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**The Role of Teaching Culture in Enhancing EFL students' Reading
Comprehension**
**Case Study: Second Year EFL Students at Mohammad KHEIDER
University of Biskra**

Dissertation submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement of Master's Degree in
Applied Linguistics at Mohammad KHIEDER University of Biskra.

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Dedication

In the name of ALLAH, most merciful, most compassionate. ALLAH who provided me with strength and patience to accomplish this work though all the obstacles I have faced. Hence, I am thankful for all the blessings ALLAH provided me.

I dedicate this work;

To my beloved Mother: Sifia YAHIA

Who did not live to witness this day.

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Abstract

Reading is one among the four skills to learn a language. The current research intends to investigate the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension. The study aims to provide different strategies and principles that may serve to achieve appropriate comprehension of texts. In this study, we hypothesize that teaching culture and its aspects may enhance EFL students' reading comprehension. The qualitative method (descriptive) has been used. As data gathering tools in the present study, the first tool we used is questionnaire submitted to EFL teachers of culture and second year EFL students at Department of letters and foreign languages, division of English at Mohamed KHIEDER University of biskra. In addition, the second too we used is classroom observation, attending lectures with students' sample. The analysis of the data gathered from the two research tools, brought evidences to confirm our two hypotheses. Moreover, the findings of the two data gathering tools reveal that EFL students do not value reading comprehension, though its significance in mastering foreign language proficiency. In addition, teaching of culture should be changed in terms of temporal and physical setting.

List of abbreviations acronyms

EFL: English as foreign language

FLL: Foreign language learning

FL: Foreign language

SL: Second language

ICC: Intercultural competence

FLLs: Foreign language learners

S/FL: Second/foreign language

IWBs: Interactive white boards

OHPs: Over-head-projector (s)

N: Number

%: Percentage

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المخلص

General Introduction

Introduction

Culture, in the foreign language learning, became a new spot of light. It is considered to be a part of the foreign language learning's prior knowledge, which scholars have been debating to illustrate its role as a key factor interrelated to the four skills of the language (listening, speaking, writing, and reading). Reading as a receptive skill plays a significant role in the enhancement of the language proficiency; whereby students construct meanings leading to a deeper comprehension of foreign language concepts and information. However, many EFL students encounter certain reading comprehension difficulties due to the lack of cultural background. This lack, or inability to comprehend often leads to the feelings of frustration and de-motivation; hence, students are in a need to be assisted to formulate an in-depth picture about what they are reading. The present study aims to illustrate the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension.

1. Statement of the problem

Comprehension is usually attained before, while, and after reading certain piece of writing. On one hand, due to the fact that the human mind cannot comprehend any new received information unless it is related to an already existing one. On the other hand, EFL students rarely possess the opportunity to contact with native speakers; but they can read native prints. Hence, students are supposed to be assisted inside the classroom through teaching them culture of the language as factor to build, as much as possible, a clear image about culture related concepts and the culture of the foreign language itself.

2. Aims of the Study

The general purpose of this research is to sensitize foreign language teachers about the role of teaching culture on reading comprehension. However, the general purpose is categorized into specific aims:

1. To understand the relation between culture and language.
2. To describe the effect of culture on EFL students' reading comprehension.
3. To suggest strategies improving the foreign language reading comprehension.

3. Significance of the study

The current research is significant in terms of discussing the value of reading comprehension; due to the assistance it provides to students, not only in learning a language but also achieving its mastery; wherein teaching culture plays a major role.

4. Research questions

The current research is based on the following questions:

1. To what extent is teaching culture significant in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension

5. Research hypotheses

The current research is basically dependent on the following hypotheses that will be checked thoroughly.

1. Teaching culture may enhance EFL students' reading comprehension.

6. Research methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is the descriptive method. We believe it is the most appropriate for our research and the context where it takes part. The choice of this method is justified by the fact that this research methodology can provide us with valid results, consistent and comprehensive data.

6.1. Research population

The population of this conducted study is Second Year EFL students at Mohamad Khiedr University of Biskra. Students are numerous, around 499, taught the module of culture once a week into sub-sections; each section consists of five groups.

6.2. Research sample

By the fact that, it is difficult to deal with huge number of different age and gender; the sample of this study will be opted at random selection of 50 EFL students. Wherein, we select 10 students from each group of the whole population. In addition to the sample of students, we are interested in EFL teachers who taught culture before in their teaching carrier.

6.3. Data gathering tools

The descriptive research requires the use of two data gathering tools. The first tool is questionnaire submitted to teachers and students; while the second one is classroom observation attending lectures of culture with second year EFL students for more valid results.

7. Research structure

The current research is divided into three chapters. The first and the second provide literature review about teaching culture and reading comprehension; whereby, together formulate the theoretical part. The third chapter is the practical part that provides a detailed analysis of the two research tools used to conduct the study.

8. Limitations of the study

In any research, a researcher encounters many obstacles. In our case, some of these are due to the conditions under which the research is conducted. Others are related to the nature of the conducted research itself; wherein culture is vague and complex. However, we made a concerted effort to display, in a simple and comprehensive way, the crucial elements. In addition, other obstacles are due to time constraints and the variations of methodology versions.

Chapter One

An Overview on Teaching Culture

Introduction

This chapter will display an overview about teaching culture in EFL classrooms. As far as, it is included within foreign language teaching; it imposed itself as a striking issue to be put in sail. A part of this chapter is devoted to a trial of defining culture from two different views (anthropology, and sociology), then introducing the cultural aspects. The core of this chapter will center the notion of teaching “culture” focusing on its importance, and challenges/constraints facing its teaching/learning processes. At the end, we will discuss some different strategies for effective the culture teaching.

1.1 Defining Culture

The concept “culture” by its nature is very vast and complex to be defined; consequently, we will discover a numerous misconceptions about it such as what Doda (2005: 82) assumes that variations of misconceptions are due to the origins of the root culture, he pens:

Many people in the western world use the term culture in the sense that some people are more ‘cultured’ than others. This is basically emanates from the idea associated with the root of the term culture “Kulture” in German which refers to civilization. Thus, when one is said to be cultured, he or she is said to be civilized.

One possibility to comprehend culture is to discriminate between what culture is and what is not culture; for instance, Brook (1968, cited in Merrouche, 2008: 8) claims that “Geography is the stage upon which the drama of human culture is played. But the play’s

the thing, not the scenery. Geography can at best be no more than the material surroundings in which culture takes root, flourishes, and comes to function”. He provides one of what culture is not. Geography in the definition refers to the setting where culture takes its role play. Hinkel (1999: 1) allows the use of the word ‘exaggeration’ in defining culture when he penned “As many definition of culture as there are fields of inquiry to human societies, groups, systems, behaviors, and activities.

As far as the definition of culture is concerned, a range of different fields of investigation included culture as a subject of study. Among them, anthropology and sociology though they differed in the angle to which they viewed it.

1.1.1 Anthropological View

Anthropology as a field addresses a series of questions; it meant before 1850, according to the *Oxford Dictionary* (cited in Moor, 2009: 19), by “The study of human nature encompassing physiology and psychology”. After 1860, the word denotes a “science of human kind”. Thus, along with the anthropological meaning change, culture as a human phenomenon became a main concern.

In fact, since the origins of the discipline, the concept culture has been in bold the main topic of debate by anthropologists. A widely recognized anthropologist by his innovative definition of culture; Taylor (1903, cited in Diah et al., 2014: 3) pens that culture is “Complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”

In other words, he meant, culture is all the characteristics that distinguishes between social communities; for instance, the traits of an Algerian Muslim differ from an American Indian traits. Evidently, the culture of the two nationalities share the essential features of being both learned and transformed from one generation to another; for this reason,

cultural anthropologists try to realize an answer to the question of: Why are the human groups and their life style varied all over the world?

1.1.2. Sociological view

Sociology is another field that centered the essence of defining culture. It tries to make sense of the social world comparing past, present, and future; whereby, culture is considered as the backbone. Hall, Grindstaff, and Cheng-Lo (2010) state that after the Second World War the universality of culture came into questions specifically in France, more widely the west, and then the rest of the world; consequently, the concept culture became prominent in the discourse of sociology.

The *Oxford Dictionary* (cited in Hall et al., 2010: 46) defines the noun culture as “The distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products, or way of life of a particular society, people, or period”. Hence, culture studies the development of particular society, or people over time; tackling various angles of daily life.

In fact, Silbermann (1968: 571) agrees on the joint of culture being the umbrella of a community, but he stated “If we bear in mind the term ‘culture’ in modern sociology has come to embrace not only the theatre, painting, literature and music, but all patterns of behaviour and types of education that are socially acquired and transmitted”. Accordingly, to some extent, culture is studying people as members of different groups and institutions since theatre, painting, literature, and music are different fields that nowadays are institutions. Moreover, the author views culture as transition of what is acquired to a learned one.

In addition, Sewell (1999) explain culture, thoroughly, as a theoretical category. Since culture is viewed from various perspectives; they restricted all what they considered

as not-useful conceptualizations to more adequate ones. Consequently, they provided the autonomy of culture, culture as system and practise, and a distinct of meaning.

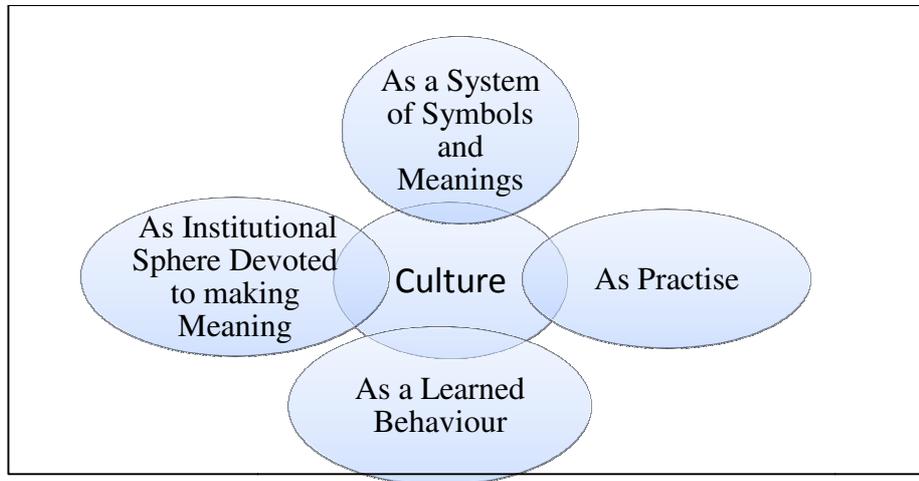


Figure 1.1 Not useful Conceptualization

Culture as not-useful conceptualization views culture as a system of meanings and symbols that has been taken place in various disciplinary locations and intellectual traditions and under many slogans such as: history, politics, and culture as a tool kitt...etc.

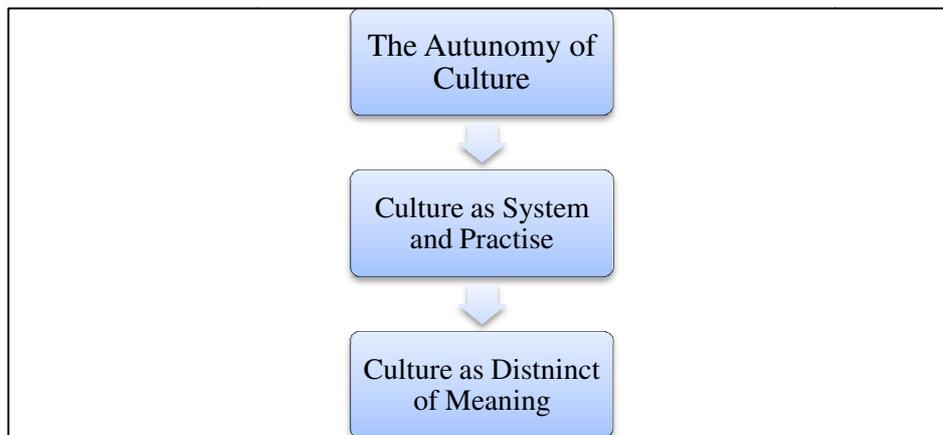


Figure 1.2 Adequate Conceptualizations.

