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**An Investigation into ESP Learners' Reading Comprehension
Difficulties:**
**The case of first year doctoral students of the Faculty of Economic
and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra
University**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for a **Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

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Declaration

I, **Hazmani Iman**, do hereby solemnly declare that the work I have presented in this dissertation is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree.

This work was carried out and completed at Mohamed KHEIDER University of BISKRA, ALGERIA.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to:

My beloved father and my dear mother, my young brother and sister, Anis and Lamis.

To my grandparents and aunts and uncles.

My deepest gratitude for their support and encouragement.

I also dedicate my work to Maroua for her advice and constant help.

To my beloved friend who always encouraged me and was there for me.

To say thank you is not enough.

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Abstract

Reading has been given priority for the students who have to read English materials related to their own specialised subjects. However, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners encounter many of difficulties in reading ESP materials and, therefore, failed to become efficient readers. What, then, are these difficulties that the ESP learners face when reading ESP materials? And what are the causes behind their unsuccessful reading? Accordingly, the present research aimed to investigate into the difficulties that hinder their reading comprehension. In addition, it sought to determine what are the reasons for such challenges. To address all these issues a qualitative research approach was adopted. In relevance to this approach, the research strategy that was used was a case study. Concerning the data collection methods, we employed a questionnaire and interview. The population of this study was doctoral students of the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra University. They consisted of 112 students. First year doctoral students were chosen to participate in this investigation. Twenty-two students were involved in answering a close-ended questionnaire, and 6 ESP teachers were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The results of this study showed that these ESP students often have difficulties in many areas of language. Such as difficulties concerning ESP vocabulary, grammar, text, reading strategies, subject background knowledge, and intrinsic motivation to read. The study also revealed that their unsuccessful reading comprehension comes from different sources: poor level of word recognition, absence of motivation to read, lack of reading strategies and inadequate linguistic and grammatical knowledge.

Keywords: business English, difficulties, ESP, first year PhD students, reading comprehension

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

D: Decoding

EAOP: English for Academic and Occupational Purposes

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EGAP: English for General Academic Purposes

EGP: English for General Purposes

ESAP: English for Specific Academic Purposes

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

EOP: English for Occupational Purposes

GE: General English

LC: Language comprehension

RC: Reading comprehension

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

WW II: World War II

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General Introduction

Nowadays, many foreign and second language learners studying at different contexts learn English not only for general purposes but for more specific uses. Students learn English for academic purposes and their academic study will usually involve specialised areas across different disciplines.

One of the most needed skills that should be developed for ESP learners at the university level is the reading skill. Reading is an important skill in language, and a further key to research as it is widely recognised today. Having an efficient performance in reading will definitely help learners in their academic success and also reinforce these learners' other language skills.

However, when teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Teachers come across problems of reading comprehension of the learners they teach. Indeed, reading is a complicated skill that demands a considerable amount of time and practice to be developed, in addition to some factors that may affect the performance of this skill.

1. Statement of The Problem

Recent researches have changed the view of reading from a mere explicit recall, word recognition, and mastery of phonemic decoding, to a complex process involving the interaction of various cognitive, metacognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic elements. The mastery in the reading skill with understanding is one of the many essential skills to acquire knowledge and flourish as a language learner.

It is worth to say that the reading skill is of great importance for all learners, but of a high degree for ESP learners. ESP learners are exposed to long texts which are written by native speakers of the language or by people who have a good command of the English language, and their proficiency or deficiency in reading comprehension would have a great effect on their academic and professional progress.

Yet, it has been noticed, the ESP learners at the Department of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences in Biskra University have poor performance when it comes to reading, especially to grasp the gist of what they read. Most of their readings are academic; thus, the need to understand, find and absorb information, ideas and arguments is essential. Even though they may face difficulties when they read in their mother language, these difficulties are doubled when they have to read academic texts in a foreign language.

In an attempt to improve the students' reading proficiency, this study is aimed at finding out the difficulties of the students in the content under study, mentioned before, when reading and the causes of these difficulties as the first step to the solutions of these issues.

2. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by ESP learners?

RQ2: What are the causes of these difficulties?

RQ3: What are the possible pedagogical implications that can help in reducing these difficulties?

3. Aims of The Study

- General Aim

The general purpose of the present study seeks to examine the difficulties in reading comprehension for the first-year doctorate students at the Department of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences.

- Specific Aims

The specific aims are:

- . explore the students' perceived difficulties in ESP reading;
- . To find out the causes of these problems; and
- . To suggest some solutions to reduce their difficulties.

4. The Significance of The Study

The present research mainly aims to improve the reading comprehension ability of ESP learners. This study would give a positive contribution to ESP learners to know what are the most common difficulties of reading ESP materials and what are the causes behind such problems. Furthermore, this study would also benefit the ESP teachers by making them aware of their students' struggles with reading comprehension, and also provide them with solutions that can be applied in classroom in order to help students to overcome their difficulties in comprehending ESP materials.

5. Research Methodology for This Study

With the aim of finding out the areas of difficulties in ESP reading of the first-year doctoral students at the Department of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences, and the causes of their unsuccessful reading comprehension, this study used a qualitative research approach because of its suitability to answer the research questions as it offers the appropriate data collection methods. In addition, the research strategy that was adopted is a case study.

With regard to the data collection methods, a questionnaire and interview were used to collect the appropriate data. A close-ended questionnaire was employed to identify the possible difficulties encountered by ESP learners when reading ESP materials, and to find out what causes these issues, in addition to some suggested solutions to overcome these difficulties. Accordingly, it is acceptable to use a quantitative data collection tool in a qualitative study. The use of this tool allows the collection of the needed data for this study. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic in order that the participants would not have any difficulties in understanding the questions. As far as the semi-structured interview is concerned, the ESP teachers from the same Faculty were invited to take part in an interview conducted individually and recorded to collect in-depth information of these difficulties.

The targeted population of this study is doctoral students of the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra University (Algeria). It consists of 112 students. The sample that had been chosen to participate in this study is the first-year doctoral students. From 36 students, only 32 answered the questionnaire. Therefore, the sampling technique which has been selected for the present research is Convenience sampling. Moreover, concerning the teachers, six teachers out of seven were interviewed and recorded.

6. Choice of Writing Style

In this study we used the APA sixth edition writing style because of its suitability to our field of study, Social sciences. However, an exception has been made between the candidate and her supervisor about the beginning of the running head. In the APA (6th edition), the running head starts from the cover page; whereas, in our dissertation, it begins from the declaration page.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists mainly of two main parts, which are the theoretical and practical parts. This study is divided into three chapters. The first and second chapters are related to literature review; whereas, the third one is devoted to the fieldwork and data analysis.

Chapter One

This chapter provides a background information and a literature review on the reading comprehension, reading models, and types of reading. Furthermore, it explains the main factors that affect comprehension and it goes through the three stages of teaching reading comprehension.

Chapter Two

It yields a background information and a literature review on ESP, and its emergence. It also includes the different types of ESP, how ESP differs from EGP. It also tackles the importance of Need Analysis, and the different roles performed by ESP teachers.

Chapter Three

It identifies the research methodology used in the current study. In addition, this chapter describes the research methodology, the research strategies, the data collection methods, and also the data analysis procedures. Furthermore, it discussed the obtained results from the questionnaire and the interview. The chapter ends with a discussion and synthesis of the findings.

Chapter One:

Reading Comprehension: The Fundamentals

CHAPTER ONE: READING COMPREHENSION

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Introduction

This chapter reviews some of the relevant existing literature on reading comprehension. The first section introduces the concept of reading and reading comprehension. Moreover, it explains what it is involved in reading comprehension and, types of reading. It also sheds light on reading models and main factors that affect this skill. Finally, it goes through the three stages of teaching reading comprehension.

1.1 Reading Defined

In many second and foreign language-teaching situations, reading comprehension receives special focus for several reasons. It is considered as an important language ability because it enhances the process of language acquisition and learning. In fact, in most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) academic situations, the ability to read in a foreign language is all that learners ever want to acquire. Reading, then, is highly valued by teachers and learners alike.

According to Goodman (1967), reading is “a psycholinguistics process by which the reader reconstructs a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display” (p.184). For Goodman, reading is as a cyclical process of sampling, predicting, testing, and confirming (Ha, 2011).

Harmer (1998) consider reading as a mechanical process that “eyes receive messages and the brain then has to identify the meanings of those messages” (p. 210). Smith (1985) defined reading as “reading is to understand author’s thought” (p.102). But the problem posed here is that how the reader understands the written texts because the meanings of a word depend on the context in which it appears. Nuttall (1982) related reading to communication process, and concludes that

“reading means getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message the writer puts into it” (p.04). He also emphasised the interaction between texts and readers in the reading process. In his opinion, “text is full of meaning like a jug of water, the reader’s mind soaks it up like sponge”. (pp.4-5). In sum, no definition can possibly capture all the ideas and features of what reading is. Each scholar’s definition reflects what reading means as seen from his point of view. However, what they all share is that they try to find out the nature of reading, and reading act, in which the readers, reading process and reading messages are emphasised (Han, 2012)

1.2 Reading Comprehension Defined

According to Pressley (2000), reading comprehension is the ability to get meaning from what is read. Thus, reading comprehension needs various reading skills from word recognition, fluency, lexical knowledge to background knowledge, so that the reader can undertake quickly the knowledge from the text. Thus, reading comprehension is a complicated process in which readers have an important role in making meaning from the text through applying existing skills (Block, 2004; Juel, & Graves ,1998, as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Snow (2002) stated that comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (p.11). Likewise, Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, and Seidenberg (2001) defined reading comprehension as the level of comprehending a text. This comprehension arises from the interplay between the written words, and how they elicit knowledge outside the message. Gough and Tunmer (1986) explained comprehension in form of an equation called the simple view of reading:

$$RC = D \times LC$$

As explained by Jiban (2017), the development of reading comprehension can be modelled as being simple, at its core, simple because it has only two moving parts, the D and the LC. Decoding (D) is the ability to turn printed words into the right word sounds, more and more automatically. Phonics instruction aims towards increasing decoding proficiency. Language Comprehension (LC) is the ability to understand spoken words in sentences. When speaking with easier words and less complex structures to small children, we are reaching their less proficient language comprehension.

