The Effect of Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies on Iraqi EFL College Students' Performance in Reading Comprehension

Saadiyah Wdaah Hasan

University of Al-Qadissiya/College of Education

saadiya_wudaa@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the effect of teaching reading comprehension strategies on Iraqi EFL College learners' reading comprehension performance and on the development of their reading comprehension strategies use . To fulfill the purposes of this study, 40 first-year students were chosen to be the sample of the present study. Twenty students were enrolled in an experimental group that received instruction on reading comprehension strategies. The other twenty students were enrolled in a control group, which was taught reading by the use of the conventional way of teaching reading comprehension. The findings after instruction indicate that the experimental group subjects' performance in reading comprehension has been found to be better than that of the control group subjects on the reading comprehension post-test and that the experimental group subjects show statistically significant increases in the use of reading strategies on the post-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey. On the basis of the results obtained , it is recommended that reading comprehension strategies should be an integral part of reading instruction courses at the college level.

Key words: EFL learners , reading strategies, reading comprehension.

الخلاصة

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى أيجاد اثر تدريس استراتيجيات استيعاب القراءة على تحسين أداء استيعاب القراءة لدى الطلبة العراقيين الدارسين للإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية وعلى تطوير استخدام استراتيجيات استيعاب القراءة لديهم.ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة،تم اختيار ٤٠ طالبا وطالبه من طلبة المرحلة الأولى لتكون عينة الدراسة، درس عشرون منهم في مجموعة تجريبية تلقت تدريسا بشأن استراتيجيات استيعاب القراءة بينما درس العشرون طالباً الآخرون القراءة في مجموعة ضابطة عن طريق استخدام الطريقة التقليدية في تعليم استيعاب القراءة.وقد بينت النتائج بعد فتره من التدريس إن أداء طلبة المجموعة التجريبية في استيعاب القراءة أعلى من أداء أقرانهم في المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار ألبعدي لاستيعاب القراءة وان هناك زيادة ملحوظة في استخدام طلبة المجموعة التجريبية لاستراتيجيات القراءة في التطبيق ألبعدي لاستبانه استراتيجيات القراءة مقارنةً بما كان عليه في التطبيق القبلي. وفي ضوء ما تقدم من نتائج،أوصت الباحثة بجعل تدريس استراتيجيات استيعاب القراءة جزءا حيويا من مناهج تدريس القراءة في الكليات.

الكلمات المفتاحية:متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية، استراتيجيات القراءة، استيعاب القراءة.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem and its Significance

Reading, as one of the receptive skills, is considered important. "It is a complex organization of mental processes and can embrace all kinds of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem-solving" (Hoover and Gough, 1990:127). Similarly, Ismini (2003: 516) shows that reading materials written in foreign language are considered difficult and this difficulty might be due to the limited vocabularies , getting idea of the text, and failure in comprehending the text.

Comprehension is a thinking, creative, and multifaceted process in which people engage with the text, so they need strategies to help them understand the text. Reading comprehension strategies indicate how readers understand a task, observe textual cues, make sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986:465). Taylor (2007:77) explains that comprehension reading strategies are the literacy strategies used by readers before, during and after their reading in order to enhance comprehension of the text.

Research studies on second/foreign language reading have consistently confirmed the importance of reading strategies on developing language learners' reading comprehension skills. It has been acknowledged that reading strategies can be taught to learners and that reading strategy instruction can benefit all students (Zare and Nooreen, 2011; Brantmeier 2002; Salataci and Akyel: 2002,etc.).

In view of the beneficial effect of reading strategies, reading comprehension strategies instruction has been used in this study. The present study aims to investigate the impact of comprehension strategies instruction on Iraqi EFL learners reading comprehension performance and to examine the effect of this instruction on students' use of reading comprehension strategies.

1.2 Aims of the Study: This study aims at:

1. Finding out the effect of teaching reading comprehension strategies on Iraqi EFL college students' performance in reading comprehension.

2.Finding out the effect of teaching reading comprehension strategies on the development in the experimental group subjects' use of reading comprehension strategies.

1.3 Hypotheses: It is hypothesized that:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group subjects and that of the control group subjects in reading comprehension performance.

2. There is no statistically significant difference in the experimental group subjects' use of reading strategies between the pre- and post- administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey.

1.4 Limits of the Study: This study is limited to :

1. Iraqi EFL first-year students/ College of Education/ Al-Qadissiya University during the academic year (2013-2014).

2.The prescribed textbook " Developing Skills " by L.G. Alexander (1965).