Sewell (1999) gathered all the not-useful conceptualization into the adequate ones under the umbrella of three pillars: the autonomy of culture, culture as a system and practice, and culture as distinct of meaning. In which each of these came as a reaction to the previous ones; the adequate conceptualization combined system of meaning and practice.

In defining culture, we opt all what is appropriate to our field of study (social sciences). Hence, culture is defined from the perspectives of anthropology and sociology; because culture in the first place concerns human beings, who are the only creators that can produce utterances to fulfill certain intentions.

1.2. Aspects of Culture

The cultural aspects box is enriched and varied appearing in everyday life; it is divided into two categories: material and non-material. *The National Standards* for FLL (cited in Thu, 2011) assume that culture is typically understood as behaviors, philosophical perspectives, and both tangible and intangible products of a society. The figure below illustrates the relation between them; as a triangulation of three pillars. Wherein, practices and products are categorized under concrete aspects, whereas, perspectives are categorized under the abstract ones.

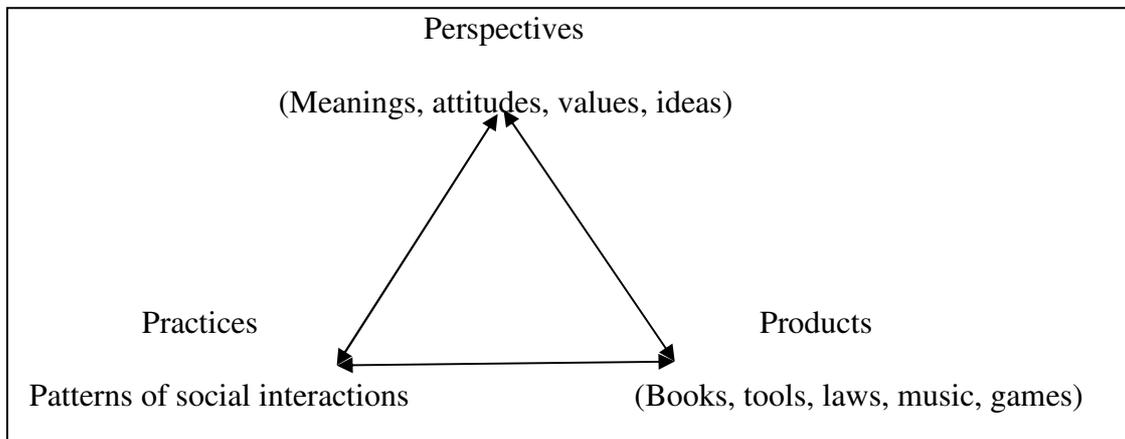


Figure 1.3. What culture constitutes? “Adapted from National Standard for FLL” by H. T. Thu, 2011, Teaching Culture in EFL/ESL Classrooms, Retrieved from ERIC database.

1.2.1 Material aspects

The material aspects of culture are notorious by their concrete sense. They are widely used; some of them are universal such as technology, trees, oil and others differ from one community to another such as food and music. Kendall (2010: 43) defines them as “Material aspects consist of physical tangible creations that members of a society make, use, and share”. Thus, we realize that materials aspects are all the creation of humans that widely spread.

1.2.2 Non-Material aspects

In contrast to the material aspects of culture, the “nonmaterial” ones are defined by *Dictionary.com* as “The aggregated of values, mores, norms, etc., of a society; the ideational of a structure that provides values and meanings by which it functions”. Thus, we recognize that the non-material aspects are abstract and can be viewed via the behavior of a specific community; these abstract aspects shape the humans’ way of dealing, behaving, thinking...etc.

In the same vein, Kendall (2010: 43) states that “Non-material culture consists of the abstract or intangible human creations of society that influence people’ behavior”. From this, we grasp that the non-material aspects of culture are unlike to the material ones. To some extent, they are not universal but they depend on the nationality, the race, or the religion of the speech community.

Hence, we realize that due to the richness of the cultural aspects, setting a standard definition to culture, consequently, became nearly impossible. Because, culture tackles all humans’ way of life; it can be categorized under boxes of aspects. The materials aspects are the measured ones whereby we can comprehend the non-material ones.

1.3. Importance of teaching culture

Culture or teaching culture did not merit all the attention of the scholars in the vacuum. Maider (2010) assumes that it has been studied as a necessary element for full development of people and communities. Thus, as far as it is included in foreign language teaching; it is significant in terms of improving language proficiency and developing language skills. It tackles many important issues.

1.3.1 Culture and language teaching /learning

Culture in language teaching and learning classrooms has been a matter of hot potato; it is defined in this discourse by Byram and Alison (2003: 1) as “Pragmatically as a/the lecture associated with a language being relevant”. In fact, as far as the necessary to teach culture arose in the literature; it has been recently included in the EFL curriculum. Students admit that possessing the linguistic competence is not sufficient in learning the FL; whereupon, their primary purpose is to communicate rather than being purely academic. This is due to the evident of language is practiced in the milieu of speech community where different cultures across each other as Cook (2003: 2) postulates “a successful interpretation of language in context depends on the degree to which the participants share conventions and procedures”.

1.3.2 Developing intercultural competence

Universities of higher education all over the world devote some prevelidge for its ‘A’ graduate students by offering scholar ships to study abroad; thus, institutions have invested to teach culture for its students as a key to develop their intercultural competence (ICC) as a trial to already internationalize them before studying abroad. ICC is defined by

Guilherme (2000) as the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures rather than one's own.

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:7-8) modifying Selye's seven goals of cultural instruction introduces the following goals:

- To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors
- To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave
- To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture
- To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target culture
- To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture
- To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and encourage empathy towards its people.

1.4. Culture and language

Language and culture, share in common the inability to be provided a standard definition; due to the nature of the two concepts. Thus, to recognize the relation between culture and language, it is notorious that they are regarded to be interrelated on account of the incapacity to neither teach culture nor learn a language in isolation of one another as it is implicitly mentioned in the words of Peck's (1998, cited in, Chahak and Basirizadeh,

2012) “Without the Study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete).

Furthermore, Cook (2003: 3) defines it as “Language is at the heart of human life. Without it, many of our most important activities are inconceivable”. We realize that language is the spirit of mankind; it is the mean of accomplishing many activities such as: socializing with others, communicating, and introducing different speech acts...etc. Language enables human beings to identify themselves; expressing their feelings, ideas, or even facts reflecting their state of being.

In addition, Kramach (1998) views language as the principal means whereby humans conduct their social lives. When it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex way; he refers by conducting social lives to ‘cultural reality’ which is one of language functions. In fact, Liddicoat et atl. (2003) state that culture and language interact with each other at certain points. In general, these points are categorized into: world knowledge, texts, pragmatics, and linguistics categories; these latter entails other points. Hence, culture is interrelated with language, and there is no possibility to isolate it from the second.

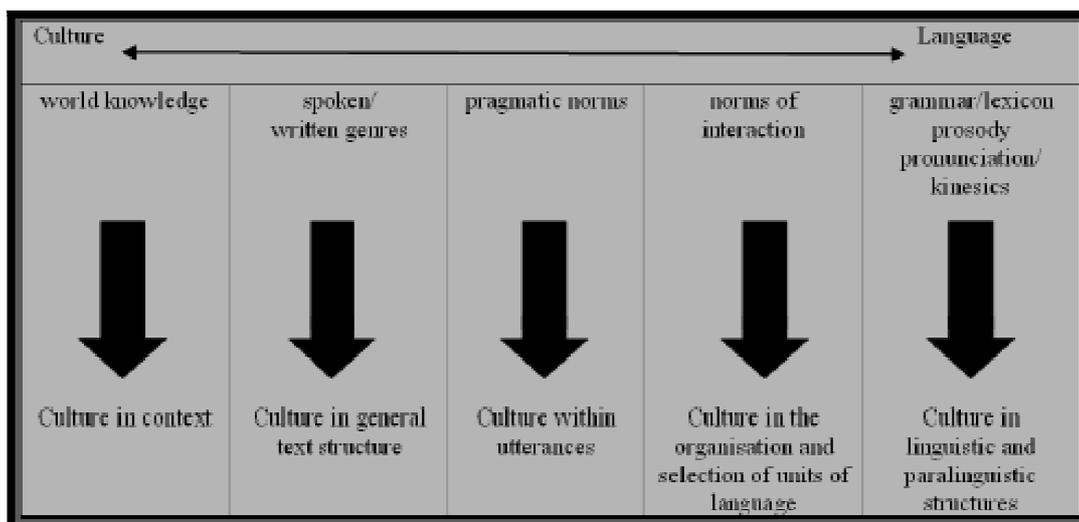


Figure 1.4 Points of articulation between culture and language (Adapted from Crozet and Liddicoat 1999) by A.J. Liddicoat et al., 2003, Report on intercultural language learning, Retrieved from www1.curriculum.edu.au/nalsas/pdf/intercultural.pdf

1.4.1. Written language

As far as, the communicative function of language in foreign language learning/teaching; written language merits the core interest where learners shift from being speakers and hearers to readers of different texts. Students share a common belief that reading means reinforcing their vocabulary package or extracting textual information as Kramersch (1993: 7) “It deceives learners into believing that all they have to do is ‘retrieve’ a meaning that is already in the text”. Overall, we grasp that the definition provided by Kramersch implicitly indicates the significance of culture in the two forms of language. Besides, the use of the sentence ‘retrieve meaning that is already in the text’ infers that the retrieving meaning is not only textual analysis; but rather going beyond to the cultural analysis.

Besides, *National Standards* (1999, cited in Yang, 2006: 968) indicate that “Through studies of other languages students gain knowledge and understanding of the culture that uses that language”. Hence, the meaning derived out of this definition is that language is the carrier of culture; culture is expressed via language.

Overall, language represents culture, and the latter is significant in terms of learning and understanding the former. Culture improves language learning and assists in achieving its mastery. Whereby, the two forms of language are learned and understood.

1.5. Challenges and constraints

Despite the fact that, teaching culture in the process of EFL teaching is an exciting endeavor for teachers; it became a constraint at the same time. Because teachers are intensively sticking to the traditional methods of teaching, neglecting that culture, as far as, it is included in most of EFL curriculum; it demand certain experience to be taught. This is

maybe due to the less importance given by educational organizers to including a special training periods devoted only to present how to teach culture for FLLs considering students demands, as far as, they are a vital part in teaching culture.

1.5.1 Teacher's role

First of all, the teacher should be sensitized of his significance as De Smet and Rasson (cited in, Chaisri, 2013:81) assume that teachers have a double role to play in teaching foreign language; hence, on one hand, they should be aware of the language used. They should decide which English to teach whether the American's or the RP's English as it is considered for some as a dilemma in foreign language teaching.

On the other hand, classroom management has been a topic of debate in this discourse; whereby, the teacher is supposed to be the one who can keep his head above water as Harmer (2007, cited in Hall 2011) lists the role of language teachers as: controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor.

Besides, motivation is the half of the battle to win; it means to make students engaged and at the same time motivated. Furthermore, teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular should bear in mind the needs of their students to incorporate technology that suits their learning styles. Puren and Bertocchini (1998, cited in Chaisri, 2013: 81) assume that "The teaching of foreign culture in language class consists of making students aware of the superficial representations and errors they have with that culture".

1.5.2. Student's role

Students learning in EFL classes should be aware that they have a role as their teachers do. Primarily, they are the active part who should assume a great responsibility

respecting both their teachers and classmates. In addition, they should consider the importance of learning culture by being more autonomous and seek for extra information about the subject of the lesson using technology.

Aloumpis (2005) states “I believe that good autonomous learner must have very good planning skill to plan times for reading and research”. Thus, in learning culture students’ major role is to depend on themselves; as is it is assumed, technology nowadays is the language of the world. Using the net, they may googl for a whole book about only one subtitle of one topic or contacting native speakers by themselves. For instance, adding native teachers and students on the list of friends in Facebook accounts introducing their cultures and trying to compare between the two which leads to critical thinking.

1.6. Strategies to teaching culture

“Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave”, starting with this Islamic proverb, we infer the significance of learning, and more specifically teaching. Wherein, the latter is sensitized as being one of the sacred and hard tasks to fulfill; due to its complexity by nature. Teaching in itself differs according to the subjects to be taught; one of those subjects is culture. It demands certain procedures or simply certain strategies to follow for imparting knowledge appropriately as it is illustrated in the Chinese proverb “tell me, I will forget. Show me and I may remember. But involve me and I will understand”.