She further explained in this model, D and LC are multiplied together, not added. This simply means when one is weak, the reader cannot compensate with a heavier dose of the other. Even if the reader can read every single word accurately, s/he can have a poor comprehension. The product of reading comprehension, will be at or below the level of the lower factor.

1.3 What is Involved in Reading Comprehension

Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007) pointed out that reading comprehension is a multicomponent and highly complex process that involves various interactions between the reader and the text from what they bring to the literacy event (previous knowledge, skills, strategies) to the variables related to the text (text type, purpose, interest in the text).

To understand what happens when we comprehend what we are reading, Irwin (1991, as cited in Klingner et al., 2007) described five basic processes of comprehension that work together simultaneously and complement one another: microprocesses, integrative processes, macroprocesses, elaborative processes, and metacognitive processes. A short elucidation of these concepts will be presented in what is coming.

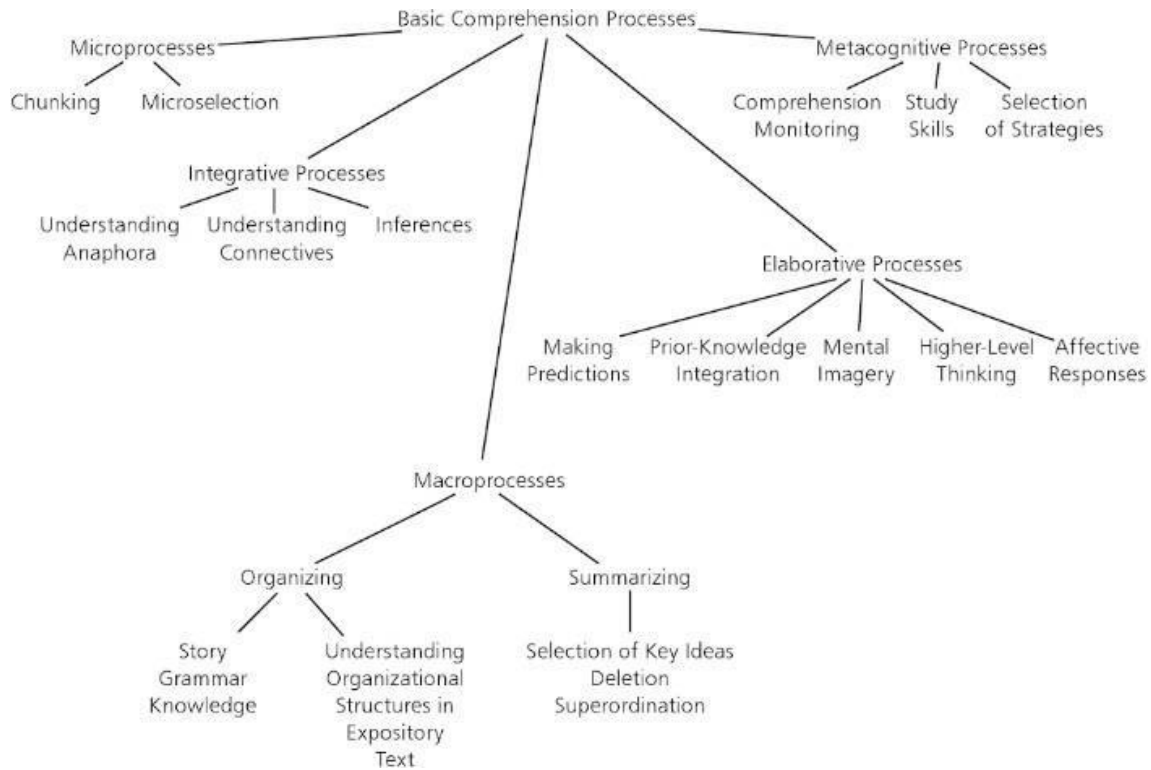


Figure 1.1: Five Basic Comprehension Processes (Source: Irwin, 1991)

1.3.1 Microprocesses. Microprocessing involves two aspects chunking and selective recall, the first involves the grouping of words into clusters of words or phrases that carry out meaning and requires an understanding of syntax as well as vocabulary, while the later requires which details of the text are worth to be remembered.

1.3.2 Integrative processes. proposed by Irwin (1991, as cited in Klingner et al., 2007) the integrative processing is the process of understanding and inferring the relationship between clauses. The subskills involved in this process are being able to infer causation or sequence and being able to identify and understand pronoun referent.

1.3.3 Macroprocesses. If the ideas are organised in a coherent way, they will likely be better understood and easily remembered by the reader. By summarising the key ideas, the reader might subconsciously or consciously select the most important details and leave the less important ones. Also, the skillful reader uses structures or organisational patterns, especially the ones used by the author, to organise these ideas.

1.3.4 Elaborative processes. The reader may tap into his/her prior knowledge and make interference beyond what is explicitly described in the text while reading. S/he makes interference that may or may not correspond to what has been intended by the author, either from their own previous experiences or upon information provided in the text itself.

1.3.5 Metacognitive processes. While reading, the reader uses various metacognitive processes including monitoring understanding, selecting what to remember, and regulating the strategies used when reading. Moreover, the metacognitive strategies used by the readers involve rehearsing, underlining important sections or words of a passage, note taking, reviewing, and checking understanding.

1.4 Types of Reading

According to Patel and Jain (2008), there are four types of reading as follows:

1.4.1 Intensive reading. Intensive reading or sometimes called narrow reading, involves students reading selections by the same author or several texts about the same topic. When this occurs, content and grammatical structures repeat themselves, and students get many opportunities to understand the meanings of the text. The success of intensive reading on improving reading comprehension is based on the premise that the more familiar the reader is with the text, the more comprehension is promoted (Jain & Patel, 2008).

1.4.2 Extensive reading. The second type suggested by the same authors is extensive reading. It is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure. The reader wants to know about something where s/he does not care about specific or important information after reading.

1.4.3 Reading aloud. Aloud reading or oral reading is a basic form of classroom organisation and disciplines. In reading aloud, the students are confronted with written sentences which may have not been spoken before. Bloomfield (1942) and Fries (1962, as cited in MacLeod, n.d) highly emphasised that oral reading is important for a better speaking ability and pronunciation.

1.4.4 Silent reading. Silent reading means reading without labial movements or the vibration of vocal cords. The text or other graphic forms are visually perceived and then transformed into meanings and ideas without passing through vocal stage. It is believed that silent reading is associated closely with the idea of reading for comprehension (Alshumaimeri, 2011).

However, for Brown (2003), reading can be classified into four types based on the length, focus, and process. These are stated in the following:

1.4.5 Perceptive reading. Perceptive reading is a type of reading which involves attending to the components of larger stretches of discourse like letters, words, punctuation, and other graphemic symbols.

1.4.6 Selective reading. Selective reading is largely part of assessment formats in which to ascertain one's reading recognition of lexical, grammatical of language within a very short stretch of language. This type of reading uses certain typical tasks, such as: pictured-cued tasks, matching, true/false, and multiple-choice (Brown, 2003).

1.4.7 Interactive reading. This type of reading, as explained by the researcher, forces the readers to interact with the text in which the readers should be able to bring a set of schemata to the

text for understanding it. Typical reading genres that lend themselves to interactive reading are anecdotes, short narratives, directions, recipes, and other forms similar to those genres.

1.4.8 Extensive reading. It is when a reader reads texts of more than a page, such as: professional articles, essays, technical report, short stories, and books that are usually read outside a classroom hour, and it focuses to tap into a learner's global understanding of a text (Brown,2003).

1.5 Different Models of Reading Comprehension

There are three models of reading process: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model. These models are explained in detail respectively.

1.5.1 Bottom-up model. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002, as cited in Takelo & Ahmadi, 2017), a bottom-up reading model is a model that focuses on a single-direction. In bottom-up model, the reader is assumed to be included in a mechanical process where s/he decodes the text letter by letter, word by word, and sentence by sentence. Decoding of the text includes noticing the details of a text for example phonemes, morphemes, words, sentences, and discourse to achieve the meaning or semantic aspect of language (Alderson, 2000).

According to Iran-Nejad (1987), bottom-up is the process that is not easy to use higher-ordered reading skills such as making inferences and the reader's background knowledge plays a very restricted function in interpreting the meaning of a text. In bottom-up theories and models, the reading process is regarded as text-driven decoding process, so the function of the reader is to reorganise meaning (McKoon & Radcliff, 1992).

1.5.2 Top-down model. A top-down reading model is a model that emphasises on what the reader transforms to the text to arrive at the meaning. In top-down models, it is assumed that the comprehension process is not mechanical, but actively controlled by the reader (Grabe, 2009; as

cited in Takelo & Ahmadi, 2017). The processing of a text started in the mind of the reader with an assumption about the meaning of a text. In this model, the primary goal of reading is achieving meaning from the text rather than mastery of letters and words. Readers are supposed to use meaning and grammatical cues to identify strange words and perceive a passage even if they do not know each word (Goodman, 1967). In this perspective, the meaning of a text, which is regarded an important goal to achieve, is accessed by the reader's prior knowledge of semantic, pragmatic, syntactic and discourse elements; so, s/he will be able to interpret the meaning (Alderson, 2000).

According to Block (1992a, as cited in Takelo & Ahmadi, 2017), in top-down models, the comprehension process is neither mechanical nor linear, but actively managed by the reader, so the major mechanisms for the processing of the text are in the mind of readers. From this perspective, readers understand letters and words only to justify their prior knowledge with reference to the meaning of the text. Finally, they can successfully decode a passage even if they do not know the meaning of the unfamiliar words within the text (Takelo & Ahmadi, 2017).

1.5.3 Interactive model. Because the information in top-down and bottom-up models do not move in one direction, the information involved in higher steps do not affect on the information in lower steps. These models cannot be applied for making inferences, which happen while reading (Demana, 2017). Therefore, to avoid this problem, an interactive model of reading is suggested.

This model, which is an integration of both top-down and bottom up strategies, is thoroughly regarded as a comprehensive explanation of how the readers derive the meaning of a written text.

The interactive model of reading is established based on the fact that meaning does not inhabit in the text alone, but is an association of the writer's text and the reader's interpretation. Thus, reading needs an interaction between the reader's mind and the writer's text. This permits the

information involved in higher stages to interact with and affect the information in lower stages (Alderson, 2000).