1.5 Value of the Study

1. The present study is expected to be of value for Iraqi EFL college students.

2. Instructors of reading comprehension to teach the essential and appropriate reading comprehension strategies that will help students overcome their difficulties in reading comprehension.

3. Curriculum designers to be aware of such kind of reading strategies.

1.6 Procedures: To achieve the aims of the present study, the following procedures will be adopted by the researcher to collect data:

1. Conducting a reading comprehension test to be applied on the experimental and the control group before the experiment.

2.Constructing a reading comprehension strategies survey to be applied on the experimental group and the control group before the experiment.

3. Randomly selecting two groups of first-year students. The experimental group to be taught the reading comprehension strategies, whereas the control group is taught

according to the conventional procedures of teaching the prescribed textbook of reading comprehension " Developing Skills".
4. At the end of the experiment, the reading comprehension test and the reading comprehension   strategies survey are applied to both groups.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading may be considered as the process of recognition and perception of the written or printed material. In other words, it is the understanding of the meaning of the written material and covers the conscious strategies that lead to understanding. Therefore, it can be said that the process of reading deals with language form, while comprehension, the end product, deals with language content where meaning is one primary purpose for reading (Sheng, 2000:14). Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning of a written communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and the message (Harris and Hodges,1995: 39). This process of interchange and involvement with the text is a function of both reader and text variables that take place within a larger social context (Snow, 2002:11).

2.2 Reading Comprehension Categories

One helpful way to look at comprehension is through types of comprehension readers do when reading. Comprehension consists of six categories: literal or factual, reorganization, inferential,prediction, critical or evaluative and appreciation comprehension (Vora,2006 :103).

Literal comprehension, the lowest of the five categories, requires a reader to be able to retell or recall the facts or information presented in a text (Brassell and Rasinski,2008:17). Re-organisation requires a learner to analyze, synthesize, and/or organize ideas or information explicitly stated in the text. Reorganization tasks are: classifying, outlining, summarizing and synthesizing (Abu Humos,2012:778). Inferential comprehension is often described simply as the ability to read between the lines . It requires the student to use information explicitly stated in the text along with personal experience and knowledge in order to form hypotheses (Mamugudubi, 2014:43-44). Prediction involves students using both their understanding of the passage and their own knowledge of the topic and related matters in a systematic fashion to determine what might happen next or after a story ends (Day and Park,2005:63).Critical or evaluative comprehension, involves the reader making judgments about various aspects of the text—the literary quality of the text, the competency of the author, the righteousness of the characters and their actions, and so on (Brassell and Rasinski ,2008:17). Appreciation encompasses all the previously-cited cognitive dimensions of reading, for it deals with how the reader aesthetically and emotionally respond to the author's content. The feelings like excitement, love, fear, happiness ,etc. are the responses to the given plot or theme, the language and actions or behaviour of the character (Vora,2006 :104).

2.3 Models of Reading Comprehension

Theorists have proposed three basic models of how comprehension of meaning throughout reading   occurs: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive (Rayner and Pollatsek,1989:461).

The bottom-up teaching approach has been proved of its effectiveness through eye-movement experiment where its goals are automatic word recognition and rapid reading rate.Specifically speaking, readers are passive recipients of textual information, and the focus is never the meaning of the whole text, but detailed linguistic forms—from phoneme to lexical and syntactic levels (Grabe,2007:89). The

top-down model, on the other hand, takes the opposite position and considers the reader and his/her interests, world knowledge, and reading skills as the driving force behind reading comprehension. The reader actively controls the comprehension process, directed by the reader goals, expectations, and strategic processing (Gascoigne,2005:2). The interactive model is based on the schema theory, which explains how readers receive, store,and use knowledge in the form of schemata (structures for organizing knowledge in the mind). The objective of this approach is to teach students strategies that will help them develop into independent readers who can monitor their own thinking while reading and link prior knowledge to the new material in their text (Donoghue,2009:170).

2.4Reading Strategies: Reading strategies are a set of methods and techniques chosen by the readers consciously, so that they can achieve success in reading (May, 2010:15). A reading comprehension strategy is defined by a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension(Graesser, 2007:3).

Koda (2005:205) characterizes reading strategies with three core elements: "deliberate, goal/problem-oriented, and reader-initiated/controlled". In a very similar view, Afferbach et. al (2008:15) define reading strategies as follows: "Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand word, and construct meanings out of text" .

2.4.1 Classification of Reading Strategies

Reading comprehension strategies are classified as pre-reading strategies, during reading strategies and post-reading strategies (Tankersley, 2003:95-110; Yang, 2006:314 and Mihara, 2011: 52).