1.6.1 The Use of authentic materials

Along with the progress of the technology, the development of education progressed in parallel. It began to play a major role in foreign language teaching/learning providing a new dimension; leaving no room for the traditional strategies of dull memorizing and sending back the goods for the teacher.

Authentic materials became nowadays a universal standard inside classrooms as Harmer (2007: 175) postulates “If you talk into some classrooms around the world, you will see a fixed data projectors, white boards (IWBs), built in the speakers for audio material that is delivered directly from a computer hard disk” coping with the new demands of different learning styles that students vary from being visual, audio-visual, and tactile in their learners.

Furthermore, the focus of using authentic materials should not be inside classrooms but also outside it as Yuganthar (2014) argues that teachers should encourage their students to cable and satellite TV radio, available books and magazines that provide them exposure to the use of authentic materials helping them mastering the FL. Besides, Harmer (2007) represents a hierarchy of materials that should be found in any natural occurring learning process, consists of: language laboratories, videos, computers, Power Point; Cassete recorders, OHPs; and photocopier; and at least paper, pen, and black-board.

1.6.2 Use of cultural materials

Teaching culture implicitly leads to teaching cultural materials as one of its representative in language teaching and learning, in fact, for significant learning, use of cultural should be exploited to the maximum to play a role in students’ motivation to learn the target language and its language. Yang (2006: 970) has shown that Wallas “Identifies the function of literature which provides enjoyment, a way of thinking, imagination, and vicarious learning”.

1.6.2.1 Use of folklore

Folklore is one component of literature that will facilitate learning by involving students themselves in the teaching process where such subjects demands students voices,

their personal culture, and their acquired knowledge about that culture. Hence, student will enjoy the lectures, boost their morale, and they will be motivated by having fun (Cholson and Sump, 2005).

1.6.2.2 Role-play

Students prefer to be involved in the foreign culture via performing the subject of lessons due to their way of perceiving knowledge. Thus, they develop the ability to be critical thinkers rather than spoon feeders. Lee (1979: 147) defines role-play by “Role playing is an aspect of stimulation. A whole situation is stimulated in the classroom, and the participants adopt roles which belong to it”. In fact, role playing assists to bring language to life experiences; whereby students live the situation and sensitize the value of foreign behaviors or beliefs.

Strategies of teaching culture are tremendous and varied depending on the teaching subjects; whereby the goal of utilizing them is to deliver a comprehensible input. Generally speaking, we can deduce that the authentic materials are nowadays used in any field of study; however, the teaching of culture, within foreign language teaching, is different than teaching anything else.

Conclusion

Out of this chapter, we conclude that it is not an easy matter to find a fixed definition to culture because of its flexibility. Anthropology and sociology similarly are both concerned with defining culture but differ in the way they viewed it. Anthropology studies cultural characteristics of societies; whereas, sociology views culture from the perspective of groups and institutions in a society. Beside, teaching culture assist to develop intercultural competence, in which students understand and respect the foreign community.

In addition, culture and language are interrelated; wherein the former affects the latter in its two forms. Furthermore, in language teaching learning culture is discovered to be the key factor for teaching FL, without it the process of teaching/learning does not happen. It is found that teaching culture is not a simple task as it seems but a difficult one. It demands certain commitment of the two pillars students and teachers. In addition, teaching culture demands coping with the development of the materials to be taught with taking into consideration the cultural materials of the foreign language.

Chapter Two

An Over View on Reading Comprehension

Introduction

Reading is considered as one pillar out of the four skills in learning a FL and/or SL. Along with listening, they construct the category of receptive skills; whereby, people attempt to infer the exact meanings of the written discourse. Two major factors of attention and understanding play a significant role in reaching the appropriate comprehension of the text; taking into account that reading comprehension is a complicated cognitive process. This chapter presents the definition of reading skill and its types; the definition of reading comprehension and theories based on meta-cognition, the relation of reading comprehension and prior knowledge. Furthermore, levels, principle, strategies, and the stages (pre-while-post) of reading comprehension. Then, factors affecting reading comprehension: (text variable, reader, purpose of reading).

2.1. Defining reading

To provide a straightforward definition for the concept reading is a hard task; though, it is said that people used to read across cultures and civilizations thousands of years ago when symbols and pictograms were discovered.

Grabe and Stoller (2013: 3) state that “Reading is the ability to draw meanings from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately”. Based on this definition, we recognize that the reader’s main objective is to be capable to decipher the coded messages in the text, and to deduce what the writer exactly intends. Pang et.al (2003:6) states that

“Reading is about understanding written texts. It is complex activity that involves two related processes: word recognition and comprehension”.

The word recognition refers to the ability of the reader to perceive the written symbols and how do they correspond to his own spoken language; whereas, comprehension refers to the process of sanitizing the written words, sentences, and the whole text. Additionally, McShane (2005) assumes that reading is a complex system in which meaning is derived from print text that entails numerous components. The following figure (2.1) illustrates what reading as a skill is a tie of word meaning and language comprehension; whereby reading takes place.

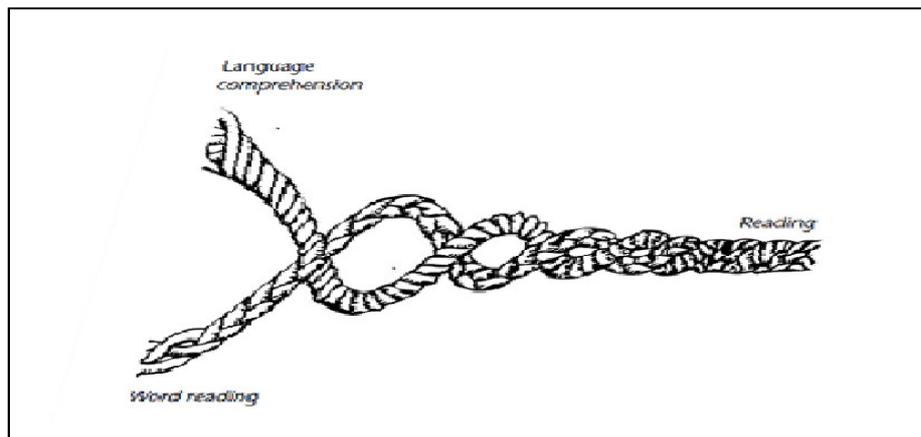


Figure 2.1 Skilled reading “Adapted from Scarborough, 2001” by J. Oakhill et.al, 2015, Understanding and teaching reading comprehension.

Overall, reading is a complex process. It is about comprehending written texts; wherein, meanings do not appear explicitly to readers. Besides, reading is a combination of words meaning and language comprehension. Hence, reading is the window to the world; whereby, students acquire knowledge

2.1.1 Types of reading

The reading task varies depending on the purpose of reading in which people read for many reasons; for educational purposes; for personal enjoyment; or for acquiring knowledge; hence, the types of reading differ. Reading types are the ones that equates to the different behaviors readers build while reading, in which they are supposed to be aware of when and how to use them especially for students under examination when time is limited.

2.1.1.1 Extensive reading

Reading for fluency, or extensive reading is private in which in one pace suits the individual's ability, taste, and mood. It means that students can read books or novels in long or short terms as they desire. They comprehend the general ideas of the book the whole idea where they only are experiencing the reading by itself. (Morris, 1972).

Hedge (2003: 218) asserts that "Extensive reading differs with the learner's motivation and school resources". He also added that it enables students to achieve their independency by reading either in school or at home. Based on this, Hedge illustrates extensive reading as the students' freedom to select what they favor to read; leaving no room for imposition but rather an independent selection according to their level of literacy.

Timothy (1998) illustrates the role of extensive reading carefully centering many aspects of language:

- Extensive reading can provide comprehensible input
- It can enhance learner' general language competence
- It can increase the students' exposure to the language.
- It can increase knowledge of vocabulary.

- It can lead to improvement in writing.
- It can motivate students to read.
- It can consolidate previously learned language.
- It helps to build confidence with extended texts.
- It encourages the exploitation of textual redundancy.
- It facilitates the development of prediction skills.

2.1.1.2. Intensive reading

Unlike extensive reading, intensive reading is what Nuttal (1982:23) mentions that it demands “The students to pay great attention to the text. The aim of the intensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the text.” Meaning that, intensive reading is the complete and the detailed analysis of the text; besides, it is the concentrated and less relaxed.

Additionally, Morris (1972) identifies intensive reading as the essentially reading in-depth. It is usually done in class, with each pupil having the same text. Revealing that intensive reading involve the teacher as a player of significant role of assisting students whenever they encounter obstacles. This is what MacLeod (n.d) asserted that intensive reading is “Narrowing reading” and summarizes all what have been said in these characteristics.

- Usually classroom based.
- Reader is intensely involved in looking inside the text.
- Students focus on linguistic or semantic details of a reading.
- Students focus on surface structure details such as grammar and discourse markers.
- Students identify key vocabulary.
- Students may draw pictures to aid them (such as in problem solving).

- Texts are read carefully and thoroughly, again and again.
- Aim is to build more language knowledge rather than simply practice the skill of reading.
- Seen more commonly than extensive reading in classrooms.

Thus, according to the importance of distinguishing between the two types Singh (2006: 233) represents the difference due to the aim “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”. While, intensive reading is restricted to class; wherein most of the readings occur.

2.2. Reading comprehension

Firstly, before identifying reading comprehension as a whole; we should understand comprehension in isolation, in order to grasp appropriately the definition of reading comprehension.

2.2.1 Defining comprehension

The crystal clear meaning accredited to comprehension is pointed out by McShane (2005) as simply understanding what we read. Going beyond, (Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980, cited in Gridi, 2006) view comprehension as the result of a balanced interplay between, on the one hand, the data brought in by the text in a script form and, on the other hand, data provided by the readers background knowledge. This is what Snow (2002) displays that comprehension entails three elements interacting in a socio-cultural context, and constituting different external factors of how reading and readers are viewed:

- The reader who is doing the comprehending.
- The text that is to be comprehended.

- The activity in which comprehension is a part.

Comprehension is identified by Ruddell (1994) as a process in which the reader constructs meaning while, or after, interacting with the text. It occurs through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in text, the stance he or she takes in relationship to the text, and immediate, remembered or anticipated social interactions and communication.

2.2.2 Defining reading comprehension

On one hand, to read and to comprehend sounds simple, reading comprehension is defined by Shakeri (2012: 21) as “Traditionally refers to a reader’s complete understanding or full grasp of meaning in a text”. In fact reading comprehension is as what Wray (2004) views it as supplying a good deal of the meaning on the page with minimum misunderstanding. Based on this view, we understand that reading comprehension is about achieving the aim of understanding the whole idea of the text.

On the other hand, Oakhil et al. (2015: 1) assert that “Reading comprehension is on at least word reading” in which readers cannot understand a whole text if they cannot decode the words in that text. Whereby, we recognize that at the basis, reading comprehension is about the relation between the reader and the words in the printed text. In the way, if they meet each other the process of comprehension can be, without any doubt, successful.

Additionally, Snow (2002: 11) sees reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously of both extracting and constituting meaning via the interaction and the involvement with the written language; wherein the two used words of extracting and constituting emphasize the significance, and the insufficiency of the text as being a determinant of reading comprehension.

To sum, reading entails comprehension which is an interaction between texts and readers. Reading comprehension is a complex process of understanding written texts; to read is all about comprehending. Thus to define reading comprehension, it first needs to identify comprehension.

2.3. Theories of reading based on meta-cognition

Since reading comprehension is a mental process; scholars in EFL/ESL learning generated many theoretical frameworks of reading as practice; wherein, meta-cognition is one of these different theories.

2.3.1 Defining meta-cognition

Meta-cognition is identified by *The Free Encyclopedia* by ‘cognition about cognition’, or ‘thinking about thinking’, or ‘knowing about knowing’ as if it is a riddle. For a more scientific identification, Flavell (1976: 232) declares that it is the “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and outcomes or anything related to them”. It takes many forms but generally, it is composed of two elements: knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition.

2.3.1.1 Knowledge about cognition

The knowledge of cognition refers to the individuals’ knowledge about their own cognition or about cognition in general. Usually, it includes three different factors: declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. (Brown 1987; Jacobs and Paris 1987, cited in Scraw and Moshman, 1995).