1.6 Factors that affect reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is influenced by the presence or the absence of some factors, such as: background knowledge, motivation, the text, reading strategies and rapid recognition. In the following section, these factors are elaborated in somehow detailed way.

1.6.1 Motivation. Motivation is an influence factor for achieving a special goal. Similarly, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), to be motivated means to progress or to be in motion to do something. Excitement, interest, eagerness, and looking forward to learning are the main elements of motivation. The levels of motivation in any individual is different from one to another.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) noted that intrinsic reading motivation, consisting of curiosity in learning about a particular topic of interest, the pleasure gained from being engaged in reading interesting materials, and the challenge in learning complex or difficult ideas, is an important component in students becoming proficient readers.

For Dennis (2008), learners' interest and motivation are very important in developing the reading comprehension skill. If the readers find the reading material monotonous, they will have a lot of problems in concentrating on their comprehension. This may lead to the weakening of the reading comprehension of learners. If the reading material is interesting for learners, they can easily understand it and can remember it clearly (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Han (2012) explained that readers' motivation has an effect not only on the result of comprehension, but also upon the process of understanding. If readers have no interest in the text, it means that they do not want to read than the reading activity will become a pressure to themselves and even the reading process may not happen at all. But if readers are motivated to

read, they will start reading the texts to satisfy their desire, to find a number of questions and specific information or ideas they are interested in.

1.6.2 Background knowledge. Background knowledge or prior knowledge is what one already knows about a subject as quite simply defined by Stevens (1982, as cited in Filiz & Anda, 2015). Dochy and Alexander, (1995, as cited in Strangman & Hall, n.d) provided an elaborative definition, describing it as the whole of a person's knowledge, including explicit and implicit knowledge, metacognitive and conceptual knowledge.

Prior knowledge may come from experience or from reading. When a reader activates his/her prior knowledge, s/he is linking what s/he already knows to what is currently being read. A text does not by itself carry all meaning. The reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, and culture – that is schemata, to the printed word (Brown, 2003).

Clarke and Silberstein (1977, as cited in Al-Issa, 2006) Indicated that “more information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page” (p.43). This simply means the understanding of a text depends on how much related schema the readers possess while reading. Consequently, readers' failure or confusion to make sense of a text is caused by their lack of appropriate schemata that can easily fit with the content of the text.

Background knowledge is necessary to retain information from a text. Activating prior knowledge before reading helps students get ready to read and be open to new information (Ha, 2011). It focuses students' reading and helps them read for a purpose. Having a purpose and inquiring about the subject before reading helps students take the lead of their own readings.

1.6.3 The text. In Defining Comprehension (n.d), the features of text have a large effect on comprehension. Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text. During reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for

comprehension.

Text structures are how authors organise texts and highlight big ideas. If a student understands text structures and their purpose, their ability to comprehend the material they are reading increases. Text structures have semantic clues and words/phrases that help with not only the students comprehending the material, but being able to create their own material with better coherence and clarity.

1.6.4 Reading strategies. Reading Strategies are strategies that good readers use while reading, such as predicting, inferring, and summarising. For instance, a reader might look at the title of a story and predict what the story will be about or they may activate their own knowledge about a topic they are reading (Demana, 2017).

In his words, Rubin (1987, p. 19, as cited in Serad, 2018) described the reading strategies as "sets of operations, steps, plans, or routines used by the learners to facilitate obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information". These specific operations that are often intentionally taken up by learners, make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.

Researchers in the strategy use of second language readers fall into two groups (Block, 1986, as cited in Suyitno, 2017). One argues that reading ability in a second language is largely a function of proficiency in that language. Ha (2011) mentioned that the major figures in this group are Clarke (1979) and Macnamara (1970). According to this group of researchers, language skills develop in a linear progression, moving from lower level letter-and-word level skills and higher- level cognitive ones.

The other group asserts that higher level strategies developed in a first language can be

transferred to a second language and operate alongside lower processing strategies. Ha (2011) referred to the major proponents of this view are Benedetto (1984), Coady (1979), Cummins (1980), Goodman (1973) and Hudson (1982).

1.6.5 Rapid recognition. Reading Comprehension (n.d) highlighted the significance of word recognition by explaining that the rapid recognition of words is of great advantage for second language readers to recognise automatically the words (in isolation) and common phrases containing them. Also adding that the rapid and automatic process of word recognition is extremely crucial for reading comprehension. Readers who are not able to recognise words easily face difficulties in getting information from the text because poor word recognition is directly related to poor reading comprehension.

1.7 Teaching Reading Comprehension

Medjahdi (2015) noted that teaching reading comprehension is a challenging and demanding task. That is why, she suggested pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading activities to develop strategies and methodologies in teaching reading comprehension.

1.7.1 Pre-reading stage. Pre-reading is an important stage in which the topic and type of the text are introduced first. Harmer (2000) clarified this by saying:

We will not get students to interact properly with spoken and written materials unless we ensure that their desire to read or listen has been awakened. Especially where the subject matter of the texts may not be immediately appealing to them, we have the responsibility to make students interested and to encourage them to tackle the text with positive anticipation (p.188).

The teachers need to prepare learners to the content of the text by using some visual aids that

can help the learners make some predictions, ask questions related to the topic, or think of some vocabulary items that may appear in the text. These steps may foster the learners' interest, and as well as set the mood for reading. Also, teachers should move gradually from easy to difficult in order to reach a better understanding.

1.7.2 While- reading stage. Richards (2009) saw that the reading or the while-reading stage as “an integration of top-down processes that utilise background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom up processes that are primarily text or data driven” (p.87), where learners read silently the passage while the teacher plays the role of the monitor.

1.7.3 Post-reading stage. According to Medjahdi (2015), in this last phase, the teacher acts as an evaluator, where s/he has to look whether the objectives of the reading tasks have been achieved or not, taking into account the understanding of the text by the learners, the recognition of the new vocabulary and grammar, and then the evaluation of the text.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, one can say that reading comprehension is of a great importance to the learners. More attention should be given to it. Through this chapter, we explained the concept of reading, and reading comprehension, and its different types and models. In addition, we tried to identify some factors that influence the reading comprehension of the learners.

In the next chapter, discussion will focus on ESP. The latter is a key concept in our research.

Chapter Two:

English For Specific Purposes: Reviewing the Concept

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Introduction

This chapter attempts to review the related literature review on ESP. It introduces ESP, how it emerged through time, its objectives and effectiveness. In addition, it elucidates the different types of ESP, how ESP differs from EGP, and the importance of need analysis in the process of ESP teaching. Also, it looks into the different roles performed by the ESP teachers. Lastly, it describes the importance of reading comprehension to ESP

1.1 ESP Definition

Since the 1960's ESP has become one of the most active branches of Applied Linguistics, in general, and of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), in particular. The main reason that could explain its expansion and vitality is the emergence of English as a world language. Consequently, the necessity to cope with the different teaching situations, and needs that such a position brings out is essential (Lamri, 2016).

Producing a simple definition of ESP has proven to be so problematic to researchers. As a result, and through time, different scholars provided different definitions of ESP. For instance, Mackay and Mountford (1978, as cited in Nădrag & Buzarna-Tihenea, 2017) mentioned that ESP involves the process of English teaching for a clearly utilitarian purpose, shaped by the learners' needs (such as academic, occupational, or scientific). Along the same line, Robinson (1991) stated that, "generally the students study English not because they are interested in the English language or English culture as such, but because they need English for study or work purposes" (p.02).

Anthony (1997) argued that some people described ESP as teaching English for any specific purpose, and others as teaching English for academic studies, occupational or professional purposes. In this respect Lamri, Bouabdallah-Heddami and Bensafa (2017) denoted that the role of

ESP is to help language learners to build up the needed abilities in order to use them in a specific field of inquiry, occupation, or workplace.

To make the definition of ESP clear enough Dudley-Evans and St. John, (1998, as cited in Susilowati,n.d) viewed:

ESP means the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language which meets specific needs of the learners, makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves and is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines, use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English. ESP may be designed for adult learner either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary, school level as well. Generally, ESP is designed for intermediate or advanced students and most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems (pp.4-5).

What stands out from this definition is that ESP can but is not necessarily concerned with a specific discipline, nor does it have to be aimed at a certain age group or ability range. Rather, ESP should be seen simple as an approach to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans and St. John describe as an attitude of mind (Abdul,2013).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 4-5, as cited in Susilowati, n.d) had also provided another definition of ESP that comprises absolute and variable characteristics of ESP. The latter see Absolute Characteristics as:

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;

2. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
3. ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

Variable Characteristics as:

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.

Javid (2013) commented on this definition by saying it has extended the horizon of ESP by allowing it to encompass the specific needs of the learners who do not necessarily belong to any specific occupation or discipline.

2.2 The Emergence of ESP

For scholars like Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998, as cited in Ramírez,2015), they believed that language teaching for specific purposes can be traced as far back as the Greek and Roman empires. Another view saw that ESP emerged at the end of Second World War (WW II) and it “was not a planned and coherent movement, but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.06). The latter identified three main reasons to the emergence of ESP: the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics, and focus on the learner.

As to the first reason, they explained that two historical periods played an important role that led

to the creation of ESP; the end of the *Second World War* (WW II) and the *Oil Crisis* in the 70's. On the one hand, the end of the Second World War declared an era of expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity world-wide. On the other hand, the Oil Crisis of the early 1970's resulted in western money and knowledge flowing into the oil-rich countries. The language of this knowledge became English. This led consequently to exerting pressure on the language teaching profession, which boosted in this part of the world, to deliver the required goods.

The second important reason that had a great impact on the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Most of the work of linguists in the 60's and 70's of the past century focused on the ways in which language is used in real communication contrary to the works of traditional linguists who set out to describe the features of language. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) pointed out that one significant discovery was in the ways that spoken and written English vary. This idea was taken one step further. If language in different situations varies, then creating language instructions to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible.

The final reason that Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mentioned to have influenced the emergence of ESP has more to do with psychology than linguistics. More attention was given in the 70's of the past century to how the learner acquires a language and ways in which it is learnt. Hence, the focus was on the different learning strategies, different skills, different learning schemata and different motivating needs, and interests that are employed by different learners. This consequently has led to a focus on learners' needs and designing specific courses to better meet the individual needs. The result of this was a natural extension of learner-centred or learning-centred perspectives on ESP.