2.4.1.1 Pre- Reading Comprehension Strategies:Pre-reading strategies are based on student's using prior knowledge and guessing the content of the text that she/he is going to read where the goal is to make connections between old and new knowledge, introduce new vocabulary, preview or examine the material in detail, make predictions and help readers set a focus for reading (Tankersley, 2003:95). They include:

1.Predicting : Prediction refers to the use of prior knowledge about a topic, and combines it with the new material in the text ,i.e, readers use what they know before, and relate it to the material at hand. In their words, before reading any passage, readers usually sub-consciously ask themselves what they know about the text, which makes it easier to see what information they already know about the time they read the text (May,2010:17). This can be done by previewing titles, section headings,and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and guess what it may be about (Brassell and Rasinski,2008:95).

2.Setting a Purpose: Reading is an activity that has a purpose. Whether someone is reading for enjoyment, to gain factual or procedural knowledge, or to learn skills such as how to analyze poetry, being aware of the purpose for reading is an essential first step(Harris and Graham,2007:104).Blanton et. al (1990:488) suggest that for struggling readers, it is best to set one purpose that is broad enough to apply to an entire reading selection.

3.Skimming: Skimming is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and a general overview of the content. Skimming can be done by various methods:(1) reading the title for it gives a summery of the content (2) reading the leading paragraph (3) looking at the relationships between subheadings (4) reading the first sentence of each paragraph (Kartika,2012 :2).

4.Scanning:canning,on the other hand, is a reading technique in which readers rapidly move their eyes to find specific information. Unlike skimming, in **scanning,** the reader can look only for a specific fact or piece of information without reading everything(May, 2005: 17-18). This can be done by looking at the study questions at the end , searching for key words or ideas, looking for definitions, looking for highlighted words and looking for examples, including diagrams(Kartika, 2012:2).

2.4.1.2 During-reading Comprehension Strategies :during reading strategies are used with the aim of deducing the main idea and important details of the text. In addition, during reading strategies make unconscious processes more explicit and show the interactive nature of reading (Bölükbaş: 2013:2148).These include the following:

1. Inferences :drawing inferences is the process of forming best guesses based on the use of background knowledge and clues within a text. It requires actively interacting with the words in a sentence, and among sentences and that is why it is sometimes called "reading between the lines." (McIntyre et. al, 2011:122). May (2010:18-19) suggests that inferencing includes such sub-skills as: (1) pronoun reference (knowing what a pronoun in a sentence refers back to) (2) forming hypotheses about what is coming next in the text (3) guessing the meanings of unknown words or phrases (4) knowing the subtle connotations of words as they are used in particular contexts (5) understanding relationships of events mentioned at different times in a text (6) drawing upon background knowledge in order to fill in gaps within a text .

2.Visualizing:Visualizing means forming sensory and emotional images of textual contents, especially visual images. Students that create images while reading, want to continue reading without stopping because they are actively engaged. A variety of visualization strategies exist, including drawing pictures(i.e., reader draws pictures of images created in his or her mind while reading), skits (i.e., reader dramatizes story), mind maps (i.e., using a picture of a mind, reader writes and draws thoughts from reading) (Brassell, and Rasinski,2008:85).

3.Comprehension Monitoring :in order for students to monitor their own comprehension, they need to learn to recognize the difference between understanding and not understanding the text.Students must be taught to monitor their own comprehension as they read, they should constantly ask themselves, "Does this make sense?" (Tankersley,2003:102).

4.Fixing Up Strategies :when the reader is no longer making connections as he/she reads, he/she should begin to suspect that he/she has lost the thread of meaning. Texts quickly become boring when the reader fails to make text-to self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections. The reader who can no longer visualize information presented in the text has lost comprehension. These strategies include: re-reading, stopping to think, asking someone's help, and figuring out unknown words(Moreillon,2007:114-117).

5.Making Connections :make Connections means using what is known to enrich authors' meanings; taking what has been learned from one's own life experiences, other texts, and cultural and global matters to deepen understandings of what the author presents. Otherwise known as "reading beyond the lines"(Moore, 2008: 12).

6.Paraphrasing: Graham and Harris(2007: 118) admit that using paraphrasing strategy is very effective to be used while reading for it helps readers to concentrate on the text being read. This can be done by making the students read the paragraph and think about what it means while reading. Then they ask themselves to identify the main idea of the paragraph.

7.Use of Graphic Organizers :Graphic organizers are visuals that help students organize concepts and ideas. They aid in the development of knowledge of text structure.They also aid in the summarization of text, as well as the visual representation of information. These include flow, tree, diagrams, compare/contrast maps, and matrices (Donoghue, 2009:179).