Additionally, Iwai (2011) illustrates those factors in reading by introducing that the declarative knowledge indicates the learner's understanding about what reading strategies are; then, the procedural knowledge requires how actually to use the reading strategies in addition to understanding what they are. Whereas, conditional knowledge goes further to include: when, where, and why students use particular strategies and assessment of their effectiveness.

2.3.1.2 Regulation of cognition

Barker and Brown (1984, cited in Iwai, 2011) assume that regulation of cognition in the field of reading includes planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies. Whereby, each of these elements represents the stages of reading; planning goes for the pre-reading stage of activating the reader's prior knowledge; monitoring illustrates the while-reading of vocabulary comprehension; and evaluating strategies represents the after-reading of grasping the author's idea.

Theories of meta-cognition in reading comprehension reveal that there is a relationship between reading comprehension and prior knowledge which needs to be extracted and explained thoroughly.

2.4. Reading comprehension and prior Knowledge activation

Scholars and researchers use the terms background knowledge, prior knowledge activation, or schematic knowledge interchangeably referring to the individual's accumulated stored information, beliefs, thoughts and assumptions whether they are academic or they are an everyday experiences.

Furthermore, McCullough (2008) declares that prior knowledge is an essential tool in reader's quest to comprehend meaning. Usually, students bring social and cultural

knowledge that are not reflected in the reading material. Besides, Labyod (2008) assumes that both, the presence and the activation of prior knowledge are essential to assist in enhancing reading comprehension; the presence of the knowledge involves the interaction of both the linguistic and the socio-cultural knowledge.

2.5. Levels of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension process occurs gradually in three main systematic levels through which the reader understands the meaning. Usually, any reader read the looks at the written material and read its content, then, s/he tries to comprehend the text, and finally s/he tries to be critical and discover the right meaning.

First, reading the lines is considered to be the first level referring to the linguistic comprehension in which a triangulation of grammar, meaning, and comprehension are interrelated. In English, for instance there is a difference between the lexical item apple and boy and sentences differ according to their type. This type of reading is comparing to the other levels seems simple.

Second, reading between the lines is pointed out by Pollet (2011) as the act of making inference in the context of reading. We grasp that comprehension in this level is assisted by the context of reading; where readers involve alternative strategies to infer the meaning. Such as using information in the text to guess another one embedded within it.

Third, reading beyond the lines, doubtless, is the third level of reading comprehension whereby readers go beyond the surface meaning of the actual printed information. It is explained by Gellet (1981, cited in, Norozi, 2007) as a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text. It is often more important that one find in the text itself.

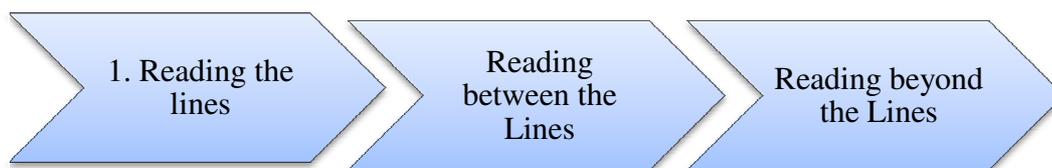


Figure 2.2 Levels of reading comprehension.

2.5.1. Principles of reading comprehension

Harmer (2007: 101) provides teachers with six significant principles that they should employ to increase the comprehensions opportunities.

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

Principle 2: Students need to respond to the content of a text (and explore their feelings about it).

Principle 3: Encourage students to respond to the content of a text.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor in reading.

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

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

To sum, since reading comprehension is a complex process, it occurs into different levels. Readers extract different types of meaning; those who are implicitly or explicitly indicated within the text. Hence, teachers of FL should assume, to some extent, responsibility of assisting their students in reading comprehension.

2.6. Reading comprehension strategies

Generally speaking, most of the EFL/ESL learners encounter some obstacles while reading texts in which they are always struggling to comprehend the content of the text. Various psychologists and researchers assume that this deficiency to read is due to the lack

of reading strategies. These strategies are significant in terms of making meaning clear and obtained thoroughly.

2.6.1 Defining reading comprehension strategies

Reading comprehension strategies are significant to transform the learner's deficiency in reading to efficiency resembling in the *U.S Department of Education* definition, "Comprehension strategies help readers enhance their understanding, overcome difficulties in comprehending text and compensate for weak or in perfect knowledge related to the text". Whereas, McNamara (2007: 6) asserts "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".

2.6.1.1 The dictionary artifact strategy

In defining reading comprehension strategy, McNamara (2007) introduces the dictionary artifact strategy, in the way, he assumes that the simple-minded strategy for purpose of illustrating meaning is that teachers would instruct students to locate the meaning of the difficult word they encounter while reading; in which they are not familiar with.

Furthermore, he illustrates it as "IF <word W is infrequent OR Reader does not know meaning of word W> THEN < (1) reader gets dictionary, (2) reader looks up word W, (3) reader rereads sentence with W, (reader rereads sentence with W, and then, (5) reader attempts to comprehend sentence as a whole". This definition means that there are two actions with the dictionary artifact strategy; the behavioral and the cognitive actions.

2.6.1.2. Skimming the text

Skimming is a quick reading of a text to get an overview and the main ideas. Snow (2002: 15) views skimming as “getting to the gist of the text”; whereby, a reader’s focus is to figure what the text is about. He/she may skip some parts of the text, but generally the beginning and the end of the text are the key leading to the text’s comprehension.

2.6.1.3. Scanning the text

Scanning is a “very highly-speed reading” Mikulecky and Jefferies (1996). When readers scan, they form a question in the mind in which reading is about answering that question not word-by-word reading. Instead, Orr (1992) describes thoroughly the process of scanning “While scanning your mind will have to be very alert and active. Your eyes act only as the collectors of information, your mind must do the registration and analyzing”.

2.6.1.4. Inferring meanings

Topics of texts sometimes may not be stated directly. Mikulkey and Jefferis (1996) assert that looking for clues and trying to guess what the passage is about; considered to be making inference. Inferring meaning includes sub-skills, Lems, Miller, and Soro (2002: 177) suggests the following sub-skills in inferring:

- Pronoun reference (knowing what a pronoun in sentence refers back).
- Forming hypothesis about what is coming next in the text.
- Guessing the meanings of unknown words or phrases.
- Forming impressions about character motives and behaviors across multiple locations in a text.
- Knowing the subtle connotations of words as they are used in particular context.

- Understanding cause effect relationship of events mentioned at different times in a text.
- Drawing upon background knowledge in order to fill in gaps within text.

Reading comprehension strategies are varied according to the difficulty of comprehending text. They are significant in terms of facilitating the extract of meaning from the text; thus, comprehension of the whole text is consequently reached.

2.7. Stages of Reading Comprehension

Stages of reading comprehension are identified carefully in Paris (1996, cited in Hudson, 2007: 108) presenting how do text processing stages play a role in promoting the reading comprehension.

Pre-reading	While- reading	Post reading
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.	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.	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.

Table 2.1 Reading comprehension stages (Adapted from Paris 1996) by T. Hudson (2007), Teaching second language reading.

From the table (2.1), Paris introduced three reading stages with details in the way he explains the pre-reading as the stage of the environmental, psychological, and intellectual interferences that may evolve also some strategies of comprehension.

Stoller (1994) illustrates the significance of this stage as utilization of tapping students' already existing knowledge, and/or providing students with new information that will help them comprehend the passage.

Whereas, the while-reading stage is the vehicle to the reading activity in which the reader takes longer time in order to carefully analyze the text. It is more about intellectual activity, including skimming, reading between lines, and it needs a little focus and patience from the reader; because this stage demands a total emersion in the text decoding the cues whether they are syntactic, discursive, or inferential.

Furthermore, the final stage would be the post- reading. It is all about text appreciation, check of pre-reading expectations, and a comparison of one's own knowledge and the one that is gained from the text. Stoller (1994 :5) simplify this stage by saying "Post-reading exercises...give students the option to review, synthesize, summarize, and/or react to what they have read".

2.8. Variables affecting reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is affected by many variables or factors that may hinder or assist the process of comprehension; this effect can be of both the presence and the absence of the so-called factors. They are related whether to the text, the reader and/or the purpose of reading. The following figure illustrates how do these factors are interrelated.

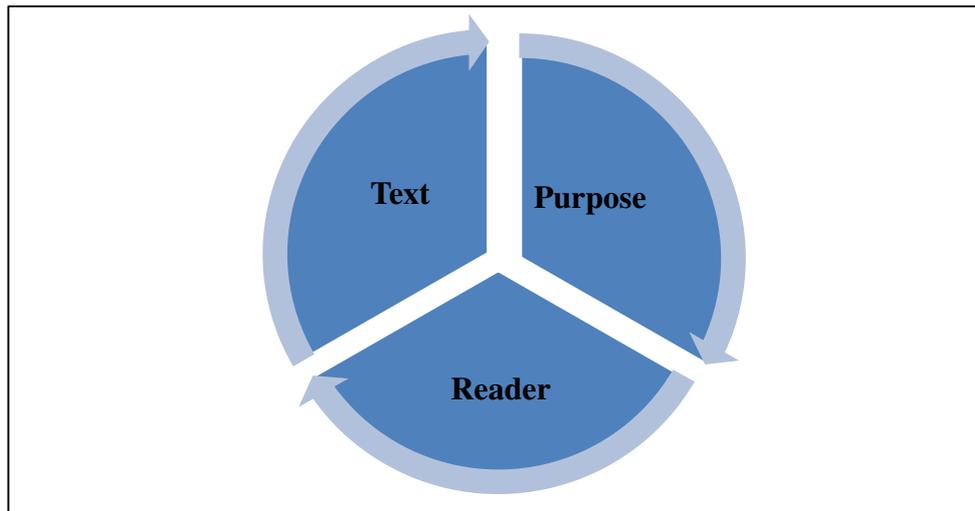


Figure 2.3 Factors of reading comprehension

2.8.1. Text variable

The text is assumed to be one of the major variables/factors that impact the reading comprehension; though, it is emarginated comparing to the other factors. Understanding the text is the purpose of every reader. It is defined by Davies (1994: 194) as “A coherent piece of writing exhibiting both structure and texture, assignable to a single author or collaborating authors, with clearly defined boundaries making the beginning and end of the writing”. Reading between the lines, we understand that each text has its own type according to the information it contains, consequently, vocabularies cope with them.

2.8.1.1 Type of the text

The type of the text is likely organized under two major categories; namely, the narrative and the expository text that any reader should be aware of. The narrative text is about, for instance, telling short stories, folktales, fables, legends, science fiction, or even in reporting biographies. Whereas, the expository text is about stating facts and the purpose is to inform, such as, text books, journals, magazines, and others.

2.8.1.2 Vocabulary Use

Lexis or vocabulary is significant aspect in the text that influences reading comprehension. Generally speaking, it is one of the obstacles FL readers encounter; they spontaneously find themselves consulting the dictionary to define this new lexis, in which they may find many definitions of the same word depending on different contexts. Thus, in some cases of reading for the general idea; readers skip the word he ignores attempting to predict the meaning from the context. Whereas, in other cases of intensive text analysis; the reader is supposed to possess an acceptable percentage of familiar words and a very little amount of unfamiliar ones. (Labyod, 2007).

2.8.2 Readers variable

Foreign language proficiency, or linguistic competence is significantly influencing reading comprehension. Notoriously, a reader possessing an important package of vocabulary, knowing the structure of sentences, and aware of the different cohesive devices is likely to encounter almost no difficulties. Thus, foreign language teachers are supposed to select texts based on their students' language proficiency; hence, many researchers assume that cognitive processes, the reader goes through such as inferring, are basically dependent at the first place on the readers awareness of the linguistics components.

2.8.3 Purpose of reading

Unconsciously, many of readers are setting their purpose behind such readings which differs from one reader to another; some would read for enjoyment others for specific purposes. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 5) states that “when we begin to read, we have a

number of initial decisions to make, and we usually make these decisions very quickly, almost unconsciously in most cases”. Grabe (2009: 7) provides six purposes of reading in the academic setting “Reading to evaluate, critique, and use information often also represents increased level of demand and more complex interaction of reading purposes”; whereas, reading for general comprehension is the most common one.

