

Difficulties in reading Comprehension in El-Obeid City Secondary Schools - North Kordofan (Case study of Ismail El-Wali Secondary School)(2021-2023)

Dr. Mujtaba Mohamed Sallam Ahmed

A. Salah Ismail Albee Hassan

Abstract:

This research dealt with the Difficulties of reading comprehension at secondary school (A case Study at Ismael Alwali Secondary School). The study aimed to identify the difficulties of reading comprehension that face high secondary school and introduce the seven cognitive strategies to activating inferring monitoring, questioning, a visualizing and organizing to strengthen their skills the descriptive and analytical approaches were followed. Random sampling method was used where a sample size of 50 English language teachers were selected from 80 teachers in Sheckan Locality in El-Obeid city. A questionnaire was distributed to the teachers. The data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science programme SPSS. The results showed that 80 % of the respondents stated that setting reading goals can help students to develop their reading vocabulary. There were 86 % of the respondents stated that reading comprehension is an important step in learning reading skills. It was found that 86% of the respondents agreed that, teachers should introduce the seven cognitive strategies of activating inferring monitoring, questioning, a visualizing and organizing. There were 80 % of the respondents agreed that comprehension or extracting meaning from what you read is the ultimate goal of reading. . There were 100 % of the respondents stated teachers should solve the difficulties that face the students in high classes .It was found that 100% of the respondents agreed that teachers should follow the methods and the strategies of reading comprehension skills.. It is concluded students at high secondary school face difficulties in reading comprehension due to the lack of knowing the strategies of reading comprehension practice it order to develop the skills. It is recommended that Future studies perspectives on students' reading ability problems and instructional methods implemented to teach the reading comprehension.

Key terms: Reading comprehension - language skills – instructional methods – language intelligibility.

صعوبات الفهم القرائي في مدارس الابيض الثانوية - شمال كردفان (دراسة حالة بمدرسة إسماعيل الولي الثانوية) (2021 - 2023)

د. مجتبي محمد سلام احمد - استاذ مساعد - قسم اللغة الانجليزية - كلية التربية جامعة كردفان
أ. صالح اسماعيل البيه - طالب ماجستير - كلية الدراسات العليا - جامعة كردفان

المستخلص:

تناولت هذه الدراسة صعوبات الفهم القرائي في المرحلة الثانوية (دراسة حالة بمدرسة إسماعيل الولي الثانوية). هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على صعوبات الفهم القرائي التي تواجه طلاب المرحلة الثانوية، وتقديم استراتيجيات التفكير السباعي لتفعيل الاستنتاج والمراقبة وطرح الأسئلة والتصوير الذهني والتنظيم من أجل تقوية مهاراتهم. تم اتباع المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي. وتم استخدام طريقة العينة العشوائية، حيث تم اختيار عينة حجمها 50 معلماً للغة الإنجليزية من أصل 80 معلماً بمحلية شيكان بمدينة الأبيض. ووزعت استبانة على المعلمين. تم تحليل البيانات بواسطة برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية SPSS. أظهرت النتائج أن 80% من المبحوثين أفادوا بأن وضع أهداف للقراءة يمكن أن يساعد الطلاب على تنمية مفرداتهم القرائية. وذكر 86% من المبحوثين أن الفهم القرائي خطوة مهمة في تعلم مهارات القراءة، ووجد أن 86% من المبحوثين اتفقوا على أن على المعلمين تقديم استراتيجيات التفكير السباعي التي تشمل تفعيل الاستنتاج والمراقبة وطرح الأسئلة والتصوير الذهني والتنظيم. وهناك 80% من المبحوثين اتفقوا على أن الفهم أو استخراج المعنى مما يقرأ هو الهدف النهائي من القراءة. كما ذكر 100% من المبحوثين أن على المعلمين حل الصعوبات التي تواجه الطلاب في الصفوف العليا. ووجد أن 100% من المبحوثين اتفقوا على أن على المعلمين اتباع الأساليب والاستراتيجيات الخاصة بمهارات الفهم القرائي. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن طلاب المرحلة الثانوية يواجهون صعوبات في الفهم القرائي بسبب عدم معرفتهم باستراتيجيات الفهم القرائي وعدم ممارستها لتطوير المهارات. أوصت الدراسة بإجراء بحوث مستقبلية لاستكشاف وجهات نظر المعلمين حول مشكلات القدرة القرائية لدى الطلاب وطرق التدريس المطبقة لتعليم الفهم القرائي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفهم القرائي، مهارات اللغة، أساليب التدريس، وضوح اللغة.