2.4.1.3 Post-reading Strategies :post-reading strategies give the chance to evaluate whether the text has been understood or, in other words, to what extent the aims of reading have been realized (Bölükbaş: 2013:2148). They include the following:

1.Determining Important Ideas:determining important ideas means identifying essential ideas and information. This is the ability to separate the wheat from the chaff in text (McIntyre,2011:127). Moore(2008: 14) believes that once readers have read something, they should review what they have learned by asking certain questions. They check if they really comprehend, by asking: What is this about?   What is the main idea? To find the main idea, they may ask themselves what the writer is saying about the topic? Or What have they learned?

2.Checking for Fulfillment of the Purpose of Reading : Readers usually question at the end of reading whether their previously set goals are achieved. Questions like " Were questions answered? Was the author's presentation adequate? Does the reader need or desire to read or learn more or search further for information?" can be adequate to check the fulfillment of their purposes (Blachowicz,2008:34).

3.Summarizing and Synthesizing:Really understanding what one reads can probably best be determined by how well and accurately one states a main idea and summarize our understanding. There are generally two ways to think about these important skills. First, readers need to identify the central message or "gist" of small portions of text. Second, readers must know how to synthesize larger amounts of text by a summary that contains only the most important information (McIntyre et. al, 2011: 128).

3.Methodology

3.1 The Experimental Design: Due to the nature and aims of the present study, the Nonrandomized Control Group Pretest – Posttest Design has been used. Two days before the beginning of the training lectures, all subjects in both the control and experimental groups were submitted to a pre-test in reading in comprehension and a pre-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey. The reason behind conducting a pre-test in reading comprehension is to find out the experimental group and the control group subjects' level of reading comprehension performance before instruction, whereas the pre-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey was conducted to find out the actual level of the experimental group and the control group subjects' use of reading comprehension strategies before instruction. Four weeks later, after finishing the instruction in reading comprehension strategies for the experimental group subjects, all subjects in both groups were post-tested by the same test and the same survey of reading comprehension strategies.

The scores of the both groups on the post-test and the post-administration of the reading strategies survey are then compared and if the experimental groups' scores are found to be significantly different from those of the control one, the difference is attributed   to   the   independent   variable (teaching   of   reading   comprehension strategies).The experimental group is the one that is taught the reading comprehension strategies, whereas the control group is the one that is taught according to the prescribed syllabus of reading comprehension .

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study:the population of the present study consists of first-year students at the Department of English Language, College of Education, Al-Qadissiya University during the academic year 2013-2014. Out of four sections,

two sections are selected randomly. Section (B) to be the experimental group, and section (C) to be the control group. After excluding repeaters and teachers on study-leave, each section is left with 20 students.

3.3 Groups' Equalization : the equalization of both groups is checked according to the age, reading comprehension performance in the reading comprehension pre-test and use of the reading comprehension strategies in the pre-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey.

1. Age :by using t-test formula, it is indicated that the mean of the control group is 19.3, whereas it is 19.35 for the experimental group. Clearly, the computed t-value 0.743 is lower than the t-tabulated value 2.000 at 0.05 level of significance. The comparison has indicated that there are no significant differences between the ages of the two groups(see Table 1).

Table (1) T- Values of the Subjects' Age for the Control and Experimental Groups

Table (1) Groups	No. of Subjects	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	D.F.	t-value		Significance Level at 0.05
						Computed Value	Table Value	
Experimental	20	387	19.35	0.227	48	0.743	2.000	Not Significant
Control	20	386	19.3	0.21				

2. Reading Comprehension Performance :in order to ensure whether there is any significant difference between the two groups in their reading comprehension performance in the pre-test, t-test formula has been used. The mean score of the reading comprehension performance of the experimental group is 32.8 , and it is 30.4 for the control group. The computed t-value which is 0.037 is less than the t-table value which is 2.000 under 48 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their reading comprehension performance in the reading comprehension pre-test (see Table 2).

Table (2)T -Values of the Experimental and the Control Subjects' Performance in the Reading Comprehension Pre-test

Groups	No. of Subjects	Total Scores	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	D.F.	t-Value		Significance Level at 0.05
							Computed Value	Table Value	
Experimental	20	656	32. 8	2.731	7.46	48	0.037	2.000	Not Significant
Control	20	608	30.4	4.004	16.04				

3. Use of Reading Comprehension Strategies:using t-test formula, it has been found that the mean score of the reading comprehension strategies use of the experimental group is 45.65, and it is 46 for the control group. The computed t-value which is 0.903 is less than the t-table value which is 2.000 under 48 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their   reading comprehension strategies use in the pre-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey (see Table 3).