Conclusion

Out of this chapter, we recognize that reading is a very complex activity that demands comprehension, which is difficult to achieve because it concerns the human mind that goes through different stages and each stage involves various strategies; besides, dictionary plays a significant role in approaching comprehension. Reading comprehension is a systematic process of three different levels, meta-cognition plays a major role in reading and comprehension. The reader’s reading deficiency is due to many factors that may hinder or assist him; each text is dependent on its type and the intention of the author thus the type of the reading differs accordingly. There is an existing relation between prior knowledge and reading comprehension.

Chapter Three

The Role of Teaching Culture in Enhancing EFL Students' Reading Comprehension

Introduction

After reviewing the two chapters of literature, the immediate step is to shift smoothly to the field work. The current study attempts to investigate the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension. We have involved second year students and EFL teachers of the module of culture. We have obtained two research tools; whereby, this chapter will be divided accordingly. The first and the second section are about the analysis and the discussion of both students' and teachers' questionnaires; whereas, the third one is an interpretation of classroom observation which is used for more adequate results.

3.1. Teachers' questionnaire

The current questionnaire was delivered to teachers of Mohammad Khieder University of Biskra who only experienced the teaching of culture as a module in order to obtain valid results.

3.1.1 Aims of the questionnaire

It is crucial to take into consideration the teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards the significance of teaching culture in the enhancement of EFL students' reading comprehension. Besides, this questionnaire aims to investigate the extent of teachers' awareness of the teaching of culture.

3.1.2 Administration of questionnaire

The questionnaire was delivered to seven (7) teachers of the module of culture at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra because second year EFL students have only two teachers devoted to teach them culture. All teachers handed them back but we have obtained randomly six (6) out of the total sample.

3.1.3 Description of questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire consists of (19) questions classified under three sections, each section emphasizes on specific element. It is made up of both "closed" and "open closed" type of questions; the first type is about answering by Yes/No or ticking the appropriate answer (s) from a series of options. The second type of question requires the teachers to provide their justifications and perspectives.

Section one: Personal information

This section aims at gathering personal information about the sample, the first question seeks to collect information about the teachers' degree of education; whereas, the second question seeks to provide the years of teaching experience. It consists of two questions.

Section two: Teaching culture

In this section, teachers were requested to answer (7) different questions concerning what culture means, how to teach culture, and why it is included in learning a foreign language.

Section three: Reading comprehension

This section deals with the perception of teachers about the implications of reading comprehension in teaching culture, and how do their students' value towards reading. It contains (9) questions.

3.1.4 Analysis and discussion of teachers' questionnaire

Section One: Personal information

Q1: What is your degree of education?

Options	N	%
Master	0	/
Magister	4	80%
PhD	2	20%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.1 Teachers' educational degree.

As the table (3.1) indicates, the majority of teachers (4) in ratio of (80%) have the magister degree and only (2) have PhD; whereas, master degree is not found. Hence, we recognize that teachers of culture possess a high degree of literacy due to the importance of its teaching. Teachers at Mohamed KHIJEDER University are in terms

Q2: How long have you been teaching English?

Number of years	Teachers	%
5-7	2	33.34%
8-9	1	16.66%
10-12	2	33.3%
28	1	16.66%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.2. Teachers' years of experience

Teachers were asked to give their years of experience in teaching English. As it is indicated in the table (3.2), the years of experience starts from 5 years and above. The most experienced teacher among the six has (28) years of experience, two teachers have experience of (5-7) years and the same number goes for (10-12); instead, one teacher goes for both years (8-9) and (10-12). Years of experience in the teaching culture is significant in terms of the language proficiency, class room management.

Section Two: Teaching culture

Q3: Did your initial training as a teacher adequately prepared you for how to teach culture?

Option	N	%
Yes	3	50%
No	3	50%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.3 Teachers training about teaching culture.

The table (3.2) indicates that the percentage of teachers (50%) who selected the option Yes equates those who said No (50%); due to the difference of the branches teacher have selected during their studies.

Q4: If No, have you faced some problems? What are they?

Teachers who said they did not have an over view of how to teach culture during their initial training as a teacher faced problems in their first years as teachers of culture and they have indicated mostly the following two problems:

- The selection of the material.
- The presentation of the lesson.

Thus, the how and what to teach is very important, learning processes. Teachers should be to be careful of what to include in the lectures; only those materials that are related to the academic setting because many issues have to be taken into consideration.

Q5: Why does teaching/learning a foreign culture include teaching/learning its culture?

- a- Language and culture are interrelated.
- b- Cultural knowledge motivates students to learn the language.
- c- Cultural knowledge broadens the students’ knowledge.

Option	N	%
Yes	3	50%
No	3	50%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.4 Reasons of teaching culture.

One of the aims of the current dissertation is to set the relation between culture and language. Thus, teachers are asked about the reason behind the teaching of culture, in which the table (3.4) above indicates that the same number of teachers (2) in ratio of (33.33%) have selected each of these options: (a), (a+c), and (a+b+c). However, reading between the lines, we realize that the common option between all is (a); culture and language are interrelated. The teaching of culture is essential in teaching the language; since language is a carrier of culture. A teacher has commented that culture is an important part of language and that is considered as the fifth skill. In addition, we discover that culture is a major factor in raising students' motivation that adequately develops their amount of knowledge.

Q6: What does culture mean to you?

- a- A set of behavior, customs, and patterned way of living.
- b- System of thoughts, assumption, and norms.
- c- Literature and fine arts.

Option	N	%
a	1	16.66%
b	1	16.66%
b+c	1	16.68%
a+b+c	3	50%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.5 Teachers' views about culture.

The results displayed in table (3.5) illustrates that half of the teachers in ratio of (50%) view culture differently but the second half in ratio of (50%) agree that culture is all the options without isolation because it concerns the human kind, and each teacher view it from his own perspective. Hence, we realize that culture is difficult to identify; it involves all the aspects of life due to the richness of the cultural box of aspects.

Q7: What does teaching culture mean to you?

- a- Providing the students about the foreign facts and artifacts.
- b- Developing the students understanding base of the foreign culture (values, norms, and beliefs).
- c-Providing students with positive attitudes towards the foreign culture community.

Option	N	%
b	1	16.67%
a+b	1	16.67%
b+c	2	33.33%
a+b+c	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.6 Teachers’ views about teaching culture.

The table (3.6) displays that though teachers’ views about the teaching culture differed, they shared in common the selection of the option (b). Most teachers (5) out of (6) have chosen more than one option, only one teacher chooses (b). Indicating that although, the perspectives of teaching culture is dependent on the teacher himself, the aim is mostly

about developing the students understanding of values, norms, and beliefs, as far as, culture is included within foreign language teaching/learning processes.

Q8: Do you use didactical aids during teaching culture?

Option	N	%
Yes	5	83.33%
No	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.7 Teachers’ use of didactic aids.

The majority of teachers (5) in ratio of (83.33%) stated that they use the didactic aids while teaching culture because sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. The teacher is not the only sole provider of the knowledge; s/he integrates the authentic materials as a strategy to teach culture. In fact, they sum up thousands of words into pictures, gaining time of dull explanation.

Q9: If “Yes”, what are they?

- a- Pictures.
- b- Maps.
- c- Projectors.
- d- Videos.
- e- Internet.
- f- Tape records.

The following table indicates only five teachers out of six; who use didactic aids during teaching culture.

Option/ Teacher	a	b	c	d	e	f
Teacher 1	√		√			√
Teacher 2	√	√	√	√		
Teacher 3			√			
Teacher 4			√			
Teacher 5			√			

Table 3.8 Didactic aids used by teachers

Teachers' response to this question varies according to the assistance these didactic aids led to the teacher, but mostly inside the classroom teachers use projectors to display works presented via Power Point or even pictures and videos. So, didactic aids are beneficial and should be used while teaching culture.

Q10: Usually, do you select teaching materials on the basis of their:

a- Structural simplicity.

b- Cultural context.

c- Appeal to learners.

Option	N	%
a	1	16.67%
b	2	33.33%
a+c	3	50%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.9 Teachers' selection of the teaching material

The table above indicates that the selection of the material is a hard task for teachers because of the issues they have to take into consideration, from one side the learners' language proficiency, and from the other side, the cultural context. Five teachers out of the total sample have selected the cultural context whether alone or with another option. A teacher commented that the material is supposed to help the learner to view the language through cultural lenses, to assist his comprehension and build his critical thinking. But in the academic field teachers are supposed to select the material on the basis of its relevance to the syllabus.

Section Three: Reading Comprehension

Q11: Do you implement reading comprehension while teaching culture?

Option	N	%
Yes	4	66.67%
No	2	33..33%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.10 Teachers' implementation of reading comprehension

The responses to this question vary but the majority of teachers (4) in ratio of (66.67%) implement reading comprehension while teaching culture, because of its importance in immersing students in the lecture and practicing their comprehensible input drawn from the lecture.

- **If ‘Yes’, Why?**

Teachers who have selected the option ‘Yes’ stated the following reasons:

- Teaching culture can enhance students’ reading comprehension.
- The reading comprehension is very useful; reading with an implementation of the cultural concepts is very motivating to learners because they feel the role of language in carrying culture.
- Reading comprehension is a useful technique for preparing and warming up the students about the lecture.
- Reading comprehension increases motivation towards learning the foreign culture.

Q12: According to your experience to what extent do you think students value the importance of reading skill? Why?

Option	N	%
A lot	0	0%
A little	6	100%
Not at all	0	%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.11 Teachers’ perception of students’ value towards reading comprehension

Analyzing the table (3.11), it seems that (100%) of teachers agree that students value reading comprehension only a little and they are neglecting its significance. Teachers are

aware of their students' abilities, deficiencies, and value towards reading skill. Thus, teachers should be aware of the hard task they are given to provide solutions to this phenomenon such as encouraging students about reading as a skill in developing their language proficiency.

Q13: Do you agree that teaching culture can enhance students' reading comprehension?

Option	N	%
Strongly agree	4	66.67%
Agree	0	0%
Neutral	2	33.33%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.12 Teachers' perception about the significance of teaching culture in enhancing reading comprehension

The table above displays that the minority is neutral (33.33%), neither agrees nor disagree; however, the majority declares the contrast. Teachers in ratio of (66.67%) strongly agree that teaching culture can enhance students' reading comprehension. The current question is answered thoroughly in question number (7) and (14). Thus, teaching culture should be devoted more attention and care since it is interrelated to language and influences the skill of reading among the other skills.

Q14: Which of these factors you think can affect reading comprehension?

Option	N	%
Type of the text	2	33.33%
Vocabulary	4	66.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.13 Factors affecting reading comprehension

By diagnosing the results of this question concerning factors affecting reading comprehension, the majority of teachers in ratio of (66.67%) have opted vocabulary, whereas, the minority have opted the type of the text. We realize that: the significance of teaching culture is to introduce concepts related to the foreign culture so students became familiar with, and encounter no obstacles that may hinder their reading comprehension; instead, the type of text is introduced to them before entering to university.

Q15: Which of these stages you think it can assist students in reading comprehension?

- a- Pre-reading stage.
- b- While-reading stage.
- c- Post reading stag.

Option	a	b	c
Teacher 1	√	√	√
Teacher2	√	√	√
Teacher 3	√	√	√
Teacher 4	√	√	√
Teacher 5	√	√	√
Teacher 6	√	√	√

Table 3.14 Stages of reading comprehension

All teachers (100%) selected all the stages mentioned above without distinction. Each stage reaches its goal where the process of reading comprehension is systematically shifted; gathering all the information built in each stage in which students achieve a clear image about the text. Thus, we cannot assume that the comprehension is achieved fully through only one or two stages but all of them are compulsory.

Q16: How do you make your students read and comprehend culture related text?

- a- Ask them to extract general ideas.
- b- Ask them to extract specific ideas.
- c- Ask them to infer hidden meaning.

Option	a	b	c
Teacher 1	√		
Teacher 2	√		
Teacher 3		√	
Teacher 4	√	√	
Teacher 5	√	√	
Teacher 6		√	√

Table 3.15 Teachers' way of asking about the text

The table above shows that the percentage of asking about extracting general ideas (4) equates the percentage of asking about specific ideas (4); whereas, inferring hidden meanings is rare. The time devoted to reading in the academic setting is limited, thus, teachers' preference is to ask usually about general and specific ideas that are clearly indicated in the text; whereas, inferring hidden meanings is a complex mental process of relating things together .

