are dreaming.'

Gackenbach also discovered that video gamers have fewer nightmares than non-gamers. Some experts believe that we have nightmares to help us practise for life-threatening situations in a safe environment. Since video gamers already practise those situations regularly in games, Gackenbach's research suggests that video gamers may have less need of nightmares. But, interestingly, when gamers *do* have a nightmare they react differently to non-gamers: 'What happens with gamers,' says Gackenbach, 'is that when they have a frightening experience in a dream they don't run away like most of us do, they turn round and fight back.'

*REM is an abbreviation for 'rapid eye movement'

ملخص

تعتبر القراءة واحدة من أهم مهارات اكتساب المعرفة لذلك نجد أن مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في بحث دائم لما قد يساعد المتعلمين على القراءة ويزيد فهمهم للنصوص. يهدف هذا البحث إلى إظهار مدى أهمية أن يستذكر الطالب ما يملك من معلومات على النص في زيادة نسبة استيعاب ما يتضمنه النص . كنا قد اقترحنا عليهم اقتراح هو إثراء وتنشيط المكتسبات القبلية للطلاب من خلال بعض الاستراتيجيات من أجل تحقيق المزيد من الفهم للنصوص. بعد كل ما قلنا نستنتج أن نتائج هذا البحث تسير جنباً إلى جنب مع فرضيتنا و كما تمت الإجابة على أسئلة البحث من خلال هذه الدراسة فمن الآن فصاعداً، نستطيع أن نقول أن هناك علاقة إيجابية بين المعرفة المسبقة والفهم في القراءة. يستوجب على الأساتذة والباحثين أن يأخذوا بعين الاعتبار قيمة هذا الاقتراح في تحسين القراءة والفهم للمتعلمين.