Table (3)T- Values of the Experimental and Control Group Subjects' Use of the Reading Comprehension Strategies

Groups	No. of Subjects	Total Scores	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	D.F.	t-Value		Significance Level at 0.05
							Computed Value	Table Value	
Experimental	20	913	45.65	8.707	75.82	48	0.903	2.000	Not Significant
Control	20	920	46	9.011	81.2				

3.4 Instruments of the Study

1.**The Reading Comprehension Strategies Survey**:in order to gain information about the students' use of reading comprehension strategies, a survey developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) has been adopted. The reading comprehension strategies survey is intended to be answered according to a five-point Likert Scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often , always). The following marks are assigned : never 1, rarely 2, sometimes 3, often 4, always 5.

In order to ensure the face validity of the Reading Strategies Survey, its initial form has been exposed to a number of experts in the field of ELT and Linguistics to decide their validity(see Appendix A). In the light of the experts' view, all the items are judged valid except for the last two items and therefore were replaced by new ones. The final form of the survey consists of 30 items: 5 pre-reading strategies, 20 during reading strategies, and 5 post- reading strategies (see Appendix B).

Content validity of the survey is established by systematically analyzing the major reading comprehension strategies, so that each strategy was reflected in the survey's item that examined the subjects' use of that strategy.

The pilot administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey is carried on the 5th of Feb., 2014 . It is given to 20 first-year students, section "A" at the Department of English Language, College of Education, University of Al-Qadissiya. The pilot administration of the instrument is carried out to check the clarity of the survey and its instructions, and to estimate the time allocated for answering its items. Consequently,no serious ambiguity is found concerning the surveys' items. Concerning the allocated time, it has been found that students need 30 minutes to respond to the survey.

Another critical feature against which the test was reliability. For Anastasi (1982: 102), "reliability" refers to consistency of the scores obtained by the same person when reexamined by the same test on different occasions or under other variable examination conditions. The survey has been administrated to a sample of

(20) first year students, section "D" at the Department of English Language, College of Education, University of Al-Qadissiya and then re-administrated to the same sample after two weeks. By applying Pearson Correlation Formula, the result was (0.89).

2. The Reading Comprehension Test :in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental procedures, the reading comprehension post-test has been applied to both groups of students, i.e. the control and the experimental.

The test was developed by Day and Park (2005: 71-73) . The rational behind choosing this test is its being comprehensive covering all categories of reading comprehension. It consists of six parts. Part one measures the students' ability to comprehend literally. Part two measures the students ability of re-organization. Part three measures the students' ability to make inferences. Part four measures the students' ability to predict. Whereas part five measures the students ability to evaluate, part six measures their ability to give their appreciation. The total number of the tests' items in its initial form is 36.

To ensure the face validity, the test has been exposed to a jury of experts in the fields of ELT and Linguistics (see Appendix A). It is necessary to note that the test is judged as being valid for measuring the reading comprehension performance of the students, but 80% of the jury members suggested to decrease the number of the items in part one. At this suggestion, six items of this part were deleted , therefore the total number of the test' items in its final form becomes 30(see Appendix C). Each item is given two marks so that the test is scored out of sixty.

In order to ensure the clarity of the test instructions, estimate the time required by the students to work out the test items, on the 6th of Feb., 2014 the test has been given to 20 first- year students, section "A", Department of English Language, College of Education, University of Al-Qadissiya to be the pilot sample of the study.

It is found out that no serious ambiguity is found concerning the reading comprehension test. The length of time needed by the students to do the test is found out to be 60 minutes.

To find out the relaibility of the test, the test has been administrated to a sample of (20) first- year students, section "D" at the Department of English Language, College of Education,University of Al-Qadissiya. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula has been used to obtain the correlation Coefficient of the students' scores on the odd numbered test items against their scores on the even numbered test items.The reliability Coefficient is found to be (0.92).

3.5 The Experimental Application:the experiment started on the 2nd of March, 2014 and lasted for four weeks during the second semester of the academic year (2013-2014), to end up on the 30th of March, 2014. The lectures have been arranged on Sunday for the control group and on Monday for the experimental one.

3.5.1 The Control Group:the control group has been taught by the researcher herself using the conventional way in teaching reading comprehension for three hours per week. The material used in teaching reading comprehension to the control group was entirely based on the passages and exercises in Alexander's book " Developing Skills ".Typically, the instructor reads the passage already assigned loudly or asks individual students to read . She then asks them to answer the comprehension questions that follow the passage, helps her students concerning difficult vocabulary items, and explains the key structures used in the passage and special difficulties that have already been identified (see Appendix D).