Q17: Do your students integrate their cultural prior knowledge while discussing the text

Option	N	%
Yes	4	66.67%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.16 Students' integration of their cultural prior knowledge

Teachers, in this question, are asked if students use their cultural prior knowledge. The results illustrates that all teachers (100%) declares that they do use it. However, its use in some cases occurs most of times, in other cases it occurs time to time. Students build cultural knowledge, then, they store it in the brain but they recall or activate it whenever it is necessary. Thus, teaching culture provides students beside their linguistic knowledge another kind of knowledge that both of them go in parallel for paving the way to an appropriate comprehension.

Q18: Do you think implementing reading comprehension while teaching culture can assist students in further studies?

- If Yes, Why?

Option	N	%
Yes	6	100
No	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.17 Culture’s significance in further Studies

Finally, all teachers (100%) declare that teaching culture will assist students if they carry on their studies and gave different reasons such as:

- It gives to them a broaden idea of how language is related to culture. Thus, they may consider it as a project to work on while preparing their dissertations (Master, Doctorate)
- Through teaching culture student enhance their reading comprehension and adequately develop their writing skill, they can enhance another skill.
- It helps them to develop the reading skill.

- It enlarges their vocabulary and vocabulary use.
- It makes them understand texts and contexts either literary ones or scientific or historical ones.
- Students would improve themselves in various fields.
- Students will be assisted in other modules: discourse analysis, pragmatics...etc.
- Students became familiar of cultural concepts whereby they comprehend texts.

Q19: Do you like to add any comments or suggestions?

Teachers (50%) have given their comments and suggestions concerning this topic; wherein, most of them seek to improve the teaching of culture and reading comprehension.

Their comments and suggestions are introduced as follow:

- One of the teachers encourages us to us to accomplish this work and supported our topic, wishing good luck.
- The essence of teaching ‘Culture of the language’ alone cannot develop students cultural awareness, students need to explore other dimension of culture via reading literacy works and general culture books.
- The teaching of culture should be devoted more importance.
- Reading comprehension in teaching culture should be devoted more time i.e. it should be included in the syllabus of culture after each lesson in order to make students active and more involved in the course.

3.2. Students' questionnaire

The current questionnaire is delivered to second year EFL students at Mohammad KHIEDER University. The total number of students is (499) divided into 10 groups.

3.2.1. Piloting the questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was delivered first to fifteen (15) students as a piloting study to verify its reliability, and to check if they are straightforward and clear. There have been no problems; all the questions were understood by students.

3.2.2. Aims of the questionnaire

The current questionnaire is primarily designed to investigate students' perspectives about the teaching aspects of culture, and its role in the enhancement of EFL students' reading comprehension.

3.2.3. Administration of the questionnaire

We have opted (50) students out of the total sample of second year EFL students, in which we have administered it to (5) groups and we have made a selection of (10) students to answer from each group. All questionnaires were submitted and handed back in a friendly manner.

3.2.4. Description of the questionnaire

Students' questionnaire consists of three sections, it is made up of only closed-ended (16) questions; wherein, students are supposed to answer by Yes/No or by ticking the appropriate answer (s).

Section one: The first section seeks to gather data about culture; the why and the how it is taught and how students perceive it.

Section two: The second section seeks to provide data about the value of reading towards students and how do they read often.

Section Three: The third section investigates the students' perception towards the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension.

3.3.4. Analysis of students' questionnaire

Section one: Teaching culture

Q1: How do you perceive culture? (Understand)

- a- A set of beliefs, customs, patterned way of life.
- b- System of values, thoughts, assumptions.
- c- Literature and fine arts.

Options	Number	%
a	29	58%
b	11	22%
c	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.18 Students' perception about culture

Apparently, the results above display that almost (60%) of students perceive culture as beliefs, customs, and patterned way of life; whereas, (22%) perceive it as the values and ways of thinking; however, the minority has opted literature and fine arts. This various

answers are dependent on the students themselves; due to the complexity of culture in nature. Thus, we can realize that the beliefs of the foreign community affect both; their way of living and thinking that results into its varied production.

Q2: How often does your teacher use didactic aids (technology) while teaching culture?

Option	N	%
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	13	26%
Rare	15	30%
Never	22	44%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.19 Students' views about teachers' use of didactic aids

All the responses gathered from this question emphasize that generally speaking, almost half of the sample in ratio of (44%) declares that teachers never use didactic aids, while (30%) of students say that teachers' use of didactic aids is rare; however, students in ratio of (26%) opted that teachers use them but from time to time. This uneven ratio of teachers' use of didactic aids while teaching culture is due to the threatening atmosphere of the learning/teaching; a huge number of students taught in the amphitheatre once a week. Perhaps teachers use them but home while preparing the lesson for their students.

Q3: What do you think of including culture while learning the English language?

- a- Culture and language are interrelated.
- b- Culture is a key to understand to understand written texts.

c- Culture motivates you to learn the language.

Option	N	%
a	12	24%
b	10	20%
c	22	44%
a+b	3	6%
b+c	3	6%
Total	50	10%

Table 3.20 Students' perception of including culture in the teaching of English

The results displayed in the table above indicate that (24%) of students have responded to this question by selecting the interrelation culture and language. The majority of students (44%) believe that teaching of culture motivates them to learn the language; whereas, (20%) of students claim that culture is the key for them to understand written texts. A minority of students (6%) opted (a+b) and (b+c).

Out of this, we recognize that culture is significant in terms of being a part of the language, a key for comprehending texts, and surprisingly it plays another role of motivating the EFL students in raising their motivation towards learning the language.

Section two: Reading comprehension

Q4: Do you like to read in English?

Options	N	%
A lot	25	50%
A little	22	44%
Not at all	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.21 Students' appreciating of reading

This question aims to investigate students' appreciation of reading. It was a surprise to us that half of the sample (50%) do like reading a lot; breaking all the common assumptions that students do not appreciate a lot reading. While, the other half do like reading but a little; instead the minority (6%) dislike reading. The students' less appreciation and dislike towards reading is because of the complexity of reading as a skill, where comprehension is dependent on so many intervening factors.

Q5: How often do you read in English?

Option	N	%
Frequently	7	14%
Sometimes	38	76%
Rarely	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.22 Students' frequency of reading

This question was addressed to students to confirm that the students' previous answers were accomplished attentively. Though the previous data illustrates that half of the sample do like reading a lot, in this question students' response does not approve that. Three quarters (76%) of students read only time to time. While the second's and third's ratio of selections were approximate; (14%) indicates that they read frequently, and (10%) indicates that students read rarely. We realize that a raised degree of appreciation of reading does not, necessarily, mean that times of reading will be accordingly frequent. This is due to motivation and the eager to read.

Q6: How do you read often?

Option	N	%
Intensively	22	44%
Extensively	28	56%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.23 Students' types of reading

Analyzing the table (3.24) above, we realize that the data gathered about students' way of reading is approximate. (56%) of students declare that they read extensively for personal aims; whereas, (44%) read intensively for educational purposes. This data interpret that though students are in the field of education most of the time; the percentage of reading extensively is not accordingly related to it, students may read for personal enjoyment. Thus, we comprehend that the purpose of reading shapes the way of reading.

Q7: Do you have difficulties in comprehending a text?

Option	N	%
Yes	29	58%
No	21	42%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.24 Students' difficulties in comprehension

The results display that students (29) of the total sample in ratio of (58%) encounter difficulties in comprehension. These difficulties lead them gradually to generate feelings such as de-motivation and frustration; in the alignment of these generated feelings, students increasingly will afford and the time's reading will decrease and sometimes starts to dislike reading at all because of the difficulty to comprehend the texts' idea.

Q8: If yes, what are they?

Option	N	%
Lack of cultural background	15	51.72%
Lack of language proficiency.	13	44.82%
Total	29	100%

Table 3.25 Students' types of comprehension difficulties.

Students (29) in ratio of (58%) who have declared in the previous question, that they do encounter difficulties in comprehending. The total sample for this question would be (29) students have responded to the current question. In one hand, fifteen students in the ratio of (51.72%) assume that their difficulties in comprehension is due to the lack of cultural background in terms of understanding the author's way of thinking his

background. In the other hand, thirteen students (44.42%) reveal that treason behind their difficulties in comprehending texts is due to the lack of language proficiency.

Q9: Do you use dictionary in defining difficult concepts?

Option	N	%
Yes	50	100%
No	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.26 Students' use of dictionary

This question aims at investigating the use of dictionary as a strategy to lessen the percentage of reading comprehension difficulties. All the sample of fifty students in ratio of (100%) assert that they use dictionary as an assistant to clarify difficult concepts for them. The use of dictionary is the first thing that comes to every student's mind; it is strategic and common to all. The strategy of using dictionary clarifies the concepts, and adequately students approximate the context in which it is used in the text.

Q10: In which of these stages you can comprehend immediately the topic of the text?

Option	N	%
Pre-reading stage	6	12%
While-reading stage	34	68%
Post-reading stage	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.27 Studnets selection of reading comprehension stages

The table (3.27) shows that the majority of students (68%) comprehend immediately the topic while they are reading; they explore information, ideas, and intentions and relate things together bit by bit till they generate a comprehension about what the text is about. Whereas, (20%) of students comprehend after finishing reading the whole text due to their cognitive abilities where they do not possess the capacity to read and relate current ideas with previous ones. However, a minority of (12%) of students they comprehend the text maybe from the title, the type of the text, or the first few words. Thus, Reading comprehension is complex and achieved differently through different stages depending on the cognitive abilities.

Q11: Which of these factors affect your reading comprehension?

Option	N	%
Type of the text	11	22%
Vocabulary	38	76%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.28 Factors affecting students' reading comprehension

The results from this question display that only (22%) of students' reading comprehension is affected by the type of the text. In which they do not differentiate between the different types of text that facilitate for them, the intention of the author whether he is informing or narrating...etc. Whereas, three-quarters of the sample (38) students in ratio of (76%) assert that vocabulary is one of the main obstacles that hinder students from comprehending a text. The text is words' construction where language expresses itself (meta-language). Vocabulary means concept; their use is dependent on the author's cultural background, beliefs, and assumptions...etc.

Q12: How do you read sometimes?

Option	N	%
Reading the lines	28	56%
Reading between the lines	16	32%
Reading beyond the lines	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.39 Students' way of reading

In this question students are asked to determine their way of reading. The results gathered indicate that the majority of students (56%) read the lines to attain apparent ideas and information from the text; which is a common way of reading to all students. While, (32%) of students read between the lines; they try to relate things and generate clearer image; whereas, the minority (12%) read beyond the lines due to its difficulty. This variation of answers is because of the difficulty that reading between and beyond the text demands an amount of knowledge about the author: his cultural background, race, and way of thinking. It needs attention and following certain strategies of reading comprehension.

Section three: The role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension.

Q13: As you read a text related to culture, do you comprehend it easily?

Option	N	%
Yes	21	42%
No	29	58%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.30 Students' comprehension of cultural text

The data obtained from this question display that more than the half of sample (58%) when reading a text related to culture, students do not comprehend it because of its complexity; thus, students though they like to read but when it comes to practice they sometimes read. While (42%) of students they comprehend it because they are exposed to some extent to the foreign culture. Overall, students should be careful while reading and try to integrate their cultural prior knowledge, to simplify and relate things together for appropriate comprehension.

Q14: If yes, this is because of?

- a- You already have an idea about the foreign values, norms, beliefs...etc.
- b- You are already familiarized to cultural concepts.

Option	N	%
a	14	48.27%
b	15	51%
Total	29	100%

Table3.31 Reasons of comprehending a cultural text

This question is based on the previous one; it intends to detect the reason behind students' lack of comprehending a text related to culture. The sample is the number of students that previously answer by saying 'yes'; (14) students in ratio of (48.27%) declare that their comprehension is because they have a glance about the foreign values, norms, assumptions...etc. Whereas, (15) students in ratio of (51%) argue that because they are already familiarized with concepts they comprehend appropriately a cultural text.

Q15: Do you agree that culture is significant in reading enhancing reading comprehension?