2.3 The Difference Between ESP and EGP

The question of the difference between ESP and English for General Purposes (EGP) has been

addressed for a long time. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that there is no difference between the two in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice. ESP can be viewed as a special and specific edition of EGP that includes practical linguistic skills to enable learners for the successful performance of professional tasks (Potočar, 2002). However, EGP provides basic knowledge and skills of English language at a school level where the occupational or the professional and higher educational levels of the learners are not defined properly.

According to Widdowson (1983, as cited in Ajideh, 2009), the distinction between ESP and EGP lies in the way of the defined learning purposes. ESP is objective-oriented learning which deals with the development of restricted competences; while EGP, on the other hand, as claimed by Lamri (2016), it is aim-oriented which does not equate the specification of objective to aim as it deals with the development of general capacities.

2.4 Types of ESP

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, as cited in Javid, 2013) had divided English for Academic Purposes (EAP) into two divisions: English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP is related to the teaching of language skills that are common in different disciplines, but ESAP refers to the teaching of language features that are specific for various disciplines.

On the other hand, Carter (1983, as cited in Gatehouse, 2001) had identified the following three types of ESP:

1. English as a restricted language.
2. English for Academic and Occupational Purposes (EAOP).
3. English with specific topics.

The scope of the first type of ESP is extremely limited which allows the learners to learn the English language for a very restricted purposes and handle specific situations in extremely limited linguistic settings (Javid ,2013). The second type of ESP has been confined by the majority of the researchers in their classification of ESP to EAP and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) (Tree of ELT by Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) (See Appendix 1). Javid (2013) explained that the third category of ESP requires that the linguistic needs of the learners should be properly determined before any ESP material is designed. It limits itself to the target future (linguistic) needs of the learners to prepare them for their future needs.

2.5 Objectives in Teaching ESP

Basturkmen (2006) presented five broad objectives on which specific teaching process is based and should be reached:

1. to reveal subject-specific language use;
2. to develop target performance competencies;
3. to teach underlying knowledge;
4. to develop strategic competence; and
5. to foster critical awareness.

Whereas Stern (1992, as cited in Ahmed, 2014) distinguished four types of ESP teaching objectives: proficiency, knowledge, affective, and transfer. Proficiency objectives are concerned with the mastery of the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The knowledge objectives are concerned with the acquisition of linguistic and cultural information. The Affective objectives are concerned with the development of positive feelings towards the subject of study. Finally, the transfer objectives deal with the ability to generalise from what has been learnt in one situation to other situations.

2.6 Needs Analysis in ESP

Needs analysis (Also known as needs assessment) has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course, whether it be ESP or general English course, its centrality has been acknowledged by several scholars and authors.

According to Kondo, et al, (1999, as cited Songhori, 2008), the term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of learners.

Alsamadani (2017) has also defined needs analysis as vital asset for teachers of ESP to identify their learners' key requirements or needs and determine the areas in which they are lacking skills. For Basturkman (2006), she observed that:

Needs analysis in ESP refers to a course development process. In this process the language and skills that the learners will use in their target professional or vocational workplace or in their study areas are identified and considered in relation to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs and the practical possibilities and constraints of the teaching context. The information obtained from this process is used in determining and refining the content and method of the ESP course (p.19).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identified two types of needs: target needs and learning needs.

2.6.1 Target needs. Target needs are mainly related to what the learner's needs to do in the target situation. That is why, the ESP teacher should gather information about the learners' necessities, lacks and wants.

2.6.1.1 Necessities. They are the academic or occupational requirements of the target situation.

That is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation.

2.6.1.2 Lacks. According to the same researchers, lacks are what the learners already know and what they lack. They are the gaps between the initial situation of the learners in terms of language proficiency, and after the accomplishment of the language training.

2.6.1.3 Wants. The learners' wants are what the learners would like to gain from the language course. They are the learners' hopes and expectations towards acquiring the English language.

2.6.2 Learning needs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined them as the factors that affect the learning like attitude, motivation, awareness, personality, learning styles and strategies, together with the social background. The concept of learning needs put forward by Hutchinson and Waters and their analysis of learning needs have been proved to be fairly useful in practice because learning needs clarify the means through which learners proceed to achieve their target needs starting with realising their lacks. As a result, in the process of leaning, learner's needs should always be taken into consideration (Lamri, 2016).

2.7 ESP Effectiveness

Basturkmen (2006) argued on why ESP courses should be more effective than general English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. According to her, it can be said with certainty, ESP courses provide to the learners their interests and needs; therefore, they are more likely to be highly motivated. If the learners are more motivated, then learning is more likely to occur.

She also emphasized that ESP courses are more efficient because they have more limited aims than general ESL courses. Because ESP courses are based on needs analysis, the learning objectives are more highly prescribed than would be the case in general ESL courses. Thus, it is not surprising that learning outcomes may be perceived more favourably. Given that, limited and

highly specified aims are more expected to be achieved.

2.8 The Role of ESP Teacher

Unlike General English classrooms, where the teacher is the centre of knowledge, ESP classes are different as ESP teachers' guide enable students to internalise their communicative practices with their objectives. Tasks such as these require being a flexible teacher and a good listener who cares about and caters for what intrigues students. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998 as cited in Chibi, 2018) described that the true ESP teacher needs to perform different roles.

2.8.1 Practitioner. The ESP teacher has to create opportunities of learning, to generate authentic communication, and to choose the appropriate teaching methods to suit the students' needs. The main reason behind the term practitioner such as this, is the conviction that the function of ESP teachers is not solely limited to teaching, but it extends to include other roles. The role of an ESP practitioner goes beyond that of an ordinary teacher (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

2.8.2 Course designer and material provider. As textbooks may sometimes fail to meet the course objectives and fulfil learners' needs, ESP practitioners sometimes see it necessary to design their own activities to obtain their objectives. Thus, ESP practitioners, based on needs analysis, customised materials that better link the objectives of lessons with the needs of learners (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). In other words, the role of ESP teachers as providers of tailor-made materials is to choose and adapt them when there is "a mismatch between the content of ESP textbooks and actual workplace language demands" (Bouzidi, 2009, p.10).

2.8.3 Researcher. As researchers, ESP practitioners have to conduct research studies in the field to vary their teaching styles and methods (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; as cited in Chibi, 2018). They should always update their knowledge and engage their interest in the subject taught. In

other words, by matching research findings to the learning and teaching environment the courses will be more fruitful and purposeful, and classes will be more dynamic (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

2.8.4 Collaborator. They further explained the role of the ESP practitioner as collaborator that involves cooperating with the subject specialists. Specialists may give their point of view concerning the teaching material the teacher has designed. The complete form of such a collaboration will result in the emergence of team teach classes in which both teachers, and specialists cooperate to teach the language, and the needed skills.

2.8.5 Evaluator. Evaluation is another vital task, ESP practitioners are to perform (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; as cited in Bouzidi, 2009). Evaluation includes testing students and assessing courses and teaching materials. Testing students serves the purpose of evaluating their competence in terms of possessing the necessary language skills to start a certain academic course or job. The process of evaluating ESP teaching materials necessitates that practitioners seek to measure the effectiveness of the material employed and the extent to which such a material meets the learners' expectations (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

2.8.6 Consultant. A consultant is an expert who has got enough expertise in a job or a domain (Frendo, 2005; as cited in Benhaoued, 2013). In different domains, a lot of self-employed/freelance teachers work as consultants. They provide expertise, design or run a training programme, discuss contracts, conduct needs analysis, and assess training delivery and results. He also added that the expertise may also include the ability to analyse communication needs, suggest a training provider, or choose the most conducive location for a course.

2.8.7 Trainer. A trainer is a person whose main role is to change a person's behaviour or ability to enable them to perform specific tasks or do particular jobs successfully (Frendo, 2005 as cited

in Benhaoued, 2013). A teacher as trainer in this context refers to teachers working in training organisations where they offer customised training programmes intended for particular participants for a short period. That is to say, if language teachers help students learn a language for various purposes; a trainer trains them to behave adequately – both linguistically and pragmatically (Chibi, 2018).

2.8.8 Coach. Coach refers to a person who assists learners to explore the job-related learning opportunities in their own field. Such a role focuses on helping learners to thoroughly identify their own strengths and weaknesses and plan accordingly (Frendo, 2005; as cited in Chibi, 2018). The main role of a coach is to help learners become autonomous via taking full responsibility for their own learning.

2.9 ESP and Reading Comprehension

Most scholars would agree that reading is one of the most important skills for educational and professional success (Alderson, 2000). In particular, reading occupies a place of focus in ESP since it is at the heart of many tasks done by ESP learners. Reading in ESP offers students the main source of knowledge, and also facilitates discussion of the topics within their own field of study.

Anthony (1997) argued that reading is relevant because it provides learners with the vocabulary, and the knowledge that will be used in their professions. In addition, reading is at the center of much of what ESP students do, both in acquiring knowledge of target community discourse and in conjunction with the use of another skill, such as writing. Thus, McDonough (1984, as cited in Ha, 2011) said “It will come as no surprise to most people to discover that, in ESP terms, by far the most significant skill is that of reading” (p.70).

Carrel (1988, Carrel, Pharis and Liberto (1989, El-Bashbishy (1993, as cited in Shehata, n.d) assured that in high educations which use teaching subjects written in English, reading becomes

the priority among all the other skills of the English language. They also assured that the ability to read and comprehend the written text is considered as one of the important factors of success in the university learning and it is the most needed skill for students who study ESP.

2.10 Factors Causing Difficulties for ESP Readers

Though the ESP learners acknowledge the importance of the reading skill in their professional, and academic area; however, they struggle with it mainly in four areas.

2.10.1 Technical vocabulary. Technical words are specialised words closely related to a specific area or field of study like engineering, medicine, linguistics, etc. They are commonly used in specialised textbooks. This group of words is identified by the meaning of a word strict to the field in which it occurs and its high frequency of occurrence or use in that field (Nation, 2001). Similarly, Bowker and Pearson (2002, as cited in Bermúdez-Bausela, 2016) mentioned that technical words and general words can have some degree of overlap where technical vocabulary occurs in academic texts with high frequency. They also suggested that this group of technical words should be taught to the ESP learners since they carry most of the content in the text.