3.5.2The Experimental Group:the experimental group was also taught the same passages with their exercises so as not to interfere seriously with the normal

proceedings of the regular course. The instruction procedure used in the experimental lectures was as follows:

The instructor (the researcher) began with a brief statement of what she was going to do through the lectures to come in reading comprehension. The teacher then explained the procedure to be followed in presenting the reading strategies drawing the subjects' attention to the fact that each group of strategies is going to be described and applied separately before teaching them how to use these strategies in combination in a single reading passage. Each reading strategy was defined and the benefits of using these strategies in reading comprehension and how using these strategies can enhance efficiency in reading and help to manage the text actively in the way that expert readers do. Two lectures were devoted for teaching pre-reading strategies . Four lectures were devoted for teaching during-reading strategies. Three lectures were devoted for explaining post-reading strategies. The last three lectures were devoted for applying the whole strategies in selected reading passages. In each of the twelve lectures , application first was scaffolded by the instructor, then in group or individual work, students were encouraged to use the strategies in a great degree of flexibility when it seemed appropriate to them (see Appendix E).

3.6 Final Administrations of the Reading Strategies Survey:on the 6th of April 2014, the students of the experimental and the control groups have been submitted to a post-administration of the reading strategies survey. The purpose for doing so is to find the impact of the instructional procedure on the progression of the experimental group subjects' use of the reading strategies.

3.7 Final Administration of the Reading Comrehension Test : at the end of the experiment, the students of the experimental and the control groups have been post-tested on the 7th of April, 2014. The purpose of the post- test was to evaluate the impact of the instructional technique on the experimental group subjects' reading comprehension performance in comparison with that of the control group subjects who have been taught reading by using conventional techniques of teaching reading comprehension.

4.Results

4.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis:using t-test for two independent samples at 0.05 level of significance and 48 degree of freedom , the result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is 50 and that of the control group is 32.7. The computed t-value (3.66) is higher than the table t-value (2.000) (see Table 4).

Table (4) T -Values of the Experimental and the Control Subjects' Performance in the Reading Comprehension Post-test

Groups	No. of Subjects	Total Scores	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	D.F.	t-Value Computed Value	t-Value Table Value	Significance Level at 0.05
Experimental	20	1000	50	8.420	70.9	48	3.66	2.000	Significant
Control	20	654	32.7	3.179	10.11				

This result shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in reading comprehension performance in favour of the experimental group. Thus, the first hypothesis which states " there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group subjects and that of the control group subjects in reading comprehension performance" is rejected.

4.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis:using t-test for two independent samples at 0.05 level of significance and 48 degree of freedom, reveals that the mean score of the experimental group subjects' use of reading comprehension strategies in the pre-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey is 45.65, whereas it is 106.05 in the post-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey.The computed t-value (4.173) is higher than the table t-value(2.000)(see Table 5).

Table (5)Pre- and Post T -Values of the Experimental Subjects' Use of the Reading Comprehension Strategies

| Experimental Group | No. of Subjects | Total Scores | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variance | D.F. | t-Value | | Significance Level at 0.05 |
							Computed Value	Table Value	
Pre-test	20	913	45.65	8.707	75.82	48	4.173	2.000	Significant
Post-test		2121	106.05	13.124	172.24				

This result shows that there is a statistical significant difference between the experimental group subjects' use of the reading comprehension strategies between the pre- and post-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey in favour of their use in the post-administration of the survey. Thus, the second hypothesis which states that " there is no statistically significant difference in the experimental group subjects' use of reading strategies between the pre- and post- administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey" is rejected.

4.3 Discussion of Results :the findings of the present study demonstrate the positive effect of teaching reading comprehension strategies on students' reading comprehension performance and in increasing their use for these strategies. The reason of the present study, from the researcher's point of view, are first due to the fact that teaching reading comprehension strategies explicitly, helped Iraqi EFL students to have some awareness and control over their reading skills. Second, it might be due to the content of instruction material which is divided into two sections: (1) theoretical where the instructor (the researcher) explicitly explains what the strategies are and how and when to use them , and (2) practical where opportunities, guidance and feedback for supporting students who practice using the strategies are provided. Moreover, the instruction provided by the instructor was systematically and carefully sequenced where easier strategies were taught before the more difficult ones.

5. Conclusions

In the light of the results obtained, teaching reading comprehension strategies is found to be:

1. positively effective in developing students' reading comprehension. Thus, Iraqi EFL students are really in need of for an effective and up-to-date effective reading syllabus.

2.positively effective in developing the experimental group subjects' use of the reading comprehension strategies in the post-administration of the reading comprehension strategies survey. This may be ascribed to the newness of strategies taught as opposed to the boredom of traditional comprehension questions and exercises students are used to.