Option	N	%
Strongly agree	9	18%
Agree	33	66%
Neutral	8	16%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.32 Students' perception towards significance of culture in enhancing reading comprehension

The table above intends to investigate how much EFL students do believe that culture is significant in the enhancement of their reading comprehension. A ratio of (66%) of students stated that they agree. Whereas, (18%) of students declare that they strongly agree that culture enhance their reading comprehension; however, (16%) of students were neutral, neither agree nor disagree, and there have been no disagreements. Those students who agree on the significance of culture in enhancing reading comprehension, have indicated this through responses to questions (8) and (11) (14) in which it provides them with cultural background, familiarizes them with vocabulary, and enlightens them about the foreign beliefs and values that affect their way of thinking and behaving. Consequently, it facilitates the comprehension of texts and authors' intentions.

Q16: Do you like to add any comments or suggestions?

Concerning our current topic, fifteen students out of fifty have added some comments and suggestions about the teaching of culture by itself and its relation to language and reading comprehension; their suggestions are as follow:

Firstly, students are not satisfied at all about the way of teaching culture. They think that teaching culture should be devoted more time and attention because it is significant for them. It improves their language proficiency, and it immerses them in language learning because culture and language are interrelated. Furthermore, it paves the way to understand not only about culture but also about different fields and subjects of education. They concern it as an interesting module.

Secondly, Students assume that teaching culture is precisely significant in enhancing their reading comprehension. They think that culture enlightens them about the foreign community way of living and thinking that affects their way of writing, and being taught to them facilitates texts comprehension, The authors intention, style and vocabulary use. They declare that culture adds to their vocabulary package, so whenever they read any text they will comprehend appropriately. Additionally, concerning culture and its role in enhancing students' reading comprehension; conclude by declaring that appropriate comprehension leads to build a cultural background and improve their linguistic competence.

Thirdly, they admit that the teaching of culture possess a role in improving their language proficiency and declaring that the teacher is not the sole provider of knowledge but they have to search by themselves. They should read in English about the foreign culture.

3.3. Classroom Observation

Introduction

For more validity of the results of teachers' and students' questionnaires, we have carried out classroom observation. It is one of the data gathering tools in qualitative methods; whereby a researcher in the learning/teaching setting attends one session or more to examine a natural occurring phenomenon and record results. Thus, it is beneficial for researchers to record valid and reliable findings. Where possibilities are to some extent lessened because the researcher lives the phenomenon; s/he obtains live data, not data gathered from other sources that may be doubtful.

3.3.1. Description of the classroom observation

The actual classroom observation is structured; wherein, in the items to be observed were prepared in advance. These items are interrelated to our topic of the research (the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension). The method of recording is real time observation; Wallas (1998) defines it "This means that the observation is observed and analyzed as the teaching/learning actually happens without using any electronic means". Via attending sessions of Culture of the Language module, using only a check list (see appendix 3) without the assistance of any electronic aids to record the findings.

The aim of this observation is to check first whether the teacher integrates reading comprehension while teaching culture, and then to discover its role in the enhancement of EFL students' reading comprehension. We had the opportunity to attend four (4) sessions during the academic year 2016 with second year EFL students at Mohamed KHIDER

University in the amphitheatre (B), all the sessions were lectures not TD's; comprising of one section scheduled each Wednesday from 14:50 to 16:20 h.

3.3.2. Analysis of classroom observation

Our analysis of the current observation will concern three sections accordingly to the check-list. The first section is about classroom environment; whereas, the second is about teachers' strategies of teaching culture. The last section is about reading comprehension. The sessions were about lectures not TDs; in which the first two lectures hold all the groups (1-10); while the other two ones hold only one section (groups, 1-5).

3.3.2.1 Section one: Classroom environment

Concerning the classroom environment, in all the four sessions we have attended on 15/03/2016, 05/04/2016, 19/04/2016, and 26/04/2016 with second year EFL students; we have observed that the session is occurring in a threatening environment. There were no didactic aids, no electricity, and uncomfortable setting. Thus, the teacher after 15 minutes lost control over her/his students; who became bored and felt asleep due to the darkness of the amphitheatre. Besides, due to the threatening environment and the scheduled time of the lecture (in the afternoon) students' presence started to decrease; in the first session they were around 180 students that became at the fourth session only 50.

3.3.2.2 Section two: Strategies of teaching culture

Firstly, concerning strategies of teaching culture, we have observed that the teacher to some extent sensitizes her/his role as teacher of culture not any other module. The teacher never used the black-board to write the difficult concepts while explaining; thus, students could not catch the difficult concept dictated by the teacher, some asked for

repetition and others started to ask each other. Hence, to some extent it created some noise and distraction of the lectures' flow.

Though culture is very important; s/he never used any kind of role plays or any authentic materials to simplify the lecture, and to add some enjoyment to keep the students in the lesson, the teacher was only lecturing speedily and students were taking notes. They had no handouts to follow; due to that, it was difficult to them to keep engaged in the lecture. Some students became lost and started to play on their mobiles or to speak with one another. Hence, besides to classroom environment, this was another reason to students' absence.

Secondly, we have observed that the selection of the material of teaching was based on valid sources; the content was about life and education in USA and Life in UK. How do the British and American people live and how do values, beliefs, and assumptions affect their way of thinking, and consequently way of behaving and living.

In the four sessions we have attended, the teacher always before starting her lessons; s/he warms up students about previous lesson and tries to make connection with the present one by stating the content of the present day to brain storm her students. Because most of the students do not revise their lectures, and the handouts were not available.

In all the sessions the teacher always directs questions to students after or during the explanation of the lesson; whereby, s/he aims to verify if the students have understood the lesson or not. In some times s/he ask questions about the Americans' and British way of thinking, or living; then, accordingly she assist students by guiding them by adding information to their existing ones or correcting their information. Beside s/he aims to set the degree of difficulty of the lesson; s/he always tries to make students compare and contrast between their culture and the foreign one because students comprehend better if they relate things to their own society.

Overall, the teacher'-students' interaction was positive, occurring in harmony; students respected their teacher and vice versa. Thus, we can say that students are to some extent aware of their role in the learning process; although, they did not do their assignments delivered to them previously.

3.3.2.3. Section three: Reading comprehension

Out of the four sessions we have attended, the teacher integrated reading comprehension only in two sessions; the second and the third ones involving two texts (see appendix 4-5).

3.3.2.3.1 Session two

In this session, on April 04, 2016, students have comprehended easily the topic of the text (see appendix 4) which is related to education, and consequently they have all suggested titles that suit text. They have proposed titles such as: Testing in US, Achievements Testing; which corresponded to the original title: Students' Achievement testing. Students were familiarized with all concepts since the text fits their level as intermediate students. They have understood concepts such as: legislations, Congress, school district, achievement...etc. However, one concept was ambiguous to students: rigor; in which they have used their dictionaries to seek the meaning. Thus, all the students have guessed the type of the text which was expository; it informs students about US students' achievement testing, and how the educational system works.

Students were asked specific questions concerning sub-ideas found in the text; they have all answered it by scanning the text to get directly the corresponded answer without referring to the whole text. Besides, they were asked to compare between the foreign students achievement testing and their own one; the response was positive students possessed a sufficient amount of prior knowledge about the foreign culture. They have

compared and contrasted the two educational systems; that the foreign one is a little bit complex rather than the one in their country.

3.3.2.3.2 Session three

In the session dated on April 19, 2016, the text was entitled “A Royal Family” (see appendix 4). Students have comprehended the text immediately from the title; they were asked to give another title that suits more the text; they thought that “Princess Diana” is more suitable. The text type was recognized by students easily, they responded by the type is narrative because the author narrates about Princess Diana.

Students have answered correctly the true/false questions, and concerning some questions about the princess they have commented that she is death now and some of the questions cannot be asked due to the fact of her death. Furthermore, they have given their background knowledge about the princess; that she used to live in the Kensington Palace but she died in a car accident. She left behind her two boys; these boys are called Prince William and Henry, and that the elder one is married to a middle class girl called Kate Middleton.

Students have understood the intention of the author that he is trying to explain how it is difficult to be a member of the royal family; in which a lot of daily life routines must be left behind and commit to complex responsibilities. A student has commented that though media each time on TV shows a nice image of the royal members, doing charities or visiting hospitals; the realty and gossip magazines provides another image.

Conclusion

From this classroom observation, that was a second tool to investigate the role of teaching culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension; the results circle the essence of culture in: familiarizing students with concepts that play major role in the comprehension of texts' topics. Besides, the teaching of culture entails the aspects of the foreign culture; which assist in extracting the author's intension and use of such vocabularies rather than the others. In addition, this observation revealed some deficiencies in the way of teaching culture and the importance devoted to it by educational organizers, despite its value in the teaching/learning foreign languages. It was effective observation in which it provided valid data obtained from real time occurring teaching/learning processes.

3.4. Findings and discussion of the results

Out of this chapter, in the basis of the upshots of the two used data gathering tools; questionnaire for both teachers and students, and classroom observation our hypothesis is confirmed. Teaching culture plays a role in the enhancement of EFL students' reading comprehension; the teaching of culture entails the teaching of its aspects.

Concerning question (6) and (1) in teachers' and students' questionnaire, we realize that culture is perceived differently. Students and teachers respond, mostly, that culture is viewed as system of behaviors, customs, patterned way of life; a system of norms, thoughts, and assumptions. We grasp that these are the aspects of culture that, in reading texts, assist in achieving appropriate comprehension.

In questions (12) in teachers' questionnaire and (5) in students' questionnaire; we have found that teachers are conscious of the degree of students' appreciation towards reading skill. Through question (4) delivered to students, there was a doubt about students'

answers concerning the question (5); if they like reading in English. Students in ratio of (76%) have stated that they read time to time; which proves that teachers' response is more valid rather than students'. Adequately, we find that students value reading skill only a little.

Out of the question (7) in teachers' questionnaire and (3) in students' questionnaire; we have found that culture and language are interrelated. Besides, culture plays another role in developing language proficiency; it motivates students to learn and seek for the mastery of language.

Furthermore, question (8) and (2) in teachers' and students' questionnaire, and classroom observation; we found that teaching culture is processing in a dull way. The use of didactic aids is most of the time absent; although, it paves the way to lecture' comprehension in which a picture is worth thousands of word.

Out of the two data gathering tools, we discover that reading comprehension is rarely integrated within the teaching of culture; despite the fact, of the role it plays. Thus, we can assume that culture and reading comprehension are affecting each other. The former affects the latter, and vice versa. In addition, culture is affecting the four skills of the language for instance, since it is nowadays, considered as the fifth skill.

Out of the upshots obtained via the data gathering tools, we found that purpose of reading decides the way of reading. Consequently, strategies of reading comprehension are varied complex mental processes; students go into different stages, in which each stage demands certain strategy. Furthermore, the use of dictionary is supposed to be as another strategy besides the known ones; since it assists in achieving the appropriate comprehension of texts.

Based on students' questionnaire, questions (6), (8), and (11), students face many difficulties in reading comprehension. Their responses display that most of the time the

difficulties are due to the lack of cultural background, and the factor of vocabulary; in knowledge about the foreign culture facilitates comprehension of texts. Thus, culture is significant as much as language proficiency in reading enhances comprehension.

In addition, the role of culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension is obtained from both classroom observation and questionnaire of teachers and students. It provides data about the foreign community aspects of life; whereby, in reading texts these aspects facilitate the comprehension of the authors' intension, the use of specific terms due to the authors' cultural background. Besides, it familiarizes students to different concepts and builds a cultural prior knowledge that they activate whenever they read due to the fact of a human mind cannot comprehend any new received information unless it already exists.

Conclusion

The current chapter verifies the validity of our hypothesis via two different research tools; we have found that there is a positive relationship between the two variables of our dissertation, culture and reading comprehension. The teaching of culture entails the teaching of its aspects, adequately; the role of teaching culture is to enhance EFL students' reading comprehension; moreover, the aims of our research are reached; the relation between culture and language is set; they are interrelated. The role of culture in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension is thoroughly interpreted; wherein culture brings a comprehensible data: aspect about the foreign community that builds students' prior knowledge as a package to activate, and the strategies of improving the foreign language reading comprehension are provided. Concerning the significance that the research is supposed to provide; we found that EFL students do not value the importance of reading skill as an instrument to learn the foreign language and achieve its mastery.