1. Introduction

This research is about difficulties of reading comprehension at secondary level. Reading comprehension is necessary skill throughout schooling and vital components of the successful transition to Adult responsibilities. It is the complex outcome of the process of constructing meaning from print. Reading comprehension can be conceptualized as an interactive process requiring the dynamic combination of reader's background knowledge with the information decoded from text. Successful comprehension requires students to coordinate many complex skills and actively participate in their own learning. success in comprehension influenced by how interesting and relevant they find the text they are reading. Their competencies recognizing, decoding

and pronouncing words fluently and accurately, their awareness of different purposes associated with reading, and facility with comprehension monitoring strategies. (Gerstein al, 2001; 1999. Reading is one of the four skills students should learn and care of. At secondary level, A F L students have always many different reading materials to read, such as: text books, articles, stories and soon.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main targets of this study are:

- 1.To find the difficulties of reading comprehension
- 2.To clarify the suitable methods of teaching reading comprehension
- 3.To help teachers to have many training in teaching English language.

3. Literature Review

Reading comprehension is widely regarded as one of the core components of literacy development, as it enables learners not only to decode written symbols but also to construct meaning, evaluate information, and engage in higher-order thinking. Researchers emphasize that comprehension represents a complex cognitive process involving the interaction between the reader, the text, and contextual background knowledge. As noted by Grebe W. (2009:45), reading comprehension is “a purposeful, interactive process that leads to understanding written discourse.” This positioning highlights that comprehension does not occur passively; rather, it demands mental effort, linguistic awareness, and the use of specific strategies that support meaning-making. One of the fundamental perspectives in the field asserts that reading involves two major dimensions: lower-level processes, such as word recognition and decoding, and higher-level processes, such as inference generation, summarization, and evaluation. According to Smith F. (2004:78), effective comprehension requires fluent coordination between these two dimensions because “if decoding consumes excessive cognitive load, comprehension becomes severely limited.” In many educational contexts, students struggle because they have not automatized the lower-level processes, leaving insufficient cognitive resources for deeper interpretation of the text. Background knowledge also plays a decisive role in shaping comprehension ability. Reading is not merely a transfer of information from text to reader; rather, it is an interaction between new information and what the learner already knows. Anderson R. (2000:112) explains that comprehension improves when students can activate relevant schemata, which helps them connect unfamiliar ideas with prior experience. When learners face texts that are culturally distant or linguistically complex, their comprehension decreases because their schemata offer fewer entry points for understanding. This challenge is particularly visible

among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds may differ significantly from the content presented in reading materials. Another major factor influencing reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary breadth and depth significantly predict comprehension performance, as readers must recognize and interpret words rapidly and accurately. Nation I. (2001:128) argues that without sufficient lexical knowledge, readers cannot construct accurate mental representations of text information. Limited vocabulary leads to frequent interruptions during reading, causing loss of coherence and breakdown in understanding. For this reason, skillful teachers integrate vocabulary building with comprehension instruction, ensuring that students develop the linguistic foundation necessary for processing texts effectively.

Cognitive and metacognitive strategies are equally essential. Comprehension improves when learners employ strategies such as predicting, questioning, inferring, summarizing, monitoring, and visualizing. These strategies guide the reader to actively engage with the text rather than reading mechanically. Paris S. (1991:66) emphasizes that students must learn not only what strategies to use but also when and how to apply them, since strategic reading is both conscious and flexible. The absence of strategic training is one of the common causes of comprehension difficulties among secondary school students.

Instructional methods used by teachers also strongly influence the development of comprehension skills. Research shows that explicit instruction, guided practice, and scaffolding enable students to gradually internalize comprehension strategies. Teachers who model thinking aloud, demonstrate text analysis, and provide structured reading tasks help students develop independent comprehension abilities. Grabe W. (2009:102) notes that “systematic instruction in comprehension strategies leads to measurable improvement in students’ reading performance,” especially when combined with opportunities for collaborative learning, discussion, and feedback. Moreover assessment practices shape how comprehension is taught and learned. Traditional comprehension assessments often focus solely on literal understanding, which does not fully capture students’ ability to interpret, apply, and critique information. Modern comprehension assessment encourages evaluation of inferential and critical thinking skills, providing a more accurate picture of learner progress. Educators are encouraged to design assessments that measure not only the final product of comprehension but also the processes students use while reading. Eventually, reading comprehension is a multifaceted construct influenced by linguistic knowledge, background experience, cognitive and

metacognitive strategies, and instructional approaches. Understanding these factors allows teachers to design more effective reading lessons and support learners who face difficulties. Strengthening comprehension skills requires deliberate instruction, meaningful practice, and ongoing assessment, all of which contribute to developing confident and proficient readers in secondary school settings.