Some noun phrases might contain some technical words which make the phrases technical. Trimble (1985) explained that the technical words themselves can provide some difficulties to learners and with the interpretation of the meaning from noun phrase, especially with compound nouns, it will be a problem for the learners to understand. He also asserted that compounding is a natural process and it can provide problems for most non-native students.

2.10.2 Learner's competence. ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of learners. It is expected from the learners to perform with adequate language skills in target situations at the end of the ESP courses. However, the performance of ESP learners has been considered unacceptable or poor in many cases as addressed by Bacha and Bahous (2008). Students' overall English

language competence has usually been considered an indicator of the success or failure of English learning. Some teachers inputted the low achievement of ESP to the students' poor English language skills. In addition, they argued that the student's poor English language skills were inadequate to cope with the ESP courses and make ESP courses inefficient.

By contrast, the students often declare themselves to be suffering from learning difficulties, which make them perform badly in ESP class. Some researchers have also reported that students suffer from learning difficulties relating to the content of ESP, the instruction of ESP and the tasks involved in the ESP courses (Gatehouse, 2001). Others suffer from the difficulty of coping with the ESP reading because of weak English skills such as inadequate vocabulary and grammar (Chang, 2000; as cited in Bouabdallah, 2015).

2.10.3 Authentic materials. Authenticity is the key issue in ESP methodology including authentic texts and authentic tasks. The conception of authenticity is enlarged in two principal ways by skill-based approaches to ESP as explained by Coffey (1984, as cited in Northcott, 2011). First, authenticity of text was both broadened to include texts other than written texts, and narrowed to differentiate between the different types of texts generated by each skill. Reading, for example, could be sub-divided into reading reports, reading technical journals and reading instruction manuals. Secondly, the conception of authenticity was enlarged to embrace authenticity of tasks. This means designing tasks that require students to process texts as they would in the real world. In other words, ESP learners were required to use ESP materials which employed the same skills and strategies as would be required in the target situation.

Although authentic materials have plenty of advantages as discussed earlier, there remain some reasons for others that are against the use of authentic materials due to some of their disadvantages.

Martinez (2002) complained that authentic materials are more difficult than non-authentic materials because of some reasons.

First, they may be too culturally biased, so unnecessarily difficult to understand outside the language community. Second, many structures are mixed so lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts. Third, the vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's immediate needs. Finally, there are many abbreviations, slang, signs and the like that can require good knowledge of the cultural background to understand.

2.10.4 Specialist background knowledge. Learners in the ESP classes are generally aware of the purposes for which they will need to use English language. Having already oriented their education towards a specific field, they see their English training as complementing this orientation. Ha (2011) admitted that knowledge of the subject area enables the students to identify a real context for the vocabulary and structures of the ESP classroom. In such way, the learners can take advantage of what they already know about the subject matter to learn English. She also confessed with her own words that the more meaningful and real context, the more interest and accordingly the more successful learning will be. Holmes (1983, as cited in Daoud Brikci, 2012) affirmed in this regard that content familiarity is a greater predictor of reading comprehension than various linguistic factors such as vocabulary knowledge and/or syntactic complexity.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, the light was shed on some of the major aspects of ESP for a better understanding of this kind of English teaching. Furthermore, the importance of reading comprehension for this kind of learners was highlighted with the major causes of their difficulties with the reading skill.

The following chapter will display the field work and data analysis in this study.

**Chapter Three:
Fieldwork and Data Analysis**

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Introduction

The present chapter presents the field work and the analysis of the collected data. Initially, it provides a theoretical background on the research methodology underlying the study. It attempts to describe the approach, the adopted strategy, and the data collection methods that are used to investigate the difficulties that hinder ESP learners' reading comprehension. Additionally, it provides the rationale behind the selection of each of the data collection methods. Then, it displays a full data analysis followed by a discussion based on the obtained results. This chapter ends with some pedagogical recommendations to overcome these problems, and besides the subsequent study limitation.

3.1 Research Methodology for This Study: Theoretical Background

It is believed that methodology is the central element in any study. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Kumar (2008) defined research methodology by saying "In it, we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them" (p. 5).

In research methodology, there are three essential components, the philosophical world view, research design and methods of research. When a particular research approach is chosen, it necessitates matching research design and methods, as well. Philosophical world view originates from epistemology considerations, which determines a paradigm as per the philosophical orientation of a research approach (Scotland, 2012).

3.1.1 Research paradigms in educational research. In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's worldview. This worldview is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Patton (2002, as cited in Chilisa

& Kawulich, n.d) described it as a way a world view that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (known as ontology – that is, what do we believe about the nature of reality), ways of knowing (known as epistemology – that is, how do we know what we know), and ethics and value systems (known as axiology – that is, what do we believe is true).

Although there is a great deal of an ongoing debate about these philosophical assumptions that researchers bring to the inquiry, four examples are available and shared on the literature in research methodology (Hoadjli, 2016). These are stated as follows: Post-positivism, Constructivism, Transformative, and Pragmatism.

The French philosopher Auguste Comte was the first who proposed Post-positivism. The Post-positivism paradigm defines a worldview to research, which is grounded in what is known in research methods as the scientific method of investigation. Chilisa and Kawulich (n.d) added that this paradigm is based upon the view that science is the only foundation for real knowledge. It holds that the methods, techniques and procedures used in the natural sciences offer the best framework for investigating the social world. This epistemology is manifested by quasi-experimental research designs that utilise treatment, outcome measures and experimental units (Taylor & Medina, 2013).

The Constructivism or the Interpretive paradigm is to understand the individuals, and their interpretation of the world around them. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explained that this approach makes an effort to get into the head of the subjects being studied, and to understand and interpret what the subjects are thinking or the meaning they are making of the context. In this paradigm, the theory does not precede research but follows it so, that it is grounded on the data generated by the research act. Hence, when following this paradigm, data are gathered and analysed in a manner consistent with grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Little (n.d) viewed the Critical paradigm to be situating its research in social justice issues and seeks to address the political, social and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle, and power structures at whatever levels these might occur. Because it seeks to change the politics so as to confront social oppression and improve the social justice in the situation, it is sometimes called the Transformative paradigm (Farias, Rudman, Magalhaães & Gastaldo, 2017).

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) reported that the last paradigm aroused among philosophers who argued that it was not possible to access the ‘truth’ about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method as advocated by the Positivist paradigm, nor was it possible to determine social reality as constructed under the Interpretivist paradigm. So, these theorists looked for approaches to research that could be more practical and pluralistic approaches that could allow a combination of methods. This gave rise to a paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods as a pragmatic way to understand human behaviour – hence Pragmatic paradigm.

For this study, the constructivism paradigm fits the purpose of the study because this paradigm seeks to understand the phenomenon under study from the experiences of the participants through using various data collections. Also, the researcher can determine from what is said and find out the true state of the situation under study.

3.1.2 Research approaches. Research approaches are plans and procedures that consist of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed method of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Hence, it is based on the nature of the research problem being addressed (Chetty, 2016). Research approaches can be divided into three types: qualitative approach, quantitative approach and Mixed- methods approach.

On the one hand, Creswell (2014) defined “A quantitative approach to is one which the investigator primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e. cause and effect

thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypothesis and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (p.18). Similarly, Dörnyei (2007) reported, “... involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data, which is then analysed primarily by statistical methods. A typical example can be surveyed research using a questionnaire, analysed by statistical software such as SPSS” (p.24).

On the other hand, Ospina (2004) identified qualitative research by saying that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 03). According to Shank (2002, as cited in Ospina, 2004), it is "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (p.05). By systematic, the author means "planned, ordered and public", following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By empirical, he implies that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience.

Finally, the Mixed method approach involves the integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain more depth and understanding of a research problem. Dörnyei (2007) explained that the mixed method researcher “...involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis levels” (p. 24).

3.1.3 Research design. Research design is defined as a framework of methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of research in a reasonably logical manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled (Bhat, n.d). It provides insights about “how” to conduct research using a particular methodology. Every researcher has a list of research questions which need to be assessed – this can be done with research design (Labaree, 2009).

3.1.3.1 qualitative designs. Astalin (2013) revealed that the design of qualitative research is probably the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures. Five major types of qualitative research design are the most commonly used, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and narrative inquiry. Even though, these types fall under the same umbrella of qualitative design; however, each type has a somewhat different focus, resulting in variations in how the research question may be asked, sample selection, data collection and analysis. There can also be overlaps in these types of research; wherein a researcher may combine two or more (Tisdell & Merriam, 2015).

3.1.3.1.1 Phenomenology. According to Creswell (2014), Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as expressed by participants and typically involves conducting interviews. Van Manen (2014, as cited in Tisdell & Merriam, 2015) explained it this way: “Phenomenology is the way of access to the world as we experience it prereflectively. Prereflective experience is the common experience that we live in and that we live through for most, if not all, of our day-to-day existence” (p. 28).

3.1.3.1.2 Grounded theory. Grounded theory is most accurately described as a research method in which the theory is developed from the data, rather than the other way around (Davidson, 2001). It may be defined as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.02). The data in grounded theory studies can come from interviews, observations, and a wide variety of documentary materials.

3.1.3.1.3 Ethnography. Ethnography is a qualitative research method that comes from the discipline of anthropology but applies to other disciplines (Rachel, n.d). Ethnography is the in-depth

study of a culture or a facet of culture. Gathers observations, interviews and documentary data to produce detailed and comprehensive accounts of different social phenomena (Trochim, 2006)

3.1.3.1.4 Case study. In the social sciences and life sciences, a case study is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. Case studies are based on an in-depth investigation and detailed examination of a single individual, group or event to explore the causes of underlying principles. A similar definition states “It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 253).

3.1.3.1.4 Narrative inquiry. In this design, the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their experiences. Then, this information is often retold by the researcher into a narrative chronology. Often, in the end, the narrative combines views from the participant’s life with those of the researcher’s life in a collaborative narrative (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.32 Quantitative designs. With regard to quantitative designs, the focus should be on surveys, correlational researches and experiments, where answering research questions and hypotheses requires the investigation of the relationships between and among variables.

3.1.3.2.1 Survey. A survey provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection to generalise from a sample to a population (Fowler, 2008; as cited in Creswell, 2014).

3.1.3.2.2 Correlational research. Researchers use this quantitative research design to correlate two or more variables using mathematical analysis methods. It is conducted to establish a

relationship between two closely entities and how one impacts the other and what are the changes that are eventually observed. This research method is carried out to give value to naturally occurring relationships, and a minimum of two different groups are required to conduct this quantitative research successfully (Bhat, n.d).