Recommendations and pedagogical implications

At the end of our research dissertation, the following recommendations are drawn from the analysis of the results obtained from the two research tools; classroom observation and questionnaires for both teachers and students. Thus, we provide recommendations to teachers, students, and further researchers.

Recommendation for teachers

1. Reading comprehension should be integrated within the syllabus of teaching culture
2. Accordingly to its significance, culture should be devoted more priority. Its scheduling within the foreign language teaching/learning should be changed in terms of temporal and physical setting.
3. Culture should be taught into TDs of individual groups in addition to lectures.
4. Teachers should be aware that culture is not like as any other module; it demands certain strategies such as the integration of authentic materials, role plays, and folklore to immerse students in the language learning.
5. Didactic aids within the teaching of culture should used for more illustration and providing a comprehensible input to students.

Recommendations for students

1. Students should be aware of their role as one pillar in the triangle of the learning process; they have to show full commitments.
2. Students should inform teachers of their needs and interests, and deficiency in learning about the foreign culture

3. Students should be aware that the teacher is not a sole provider of knowledge but they have to be autonomous learners and seek for the knowledge by themselves through reading and researching at home.
4. Students should value the importance of reading skill as an instrument in achieving language proficiency.
5. Students' frequency of reading should be increased; they have to read gradually different books about both culture and literacy.
6. Students should be aware of the purpose of reading shapes the way of reading

Recommendations for further researchers

For further researchers, out of the current research, future researchers can relate the variable of culture with motivation as a factor in developing EFL students' language proficiency.

General conclusion

Developing reading comprehension skill is one of the key factors to achieve foreign language proficiency. In most cases, students encounter many obstacles in comprehending texts; thus, their value towards reading gradually decreases. Our research objective is to provide solution to enhance foreign language students' reading comprehension; in which teaching culture is supposed to be a role player. Thus, we hypothesize that teaching culture may enhance EFL students' reading comprehension.

Out of the theoretical part consisted of two chapters; we have found that culture and reading comprehension are two complex concepts, neither to define nor to identify because they are related to human beings. Furthermore, culture is a carrier of language without it the processes of teaching/learning do not occur; hence, it is interrelated to its four skills. Reading and comprehension, instead, are two inseparable concepts; a successful reading means successful comprehension. Thus, reading comprehension is mental process where different stages and strategies systematically occur during the reading activity.

On the basis of the upshots provided from the practical part, via two different data gathering tools; we collected evidences that confirmed our hypothesis. Teaching culture play a role in enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension; it familiarizes them with concepts, and facilitates the comprehension of the author's intentions and builds background knowledge that may assist in future readings. In addition, we have fulfilled our aims and significance of our study in which we endeavored to provide the extent of EFL students' value towards reading comprehension.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire to express your thoughts about the importance of teaching culture on EFL students' reading comprehension.

Please, mark (✓) in the appropriate boxes and make full answers whenever necessary.

Your contribution is kept anonymous and your contribution will be a great help.

Student: Mouna Yahia

Section One: Personal information

1- What is your degree of education?

a. Master

b. Magister

c. PhD

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

Section Two: Teaching culture

3-Did your initial training as a teacher adequately prepared you for teaching about culture?

a- Yes

b- No

4- If no, have you faced some problems? What are they?

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

5-Why does teaching/learning a foreign language includes learning/teaching its culture?

a- Language and culture are interrelated.

b- Cultural knowledge motivates students to learn the language.

c- Cultural knowledge broadens the students' knowledge.

.....
.....

6- What does culture mean to you?

a- A set of behaviors, customs, patterned way of living.

b- System of thoughts, assumptions, values, and norms.

c- Literature and fine arts.

7- What does teaching culture mean to you?

a- Providing students about the foreign culture facts and artifacts.

b- Developing the students understanding base of foreign culture (values, norms, beliefs).

c- Provide students with positive attitudes towards the foreign culture community.

8- Do you use aids while teaching culture?

a- Yes

b- No

9- If "Yes" what are they?

a- Pictures.

d- Videos.

b- Maps.

e- Internet.

c- Projectors.

f- Tape recorders.

10- Usually, do you select teaching materials on the basis of their:

a- Structural simplicity.

b- Cultural context.

c- Appeal to learners.

Section Three: Reading Comprehension

11- Do you implement reading comprehension while teaching culture?

a-Yes b-No

If yes why?.....
.....
.....

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

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

13- Do you agree that teaching culture can enhance students reading comprehension?

a- Strongly agree b- agree c- Neutral

e-Disagree d- Strongly disagree

14-Which of these factors you think it can facilitate reaching appropriate reading comprehension?

a-Type of the text b-Vocabulary

15-Which of these stages you think it can assist students in reading comprehension?

a- Pre-reading phase.

b- While reading phase.

c- Post reading phase.

16-How do you make your students read and comprehend cultural text?

a-Ask them to extract general ideas.

b- Ask them infer hidden meaning.

c-Ask them to extract specific ideas.

17- Do your students integrate their cultural prior knowledge while discussing a text?

a- Yes. b- No. c- Sometimes.

-If yes, say why?
.....

.....
18- Do you think implementing reading comprehension while teaching culture can assist students in further studies?

a- Yes b- No

If yes, Why?
.....
.....

19- Do you like to add any suggestions?

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

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 2

Students' questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is a data gathering tool for masters' thesis, it intends to provide a comprehensive data about EFL students' attitudes towards the role of teaching culture in enhancing their reading comprehension. Please tick the write answer in the box or if necessary write a full statement. Your answers will be a great help. Thank you for your collaboration.

Student: Mouna YAHIA

Section One: Teaching culture

1- How do you perceive culture? (Understand)

a- A set of beliefs, customs, patterned ways of life.

b- A system of value, thoughts, assumptions.

c- Literature and fine arts.

2. How often does your teacher use didactic aids (technology) while teaching culture?

a- Always Sometimes Rare Never

3. What do you think of including culture while learning the English language?

a- Culture and language are interrelated.

b- Culture is the key to understand written texts.

c- Culture motivates you to learn the language.

Section two: Reading comprehension

4-Do you like to read in English?

a-Yes b-No

14.If yes, this is because of?

a- You already have an idea about the foreign values, norms, beliefs...etc

b- You are already familiarized to concepts related to culture.

15.Do you agree that culture is significant in reading comprehension?

a-strongly agree b- Agree c- Neutral

d-Strongly disagree e- Disagree

16- Do you like to add any suggestions or comments?

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

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 3

Classroom observation checklist

Teacher:

Date:

Observer:

Time:

Class observed:

Department:

Sections	Items	Observed	Not observed
1. Classroom Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical setting. 2. Temporal setting. 3. Didactic aids. 		
2. Strategies of teaching culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher brain storms students. 2. Teacher introduces the day's content of the lecture. 3. Teacher selects a reliable teaching material. 4. Teacher is aware of being a tutor of culture. 5. Teacher motivates his/ her students. 6. Teacher directs questions. 7. Teacher-student positive relationship. 8. Teacher use of role plays as a strategy for delivering more comprehensible input 		

3. Reading comprehension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students comprehend the topic of the text. 2. Students comprehend vocabularies. 3. Students se their prior knowledge to comprehend present one. 4. Students extract general idea. 5. Students extract specific ideas. 6. Students se dictionary to explain difficult words. 7. Students se of reading comprehension strategies. 8. Students read silently. 9. Students read intensively. 		
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Mouna YAHIA

Appendix 4

Text of classroom observation 1

Students Achievements Testing

States administer tests on a regular basis to assess student performance at designated grade levels. One of the key factors determining the relevance of a state's testing regimen is its alignment with the state's academic content and achievement standards. Achieving this alignment is often challenging due to the time and expense required. Some states use tests purchased from a commercial test developer, while others develop original test instruments that are specifically designed to measure state standards. Another challenge is how to define and ensure test quality. For example, states must determine whether tests will primarily contain open-ended essay questions and mathematical problems, or multiple-choice questions.

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires states to test all students in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8 and at least once in high school. Science assessments will be required at least once during grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12 starting in the 2007–08 school year. Each state, school district and school is expected to make adequate yearly progress toward meeting state standards in these subject areas and to measure this progress for all students. Special focus is placed on the progress of students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities or have limited English proficiency.

The results of state-level tests do not generally affect an individual student's grades or promotion but instead are used to assess the educational quality in a school, a district or the entire state. In many communities, the media report the results of districts' or schools' performance on standardized measures.

National-level student assessment takes place through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which includes a random sample of U.S. schools and is designed to provide the public with information on the nation's progress in a number of subjects. NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools; instead, it offers results regarding subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences and school environment for populations of students (e.g., fourth-graders) and subgroups of those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students).

In 1988, the Congress passed legislation enabling NAEP to assess student performance also at the state level, and in 2002, *NCLB* added a requirement for state-level NAEP testing as a benchmark for the rigor of state assessment systems. Many schools also participate in international assessments to measure how well U.S. students perform in comparison to students in other countries.

U.S. Department of Education, International Affairs Staff, *Education in the United States: A brief overview*, Washington, D.C., 2005. Retrieved from

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/international/edus/index.html>

Questions about the text

1. What is the text about?
2. What is the title of the text?
3. What is the type of the text?
4. What do 'district', 'legislation', and 'regor' mean?
5. Due to what achieving alignment is often challenging?
6. What is the federal No Child Left Behind about?
7. How do the Algerian tests differ from the U.S texts?
8. How do the results of state-level tests generally affect individual students' grade or promotion?

Appendix 5

Text of classroom observation 2

18

Unit 2

4 A royal life

Task 1

How much do you know about Princess Diana? Do you think these statements are true or false?

- | | TRUE | FALSE | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diana likes to drive her own car. |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | She has never had a job. |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | She now lives in Buckingham Palace. |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | She has two daughters. |

Task 2

Read the text below about Princess Diana. Then do the task below.



From the moment the world set eyes on Diana, she has been the focus of international attention. Her beauty, her aristocratic background and her role as the future Queen of England have perhaps given the Royal Family a new dimension.

Her father has described her as 'the girl who has everything'. Yet, in becoming one of the most privileged people in the world, Diana gave up many everyday rights. Although legally she can still vote, she probably never will again. In public she cannot express her real feelings and her private life is often interrupted by the press. In other words, she has very little 'freedom'.

The Princess's engagements are decided six months in advance. A day's programme can begin at 09.30am and finish at 3pm. Sometimes she goes with Prince Charles, sometimes alone. When she sits down at her desk she may well find hundreds of requests for autographed pictures or requests to have hospitals named after her. The popularity of the Royals is increased by the fact that they are seen to be busy, but couldn't this be a case of 'pulling the Royal wool over our eyes'?

Which paragraph tells us about:

- The disadvantages of being a princess?
- Diana's attraction?
- Diana's work?

Task 3

- Does the text give a completely positive picture of the Royal Family?
- Which sentence is a little critical?
- What is the writer trying to suggest with the expression 'pulling the Royal wool over our eyes'?

Below are phrases from the text. Explain what they mean in your own words.

- 1 Diana has 'given the Royal Family a new dimension'.
(paragraph 1)
- 2 'Although legally she can still vote, she probably never will again.'
(paragraph 2)
- 3 'Diana gave up many everyday rights.' (paragraph 2)
- 4 '... she has very little "freedom".' (paragraph 2)
- 5 The Royals 'are seen to be busy'. (paragraph 3)

What is the type of text?

What would you suggest as another title?

تعد القراءة واحدة من أهم المهارات لتعلم اللغات و إتقانها، و البحث الراهن عبارة عن دراسة عميقة لأهمية إدراج الثقافة ضمن تعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تعزيز و تفعيل قدرة الطلبة على استيعاب النصوص وفهمها . يقوم هذا البحث على فرضيتي تعليم الثقافة وتعليم عناصرها ودورها في تعزيز قدرة استيعاب النصوص، كوسيلة للبحث تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي من خلال توزيع استبيانين لأساتذة الثقافة و لطلبة السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية ، بالإضافة إلى الملاحظة الصفية بحضور مقياس الثقافة لقسم اللغات الأجنبية فرع اللغة الانجليزية. كخلاصة للبحث توصلنا إلى أن لتعليم الثقافة دور فعال في استيعاب النصوص وهو ما يثبت صحة فرضياتنا.