4. Research Methods

The study followed the descriptive and analytical methods, it is used in this study a questionnaire as a main instrument to achieve the aims of the study. The draft of the questionnaire consists of 12 dealing and tackling improving reading comprehension through using reading strategies. It adopted the three-point Likert-Scale: Agree, Disagree and Not sure. The research conductor distributed the questionnaire to a panel of 30 teachers specialized in English language. The aim of validating this questionnaire is to get benefit from their comments and suggestions. Further, upon the researcher's supervisor recommendation, 3 new statements were added to of the domain. The instructions of the questionnaire were clearly written in English on above statements. The instructions included the purpose of the questionnaire and guiding steps for the participants to choose the appropriate options for each item . The samples of this study were chosen randomly from English language teachers Kordofan whom are specialized in English language and teach English at El-Obeid secondary schools, this simple random sample include a number of 50 teachers from the total of 200 which represent 25% percent.

5. Data analysis and Discussion

Table (4.1) Setting reading goals can help students to develop their reading vocabulary.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	40	%80
Disagree	7	%14
Not sure	3	%6
Total	50	%100

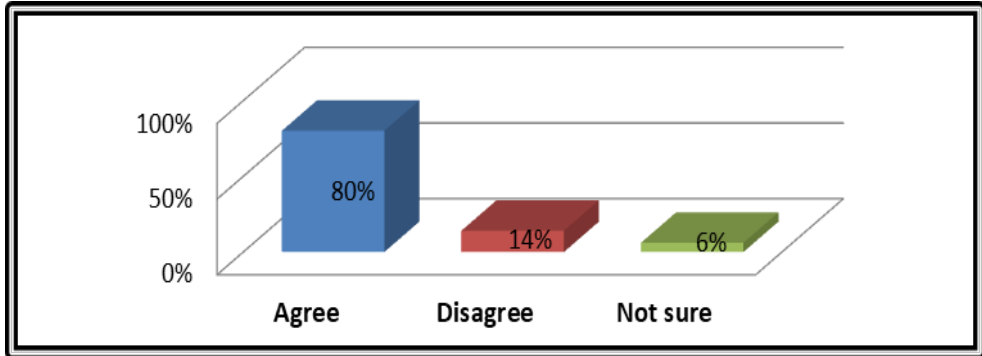


Table and figure (4-1) above explain that, setting goals can help students to develop their reading vocabulary .The majority of the respondents 80% agreed while the minority (14%) were disagree (6%) were not sure, thus setting goals help student in their vocabulary.

Table (4.2) Building Vocabulary is a powerful way to enhance your career.

Option	frequency	Percentage
agree	30	% 60
disagree	4	8%
not sure	16	% 32
total	50	% 100

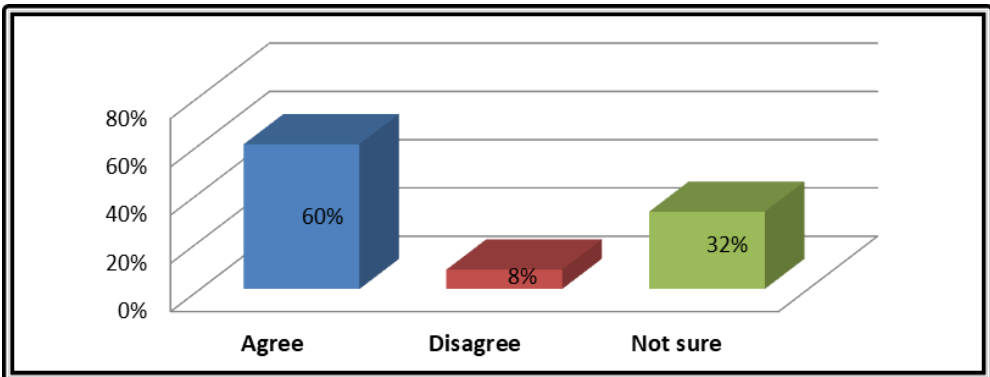


Table and figure (4.2) show that Building vocabulary is powerful way to enhance your career (60%) were agreed while (32%) were no sure (8%) were disagreed