6.Recommendations: It is recommended that training students in reading comprehension strategies should be an essential part of a reading comprehension course at college level.

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Appendices Appendix (A)The Academic Ranks, Names, and Locations of the Jury Members

No.	Academic Rank	Name	Location
1	Asst. Prof., Ph.D. in Linguistics.	Maysaa' K. Hussein	College of Education, University of Al-Qadissiya.
2	Asst. Prof., M.A. in Linguistics	Rajaa M. Flaih	College of Education, University of Al-Qadissiya.
3	Asst. Prof., Ph.D. in ELT	Salam H. Abbas	College of Education(Ibn Rushd), University of Baghdad.
4	Ass. Prof., M.A. in Linguistics	Salima Abdulzahra	College of Education, , University of Al-Qadissiya
5	Asst. Prof. , Ph.D. in Linguistics	Zainab Abbas	College of Education University of Diyala.

Appendix (B) Reading Comprehension Strategies Survey

Dear Students,

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the various strategies you use when you read. After reading each statement, trick (✓) on the alternative which applies to you. Note that there are no right or wrong responses to any of the items of the survey.

No.		Statement	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
1	Pre-reading Strategies	I have a purpose in mind when I read.					
2		I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.					
3		I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.					
4		I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.					
5		I skim the text to get the main idea.					
6	During reading Strategies	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.					
7		When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.					
8		I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading.					
9		I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.					
10		I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.					
11		I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.					
12		When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.					
13		I use reference materials (e.g. a dictionary) to help me understand what I read					
14		When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.					
15		I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.					
16		I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.					
17		I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.					
18		I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read					
19		I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.					
20		I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key					

21		I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.					
22		I check my understanding when I come across new information.					
23		I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.					
24		When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.					
25		When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.					
26	Post-reading Strategies	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.					
27		I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.					
28		I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.					
29		I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.					
30		I summarize the major ideas of the text					

Appendix (C)The Reading Comprehension Test
Community Service

I was reluctant to go there on that first day, and as I waited outside the director's office, my anxiety only increased. My legs felt like lead. "There" was a rehabilitation residence for mentally and physically ill people. My dad, a doctor, had insisted on my volunteering at the residence. He wanted my high school community service requirement to be filled in a productive way. I felt the same. The previous summer I had gardened and picked up trash, ctivities that didn't really seem to make the meaningful difference that I thought I wanted to make. Still, I was scared imagining what the realities of working at the residence would be. The director was brief. She told me about the need to establish emotional connections with the residents, then rushed to introduce me to a group of 15, their ages ranging from 8 to 21, that I was asked to supervise. My charges welcomed me graciously. Some tried to clap but couldn't bring both hands together; some tried to say hello, but their speech was so impaired that I really only guessed at what they said. Most conspicuous among them was Young-il. He was older than I, and he was the only one who spoke clearly enough for me to understand fully. Young-il had the face of a 30 year-old, but he was barely four feet tall. He took me in charge at first and, stumbling as he walked, showed me around and taught me the basics of the residents' routine. I was embarrassed when he told me what to do; to be frank, I felt as if I were being instructed by a child. Later, thinking back on my condescension toward that kind, intelligent man, I felt a much deeper embarrassment.

The youngest was Sung-Min. He was eight years old, only three feet tall, and his fingers were all odd shapes and sizes. A teacher told me that Sung-Min's fingers used to be fused, but he had recently had an operation. Sung-Min now had five discrete digits on each hand, but their irregular forms still made it very hard for him to grasp things. In spite of his physical struggles, Sung-Min was the brightest and most energetic person at the residence. On my second day of work, he was the first to greet me, something I was grateful for, since not all of the residents remembered my face.

Helping at lunch was my most difficult task. It required considerable patience. Some residents had trouble focusing on eating and would often start shaking their heads violently as I tried to feed them. But whatever their physical challenges and discomforts were and however unappealing the food was, none of the residents ever complained. I couldn't help contrasting the residents' behavior with mine. I was again embarrassed to think about my regular pickiness, my refusal to eat this or that or at all, my demands for particular foods; and I began to hope that the road to wisdom was paved with such small embarrassments.

After my first lunch at the residence, a teacher took over the group. Everyone in the room said goodbye in his own way, and Sung-Min, the little guy with the

mismatched fingers, accompanied me to the door and hugged my knees. I walked home, my legs much lighter than they had been that morning. My fears and worries had disappeared; in their place were the surprising beginnings of an emotional connection that I had thought was beyond me. I was looking forward to seeing the residents again, to helping them, I hoped, and having them help me.