3.1.3.2.3 Quasi-experimental design. Research Ready (n.d) explained that a quasi-experimental design or often referred to as Causal-Comparative seeks to establish a cause-effect relationship between two or more variables. The researcher does not assign groups and does not manipulate the independent variable. Control groups are identified and exposed to the variable. Results are compared with results from groups not exposed to the variable. Quasi-experiments are most likely to be conducted in field settings in which random assignment is difficult or impossible. They are often done to evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment (Nonexperimental Research, n.d).

3.1.3.2.4 Experimental design. According to Bhat (n.d), the experimental research design is used to establish a relationship between the cause and effect of a situation. In this design, the impact caused by the independent variable on the dependent variable is observed.

3.1.3.3 A Mixed-methods design. There have been several typologies for classifying and identifying types of mixed-methods strategies. For example, Creswell (2014) presents three basic Mixed methods designs. The convergent parallel mixed methods design where qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently in one phase. The data are analysed separately and then compared and/or combined.

The Explanatory sequential Mixed methods design is a two-phase design where the quantitative data is collected first followed by qualitative data collection. The purpose is to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. The third design is exploratory sequential mixed methods design. It follows the same process of data collection;

however, it differs in purpose where it seeks to an instrument (such as a survey), to develop a classification for testing, or to identify variables.

Thus, in the present research study, the research design that is used is a case study. First, because In general, case studies enable the researchers to closely examine the phenomenon under-investigation. It will be successful in achieving the aims of the present research as it will produce appropriate kinds of data. That is, it will produce findings that can answer the research questions.

3.1.4 Data collection methods. A researcher requires many data collection tools which may vary in complexity, interpretation, design and administration. Each tool is suitable for the collection of certain type of information. One has to select those tools which will provide data needed data. Different tools used for data collection may be: questionnaire, interview, observation, focus group and tests.

3.1.4.1 Questionnaire. The questionnaire is probably the most popular and used tool among other tools. Quoting from Barr, Davis and Johnson (as cited in Pandey & Pandey, 2015), “A questionnaire is a systematic compilation of questions that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is desired.” Singh (2006) also gave an illustrated definition of questionnaire “the questionnaire consists of a sense of questions or statements to which individuals are asked to respond the questions frequently asked for facts or the opinions, attitudes or preferences of the respondents” (p.192). Before using this tool, it is always advisable to conduct piloting to the questionnaires (Kothari,2004).

3.1.4.2 Interview. Interview is a method which permits an exchange of ideas and information. Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush (2006) pointed out the interview as “Interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts,

experiences, and feelings” (para 01). This method also ensures a higher response rate where the interviewer has more control over the data collection process.

3.1.43 Observation. Observation is recognised as the most direct means of studying people when one is interested in their behaviours. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) defined observation as “a systematic data collection approach. Researchers use all of their senses to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations” (para 01). Observation can be participant and non-participant. Participant observation "combines participation in the lives of the people being studied with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data" (Fetterman, 1998, pp. 34-35). By contrast, non-participant observation is observation with limited interaction with the people one observes (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

3.1.44 Focus group. A group of people assembled in order to discuss a particular subject of the research in order to reveal their opinions and beliefs (Walliman, 2011). Kumar (2011) added that such a tool allows to explore the perceptions, experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common with regard to a situation or event. Thus, this type of interaction can result in high-quality data.

3.1.45 Tests. according to Khan (2010), tests are among the most useful tools of educational research, for they provide the data for most experimental and descriptive studies in education. He also added that this tool has been designed to describe and measure sample of aspects of human behaviour and assess variety of human abilities, potentials achievements and behavior tendencies. Tests possess different degrees of validity reliability and applicability.

For this research, the data collection tools that were used are the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The structured questionnaire was adopted from another research study because it fits perfectly the research objectives and such structured questionnaire reduces the amount of

thinking that respondents need to undertake to complete the questions which lead to higher response and more accurate data. For the semi-structured interview, it was used because it allows informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms as a result a reliable and in depth information are provided.

3.1.6 Sampling techniques. According to Pandey and Pandey (2015), a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. For Rahmadhini (2018), it is a collection consisting of a part or sub-set of the objects or individuals of population which is selected for the express purpose of representing the population.

In social sciences, two methods of sampling are used which are probability and nonprobability sampling. With probability sampling, every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. By contrast, with nonprobability sampling, population elements are selected on the basis of their availability because they are volunteered, or because of the researcher personal judgment that they are representative (Introduction to Sampling, n.d). The two methods of sampling can be categorised as follows in figure 3.1:

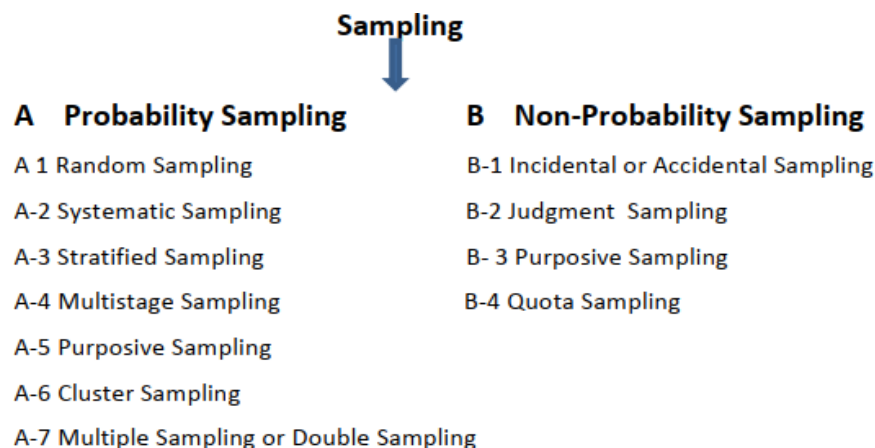


Figure 3.1: Types of Sampling Designs (source: Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p.75)

In the present research, the researcher was unable to employ any sampling except for the accidental or the convenience sampling because the participants were readily available and were the most easily accessible ones for the researcher.

3.2.4 Data collection methods. When choosing the appropriate data collection methods, the researcher has to take into account the research problem nature, the research design, the sampling technique, and the possible data sources. Therefore, the data collection methods selected for the present research include a questionnaire and an interview.

3.2.4.1 Questionnaire.

3.2.4.1.1 Structure and aim. The questionnaire for students was adapted from Ha's (2011) questionnaire; however, some changes were made by the researcher to fit the current research objectives and aims. The questionnaire used in this study is a structured questionnaire included four sections: general information, the identification of the difficulties that students encountered with according to their opinions, reasons for such challenges and possible solutions for these problems. The general information included five questions and was about the participants' age, their level in the English language, the level of interest of the English. Also, whether they read materials in relation to their specialities and if they face difficulties when reading them.

The section of difficulties identification had 18 four-point Likert scale (very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult) items divided into five categories which are difficulties with ESP vocabulary, difficulties related to the lack of background knowledge, difficulties with grammar, difficulties with text and difficulties related to the lack of reading strategies. In each category; there was an open-ended question in each category referred to as others to indicate if there are any other difficulties. The purpose of section two was to explore the causes of the students' reading problems. So, it had nine questions to be answered with yes or no. The final section was about the suggested solution

that should be taken into consideration to overcome these difficulties. The participants were free to choose as much as possible from the proposed solutions and to give more answers from their own experience if it is possible.

It should be noted that the questionnaire was translated into Arabic language before it was administered to the students, so that they would not have any difficulties in understanding the questions.

3.2.4.1.2 Piloting and validation. The piloting process was carried out a week before the submission of the final version of questionnaires to the participants.

In the piloting stage, the questionnaire was handed to two students who were chosen randomly from our population. The reason why it is was given to only two students is the availability of these two students at the university at that time. It is important to note that the questionnaire was sent to them via email. Both students agreed with the clarity of the questions, and the attractiveness of the layout. The questionnaire was also distributed to two teachers as experts to benefit from their feedback and observations; one of them is a teacher at the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences. Both of them made some remarks concerning some spelling mistakes in the Arabic version of the questionnaires. However, the two experts said no gaps or changes were required in the questionnaire.

3.2.4.2 Interview. The interview was conducted on the ESP Teachers from the same Faculty. The general aim of the interview was to get more and in-depth information about the learners reading comprehension difficulties from the teachers' perspective.

The researchers used the final questionnaire as a guide to design the interview, which included nine questions. We decided to use a semi-structured interview. The first two questions were meant to set the tone and create a comfortable atmosphere. The next seven questions were the main ones. They

aimed at collecting more useful information about the topic of the present study. The interview was recorded and conducted with seven teachers. Unfortunately, one of the records of a teacher was corrupted; hence, only the records of six teachers were analysed.

3.2.4.2.2 Piloting and validation. The piloting stage was carried out by a teacher from the same faculty. Concerning the interview questions, the expert said the items were accurate and relevant to the study.

3.2.5 Data collection procedures.

3.2.4.1 Data collection procedures for the questionnaire. The questionnaires were handed to the 32 participants. From 32 students, 22 were handed the questionnaire before their sessions and, a consent letter. The researcher explained the purpose of the current study and asked the participants for any further questions. However, for the other 10 students, the questionnaire was sent via email with a consent letter and a text explaining in it what was the study about and to contact the researcher for any other explanations.

3.4 Results of the Study

3.4.1 Results of the questionnaire. All quantitative data (background information and Likert scales) were coded and registered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) system version 21.0. Various quantitative analyses have been performed, aimed at gaining a thorough knowledge and understanding of the data. The responses were calculated in terms of the number (N) and percentage (%).

3.4.1.1 General information. The general information questions were designed to explore the students' attitudes towards ESP and ESP reading. The responses were then calculated in terms of number (N) and percentage (%).

3.4.1.1.1 *Learners’ age.*

Table 3.1: Learners’ age

Age	24-30	31-35	over 36
Number	15	6	11
Percentage	46.87	18.75	34.37

In table 3.1, we can see that there is a diversity in learners’ age. The majority of learners (46.87%) are between 24 and 30 years. The learners who are over 36 years old represent 34.37% of the sample, and the ones between 31 and 35 are only 18.75%. Depending on their ages, it can be said that the learners have different learning experiences.