Table (4.3) Reading disabilities undergraduates and graduates students' unassembled knowledge base.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	23	% 46
Disagree	20	% 40
Not sure	7	% 14
total	50	% 100

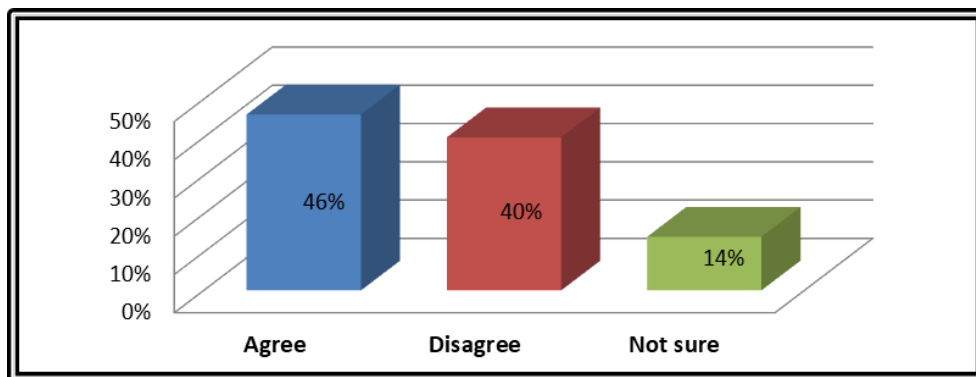


Table and figure (4.3) explain Reading disabilities underrate student's unassembled knowledge base. (46%) of the respondents agreed while (40%) of respondents disagreed and (14%) of the respondents not sure.

Table (4.4) Reading comprehension is an important step in learning reading skills

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	43	% 86
Disagree	7	% 14
Not sure	0	0
Total	50	% 100

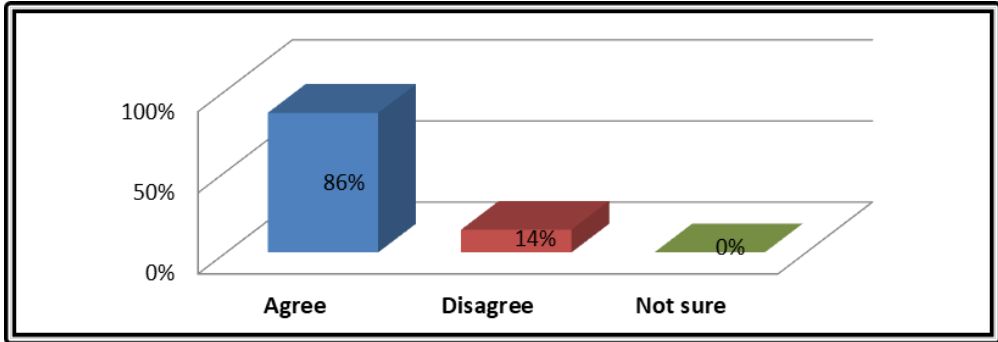


Table and figure (44) above explain, reading comprehension is an important step in learning skills. The majority of the respondents 86% agreed while the (14%) were disagreed

Table (4.5) Port scanning techniques are extremely useful when comes to identifying open ports

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	40	% 80
Disagree	10	% 20
Not sure	0	0
Total	50	% 100

Table and figure (4.5) show port scanning techniques are extremely useful when comes to identifying open ports (80%) agreed while the minority were disagreed