LITERAL

1. A's father was a doctor. T/F

2. The residents of the rehabilitation home were mostly old men. T/F

3. Did the director of the residence think it was necessary that A learn sign language or establish an emotional connection to work with the residents?

4. Who was the youngest resident at the home?

5. Who taught A the basic routines of the home?

6. What was A's most difficult daily assignment?

7. When did A garden and pick up trash in his neighborhood?

REORGANIZATION

8. Is Young-il a child?

9. How did most the residents communicate with A?

10. Was the operation on Sung-Min's hands a complete success?

11. A suspects that "the road to wisdom is paved with small embarrassments." What embarrassments is he referring to?

12. In what way did A's legs feel different at the beginning and end of his first day at the residence?

INFERENCE

13. Was Sung-Min able to speak clearly?

14. Sung-Min hugged A's leg:

a) because they were playing a game

b) because he wanted to be fed

c) to help him understand the residents' daily routine

d) as his way of saying goodbye

15. How has A's attitudes toward and understanding of disabled or disadvantaged changed

through his experience at the residence?

16. Did the residents only play or did they also study?

17. Do you think that A's work at the residence made a meaningful difference to the people there?

18. Why do you think A's work at the residence made a meaningful difference to him?

19. Why did A feel as if he were being instructed by a child when Young-il taught him about the residence?

PREDICTION

20. Do you think that A will continue to volunteer at the residence after his school requirement is satisfied?

21. Imagine that next summer A is offered the opportunity to either return to his volunteer work at the residence or to participate in a foreign-language study program abroad. Which do you think he *will* choose?

22. While feeding the residents, A is embarrassed remembering his own behavior at mealtimes. Do you think that A will change the way he behaves?

EVALUATION

23. This essay was written as part of a college application. Is the essay effective in presenting the author as an attractive or interesting candidate to an admission officer in a college?

24. Is this article well-written?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

25. Was A's decision to work at the rehabilitation residence a good choice for satisfying his school community-service requirement?

26. How do you feel about A? Do you like him?

27. Which person in the essay do you find most interesting? Who, in the essay, would you like to meet?

28. What experiences have you had with disabled or disadvantaged people?

29. Would you like to or be willing to volunteer at the residence?

30. What other activities do you think would be good community service activities?

Appendix (D)A Sample Lesson Plan- the Control Group

Subject: Reading Comprehension.

Class: First- year.

Topic: It's Only me!

Instruction Objectives: The student are supposed to understand the passage assigned by the teacher and do the exercises thereafter.

Procedures

Typically, the teacher reads the passage already assigned loudly or asks individual students to read it while others are listening and following in their books. She then asks volunteers to answer the comprehension questions that follow the passage, helps her students with difficult vocabulary items, and explains the key structures used in the passage and special difficulties that have already been identified. The instructor's role dominates the lecture: she (sometimes) reads the passage, explain difficult words and special structural points. The students' roles are varied. Typically, individual students answer the comprehension questions and do the exercises after the notes or explanation made by the instructor of the points related to difficult words or structures.

Appendix (E)A Sample Lesson Plan- The Experimental Group

Subject: Reading Comprehension

Class: First- year-Department of English.

Topic: It' s Only me

Instruction Objective:

The students are supposed to be able to make predictions on the content of the reading text.

Procedures

1.The instructor first describes reading strategy in focus drawing her students' attention to the importance of reading texts strategically and its relevance to reading comprehension. By using the data show, she shows her students a slide on the strategy of prediction in which she explains to them what is the strategy, why to use it and what they should do in order to be able to predict the content of the reading text .

Predicting

What is it? It is checking that you make thoughtful "guesses" about what will happen and then read to confirm or revise your predictions.

Why use it? Predicting helps you set a purpose for reading so you can engage in the reading experience.

When? You should use this strategy before beginning to read.

What do you do?

1. Read the title of the text.

2. Find topic clues.

3. Think about what you already know about the topic.

4. Guess what the text is going to say.

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2. The instructor asks her students to work in groups and look at the title and the image presented in the text to make guesses about the content of the reading passage.

3. The instructor asks each group about their guesses.

4. The instructor then asks her students to read the first paragraph of the passage and then she asks them the following questions:

What do you think will happen next?

What words or images do you expect to see or hear in the text?

What might happen next? Why do you think that?

What helped you make that predication?

5. The instructor asks her students to complete reading the passage, and then she ask them to check their guesses or predictions by asking them the following questions:

Were your prediction accurate?

How you confirmed your predictions?

Have you read , seen or heard about a similar topic anywhere else?

Talk to your group about your experience.