3.4.1.1.2 *Learners’ level in English.*

Item 02 aimed to discover the learner’s level in the English language.

Table 3.2: Learners’ level in English

level	Beginner	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper intermediate	Advanced
Number	1	10	17	4	0
percentage	3.12	31.25	53.12	12.5	0

From the table above, 53.12% (17) of the participants had an intermediate level in English language. Three point twelve per cent saw themselves to be beginner and 31.25% just pre-intermediate. Whereas, 12.5% of the students had an upper intermediate in English but none of them consider themselves to be advanced in it.

3.4.1.1.3 Interest in English language.

Table 3.3: interest in English language

Level of interest	Very interested	Somehow interested	Not interested at all
Number	0	13	19
percentage	0	40.6	59.4

Surprisingly, no one from the participants seemed to be that much interested in English language thought its importance in their field. Only 40.6% were somehow interested in it but 59.4% (19), which is the majority, showed no interest towards English Language.

3.4.1.1.4 ESP reading.

Table 3.4: ESP reading

ESP reading	Yes	No
Number	21	11
Percentages	65.7	34.3

Apparently, through the responses, 65.7% (21) of the participants answered with yes while 34.3% (11) answered with no. That is because the sources in English are significant and considered as number one source of information to them.

3.4.1.1.5 *ESP reading difficulties.***Table 3.4:** ESP reading difficulties

ESP reading difficulties	Yes	No
Number	24	8
Percentages	75	25

Out of 32 students, 24 (75%) answered with yes; whereas, 8 (25%) answered with no. Indeed, the first year PhD students face difficulties when reading ESP materials.

3.4.1.2 Difficulties in reading comprehension. Reading difficulties in ESP perceived by the students are classified in terms of vocabulary, background knowledge, grammar, text, and reading strategies. The responses were then calculated in terms of the percentage.

3.4.1.2.1 Difficulties with ESP vocabulary. In item 06, the participants were asked to point out their difficulties with ESP vocabulary. The results are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Difficulties with ESP vocabulary

Questions \ Scale rating	Very Easy		Easy		Difficult		Very Difficult	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6a. Pronouncing specialised words.	0	0	5	15.6	24	75	3	9.4
6b. Understanding the meaning of specialised words.	1	3.1	4	12.5	19	59.4	8	25
6c. Memorising specialised words.	1	3.1	6	18.8	15	46.9	10	31.1
6d. Knowing which meaning is used when a word in a text has many meanings.	4	12.5	3	9.4	14	43.8	11	34.4

Both Items 6a and 6b have the highest percentages in difficult scale (84.4%). In item 6a, 15.6% of students found pronouncing specialised words easy but none of them found it very easy. Also, understanding the meaning of these words is easy for 12.5% of students, and very easy for only 3.1%. The results obtained from items 6c and 6d suggested that students also encountered difficulties with ESP vocabulary, including memorising specialised words (78%) and 78.2% of the students had difficulties in choosing suitable meanings for the polysemantic words in the reading texts.

3.4.1.2.2 Difficulties related to lack of background knowledge. Question 07 investigated the difficulties that the students face in terms of lack of background knowledge. The results are shown in table 3.6.

Table 3.6: The difficulties in terms of background knowledge

Questions	Very Easy		Easy		Difficult		Very Difficult	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
7a. Understanding the content of unfamiliar academic topics.	1	3.1	4	12.5	16	50	11	34.4
7b. Understanding the content of a text with limited background knowledge about it.	0	0	8	25	16	50	8	25
7c. Comprehending authentic materials.	5	15.6	7	21.9	12	37.5	8	25

As it is noticed from the table above, item 7a had the highest rate of the three items. Eighty four point eight per cent of the students agreed that it was difficult in which up to 34.4% confirmed that it was very difficult and the rest considered it difficult. In item 7b, 75% of the participants acknowledged that the understanding the content of a text with limited background knowledge about

it was difficult for them and only 25% considered it as an easy process. The highest scale of easy was 37.5% in item 7c; still, for the majority (62.5%) the comprehension of authentic materials was difficult.

3.4.1.2.3 Difficulties related to Lack of Background Knowledge. Question 08 investigated the difficulties that students face in terms of grammar. The results are shown in table 3.7.

Table 3.7: The difficulties in terms of grammar

Questions	Scale rating		Very Easy		Easy		Difficult		Very Difficult	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8a. Understanding the meaning of long sentences in the reading text.	0	0	8	25	18	56.2	6	18.8		
8b. Understanding the text when it contains a new grammatical structure (i.e. New tense, new phrase, etc.).	1	3.1	7	21.9	15	46.9	9	28.1		
8c. Remembering all the grammatical structures that had been learnt.	3	9.4	4	12.5	15	46.9	10	31.2		

All the items had a relatively high rate of difficulty (75% and 78.1%), which reflects that grammar is a serious problem for the students. Item 8c had the most responses on very difficult and difficult scales (78.1%), meaning that they indeed have difficulties in recalling all the grammatical structures that had been learnt. Items 8a and 8b had the same responses (75%). In item 8a, only 25% found it easy to understand and identify the elements of long sentences, but none of them thought it was very easy. The remaining item 8b, 46.9% of the students thought that it was difficult to comprehend a

reading text containing new grammatical structures, and it was confirmed when 28.1% agreed it was very difficult for them. Thirty two per cent of students thought that it was easy to understand and use new grammatical structures, only 3.1% found it very easy.

3.4.1.2.4 Difficulties with the text. In question 09, the participants were requested to rate the difficulties concerning the ESP texts. The results are illustrated in table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Difficulties with the Text

Questions	Scale rating		Very Easy		Easy		Difficult		Very Difficult	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9a. Defining the structure of the reading texts.	4	12.5	11	34.4	13	40.6	4	12.5		
9b. Knowing how a paragraph is organised.	5	15.6	8	25	17	53.1	2	6.2		
9c. Finding out the most important idea in the text.	7	21.9	12	37.5	9	28.1	4	12.5		
9d. Understanding how the meaning of different sentences is linked together.	3	9.4	8	25	16	50	5	15.6		

Surprisingly, the responses to the difficulties concerning the text were variant in difficultness and easiness. In item 9a, 46.9 % of the students found defining the structure of texts an easy task. Despite that, the rest of them (53.1%) considered it difficult. Item 9b scored the highest rate on an easy and very easy scale (59.4%), 37.5 % found it easy to know the organisation of a paragraph and 21.9% confirmed it was very easy. Items 9c and 9d showed a rather high percentage of students (65.6% and 59.4 respectively) who considered them difficult. Twenty eight point one per cent thought that finding the most important idea in a reading text is difficult and 12.5 % found it very difficult.

Knowing how the meaning of different sentences are linked together is not that easy for students, 50% found it difficult and 15.9 % admitted it to be very difficult for them.

3.4.1.2.5 *Difficulties due to lack of reading strategies* Question 10 explored the difficulties in terms of reading strategies. The results are shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Difficulties due to Lack of Reading Strategies

Questions	Very Easy		Easy		Difficult		Very Difficult	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10a. Knowing what to read closely and what to ignore.	5	15.6	8	25	12	37.5	7	21.9
10b. Recognising what the writer wants to imply in a reading text.	5	15.6	11	34.4	14	43.8	2	6.2
10c. Knowing how to use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) for a better understanding of the text.	1	3.1	9	28.1	10	31.2	12	37.5
10d. Knowing how to answer comprehension questions of a reading text.	6	18.8	9	28.1	14	43.8	3	9.4

All the four items scored the highest rates in difficult scale. The majority of students (68.8%) agreed that the use of illustrations for a better understanding (item 10c) is the most difficult skill. Following it item 10a, 59.4% of students found difficulties in deciding what to read closely and what to ignore in the text, and 40.6% thought it was an easy process for them. Item 10b had the same scores in difficult and easy scales (50%). Six point two per cent of students found making interferences very difficult; however, 15.6% thought it was very easy. The last item 10c was

concerned with answering comprehension questions of a reading text. The item presented the same percentage of easiness (50%) and difficultness (50%).

3.4.1.3 Causes of reading comprehension difficulties. Question 11 was set up to investigate the sources of perceived difficulties in ESP reading by the students. The causes of difficulties fell into two categories: external and internal. The external causes are to do with the reading materials, and teachers, and the internal causes are to do with the students themselves. The results are calculated by percentage and illustrated in Table 3.7.

Table 3.10: Students' views of sources of difficulties

Causes of reading comprehension difficulties	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
11a. ESP lessons are not useful for me.	9	28.1	23	71.9
11b. The texts are too long and full of technical terms.	21	65.6	11	34.4
11c. The texts are full of new and complex grammar structures.	23	71.9	9	28.1
11e. Some texts are taken from authentic materials, which makes it difficult to understand.	22	68.8	10	31.2
11f. The teacher does not teach us sufficient reading strategies.	13	40.6	19	59.4
11g. The teacher does not give us sufficient practice of grammar and vocabulary.	16	50	16	50
11h. I lack motivation to read.	15	46.9	17	53.1
11i. I lack vocabulary especially ESP vocabulary.	22	68.8	10	31.2
11j. I lack knowledge about the topics I am studying.	17	53.1	15	46.9

From Table 3.8, we can see that 65.6% found the main causes of their difficulties to be long texts, which contained a great number of technical terms. However, 71.9% believed that the number of grammar structures in a text was the problem. ESP texts do not contain too many complex grammatical problems. Even though, the grammatical structures in ESP texts, such as mainly simple present tense, simple sentences, complex sentences with common conjunctions; nevertheless, the students found it difficult for them. Sixty eight point eight per cent of the participants thought that the texts which are taken from authentic materials are very difficult to them. It is due to that these texts are full of technical terms, abbreviations, signs and are not illustrated in a coherent style.

As it displayed in Table 3.8, 59.4% of the students admitted that their teachers indeed teach them reading strategies. In item 11g, 50% complained for not being given frequent and sufficient practice of vocabulary and grammar. Yet, 50% reported that they are provided with enough vocabulary and grammar activities.

The data collected also revealed that 68.8% of the students lacked ESP vocabulary, and 53.1% reported that they lacked background knowledge related to the topics they were reading. These findings are consistent with the findings presented in Appendix 7, the students found the area of vocabulary and subject background knowledge difficult. On the other hand, 71.9% (23 out of 32) found ESP lessons useful for them. Only 53.1% of the students considered that having sufficient interest in ESP reading was not one of the causes of reading difficulties.