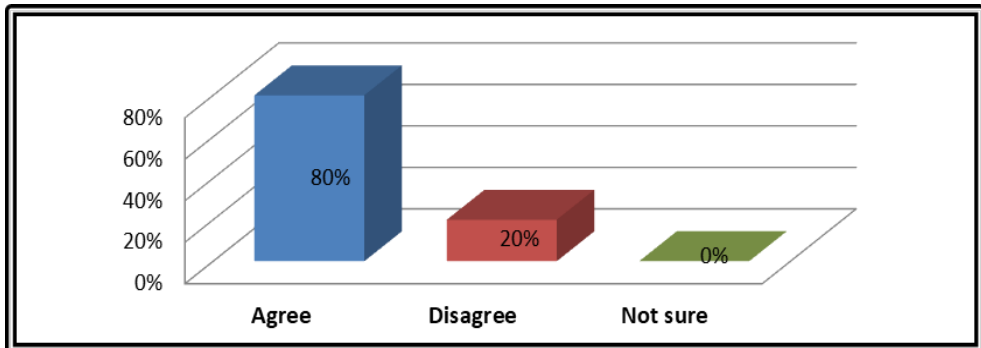


Table (4.6) Pre- reading starts with a survey of reading assigned reading

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	30	% 60
Disagree	10	% 20
Not sure	10	% 20
total	50	% 100

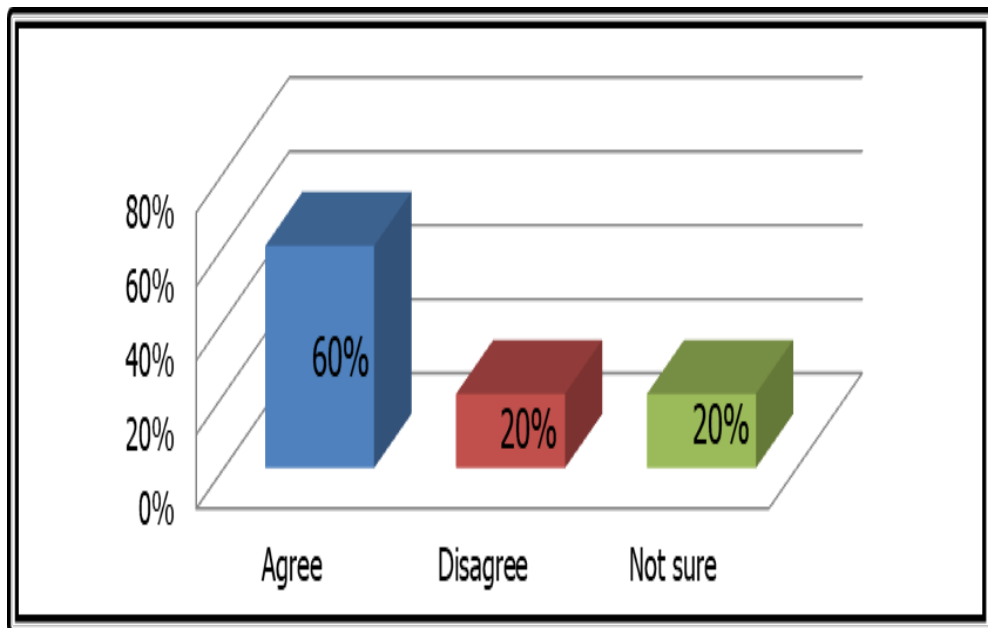


Table and figure (4.6) explain, pre-reading start with a survey of reading assigned reading the majority (60%) agreed while the minority (20 %) was disagreed and (20%) were not sure.

6. Findings

This study reached for the followings

1. Setting reading goals can help students to develop their reading vocabulary. (% 80)
2. Reading comprehension is an important step in learning reading skills (% 86)
Scanning is an invaluable reading technique use to enhance reading comprehension (% 86)
3. Teachers should introduce the seven cognitive strategies of activating inferring monitoring, questioning, a visualizing and organizing (80%)
4. Comprehension or extracting meaning from what you read is the ultimate goal of reading (% 80)
5. Teachers should solve the difficulties that face the students in high classes (%100)
6. Teachers should follow the methods and the strategies of reading comprehension skills (%100)

7. Conclusion

Findings of the study clarified that reading difficulty is due largely to educational factors and there is no single cause for reading difficulty, the difficulty is due to a composite of related conditions. However, the results show differences in percentages and means for the different variables. The researcher mentioned different ways that can be effective remedies for reading difficulty. Most of these ways can be created by the teacher of English and the student in the learning process. Also, the results showed that reading strategies have a great impact on the students' reading comprehension ability. Students are not just passive receivers of information but they are active makers of meaning. Successful readers try to apply numerous skills to grasp meaning from the texts. Readers should be involved in the reading process

by using different strategies to monitor their meaning. This study emphasized the idea that comprehension processes are influenced by a lot of strategies. All of these strategies work together to construct the meaning process easily and effectively.

8. References

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