3.4.1.4 Solutions to reading comprehension difficulties. Question 10 was designed to investigate what types of reading materials motivated students and helped them read ESP more easily. Also, it looked into the students' expectations about the teachers' methodology in teaching ESP reading. The participants were asked to choose as many responses as possible among nine questionnaire items;

apart from these items, the other one was identified (referred to as “others”) for the participants to give their own opinion. The results of this question are presented in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: Solutions to reading comprehension difficulties

Solutions to reading comprehension difficulties	Responses	
	N	Percent
12a. Reading texts should be more related to my specialty.	30	93.75
12b. Reading texts should be shorter.	14	43.75
12c. Reading texts should have a limited number of new words.	22	68.75
12d. Reading texts should be more motivating.	21	65.62
12e. Specialised terms should be explained more carefully.	27	84.37
12f. Grammatical exercises should be more various in form.	23	71.87
12g. I want the teacher to guide us to choose suitable reading strategies for each reading text.	25	71.87
12h. I want the teacher to give us more activities to help remember vocabulary more easily.	26	81.25
12i. The teacher should be competent and have sufficient knowledge about my specialty.	27	84.37

As we can see in Table 3.11, it is apparent that 93.75% of the students preferred subject-related reading texts. Clearly, when the lack of subject background knowledge and ESP vocabulary hinders the students' comprehension, they would easily feel discouraged. This barrier to reading could be lifted only by choosing the right kinds of reading materials which do not look rather difficult to the students and which they can manage.

Moreover, 68.75% of the students believed that the number of new words in a text should be limited so as to make the reading passage readable for them, especially, technical terms, the latter should be taught and explained carefully (84.37%). Another finding is that 65.62% of the participants enjoyed reading motivating reading texts. This kind of text would not make them stressful and discouraged. In addition, 71.87% agreed that grammatical exercises should be more various in form. However, many students thought that it was unnecessary for the reading texts to be shorter. So, only 43.75% agreed on this idea.

The collected data showed that 81.25% of the students expect from the teachers to give them sufficient activities to remember vocabulary easily. It is necessary for the students to memorise a certain amount of vocabulary if they want to understand the text well. This expectation is consistent with the finding that ESP vocabulary is the most difficult problem to students, which is summarised in Appendix 7.

From the above table, we can see that 71% of the informants wanted to be guided to choose the appropriate reading strategies for each type of reading. Eighty four point twenty five per cent of the participants wanted from their ESP teachers to be competent and have sufficient knowledge about their specialty. These results were rather surprising giving the fact that their teachers were already specialised in their fields of study with long experiences in teaching.

3.4.1.2.6 Rank order of ESP reading difficulties. In order to rank the area of language the students perceived as the most difficult, we used SPSS to help us to identify them. With guidance from a teacher expert in statistics we calculated the mean of each difficulty than calculated a new mean of the previous means and categorise them under vocabulary, background knowledge, grammar, text and reading strategies.

Next, to determine the minimum and the maximum length of the four-point Likert scale, the range is calculated by $(4 - 1 = 3)$ then divided by four as it is the greatest value of the scale $(4 \div 3 = 0.75)$. Afterwards, number one which is the least value in the scale was added in order to identify the maximum of this cell. The length of the cells is determined below:

from 1 to 1.74 represents very easy.

from 1.75 to 2.49 represents easy.

from 2.5 to 3.24 represents difficult.

from 3.25 to 4 represents very difficult.

The results are represented in Appendix 7. From Appendix 7, it can be seen that all the items considered to be difficult except for recognising what the writer wants to imply in text and finding out the most important idea in the text which seem to be an easy task for them.

Rank order of the difficulties faced by the participants is as follows vocabulary (3.0156), grammar (2.9792), background knowledge (2.9583), reading strategies (2.6328) and finally the text (2.5156).

3.4.2 Results of the interview. This part of the research presents findings from the interview.

Item 01: How long have you been teaching as an ESP teacher?

The ESP teachers at the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences had a quiet of time in teaching English from two years to eight years teaching. One of them even forgot how long she has been teaching, as she says, since it was a very long time for her. This indicates that they have good experiences in teaching English language and what is remarkable is that they are aware of their students' weaknesses and difficulties.

Item 02: Are your students interested in your course?

Regarding this question, the interviewees provided different answers. The majority of the students were interested in the course because they are aware of the importance of English. T2 said that there

is a significant number of students who are interested in learning English, “they are motivated because they need English in their dissertations. Because English language is their first not second source”, added T1. Despite that, some teachers disagreed. They said their students were not motivated to learn English, or even bother themselves to learn any foreign language because of some obstacles like their weak level.

Item 03: What do you usually tackle in your course?

Concerning this question, there was a general agreement among the interviewees that the courses were about teaching English in relation to their specialities. Quoting from T4 “I teach management courses in English”. T5 answered with “as well as I am teaching students who are studying accounting. So, I have [concerned focusing] on the English for accountants. So, we have learned the names of jobs and we wanted to deal with basics about Grammar”. Other teachers added that they teach business vocabulary, some even teach phonetics to their students to enhance their pronunciation. From this, it can be said that the ESP teachers at the faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences are both competent in English and in their fields of speciality.

Item 04: Do you use any reading materials?

All the teachers agreed that they use reading materials during their lectures. They used articles, books, abstracts, short paragraphs and scientific papers. T4 confessed that she imposes on her learners to read inside and outside the classroom.

Item 05: What are they usually about?

As one of the teachers said, each specialty has its own course, the same goes with the reading materials. The reason behind this is to attract their learners to follow and motivate them. T4 also explained that it is challenging for the learners to understand new ideas and the course in English. It

is already difficult for them to understand a new idea in Arabic, and it would be more difficult if it was with another language. That is why, she always cooperates with a teacher of one of their courses and translate into English the lessons that they have already learnt in Arabic. So that the learners can focus on acquiring the language only.

Item 06: Did you observe any difficulties encountered by your students when they read those materials?

Indeed, all the teachers admitted that their students face some difficulties when they read the materials provided to them inside the classroom; however, the degree of difficulty differs from one student to another.

Item 07: So, I will give you a list of some difficulties, and tell me if your students have them. You are free to add more.

The first difficulty that was mentioned to the interviewees was vocabulary. They all agreed that their students in fact have a considerable lack when it comes to vocabulary, specifically, business vocabulary. T2 commented, “The vocabulary of the field they are studying many terms are strange for them unless the terms are similar to French. In general, they don’t have problem with them but the new terms which are in English, pure English, in most time they have difficulties with them”.

The second difficulty was background knowledge. T1 said that the PhD students have already the background knowledge of their area of study, but in Arabic, which all the other teachers agreed on; however, because of the great deficiency in business vocabulary, they could not understand the texts provided to them even though the materials were heavily related to their fields.

The next difficulty was grammar, T1 mentioned concerning this matter “forget about grammar, they don’t have any rules of grammar except the simple present”. T4 also added that she teaches

grammar rules indirectly while teaching the course because it will take too much time and efforts to understand simple grammatical rules because of the weak level of the students.

The last one was reading strategies, T3 revealed that her learners did not know anything about reading strategies; consequently, she had to teach them some reading strategies like skimming and scanning.

The interviewees mentioned the problem of pronunciation more than once. They discovered that the students have poor pronunciation; as a result, they were shy to read aloud in front of their classmates. Also, the matter of motivation, some of the teachers said their learners were not motivated to read, and even if they imposed on them to read; they were not that much engaged during the session.

Item 08: In your opinion, what are the reasons behind such problems?

The ESP teachers listed some reasons starting from general to specific. T4 stated that English as a language was not given that much importance in Algeria. Subsequently, T6 added they were taught English language as a dead language, only focusing on grammar, which gave the learners the idea of studying only for marks, and this explains the weak level of their students. Moreover, T4 added that even if they tried to read if they were met with some obstacles when reading they would stop immediately and refuse to reread it again. T6 explained this is due to *poor self-concept*. T2 added further that the time devoted to the English course is not enough. Only one session per week is not effective. Also, he added that the methods that are applied to teach them English before becoming PhD students were not effective; so, at this level their language remained weak.

Item 09: Using your experience, how did you treat such difficulties?

Every teacher had his/ her own strategies concerning this matter. The solutions that are suggested are presented as follows:

T1

- . Explained the relationship between the words for better understanding.
- . Varied between the reading materials and tasks to make the learners more motivated and engaged.

T2

- . Used translation into the Arabic language.
- . Encouraged the students to read more.
- . Recommended it would be better if the course of English is more than once per week.

T3

- . Tried to enrich their vocabulary through writing even with mistakes.
- . Taught them how to choose the appropriate materials to read according to their level.
- . Made reading as a homework so the learners were obliged to read.
- . Tried to motivate them through telling them her experiences in learning English.

T4

- . Used brainstorming to find the synonym of the unknown words and tried to explain them in English.
- . Encouraged them to read more starting from the easier and gradually to the difficult one.

T5

- . Made them work in groups so that they can help each other.
- . Tried to explain ambiguous words in English, French, even in Italian but not in Arabic.
- . Advised them to read more even for five minutes a day.

T6

- . Advised them to use dictionaries if they do not understand certain words.

- . Used games like crosswords to enrich their vocabulary.
- . Encouraged them to visualise the text for better understanding.

3.5 Discussion of the Findings

To recapitulate, the main purpose of the present study is to investigate the difficulties of reading comprehension of PhD students at the faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences, and Management Sciences, and to identify the factors that cause such challenges. To start with, the students were aware of their problems with reading, and what hinders their comprehension. Additionally, the ESP teachers were also aware of their students' challenges with reading and sought to use different methods and techniques to reduce them.

3.5.1 Difficulties with ESP vocabulary. Starting with the first difficulty, the ESP vocabulary. It was the highest rated difficulty that affected their understanding which was showed in the results of the questionnaire, and from the answers of teachers.

The ESP vocabulary tends to be specific to the field of studying and has the highest frequency to occur in texts. The ESP learners have difficulties with ESP vocabulary at the level of pronunciation, memorisation, understanding, and the use of polysemy. From the interview with teachers, it was revealed that they do not only have difficulties with specialised words and terms from their field of study but even with general English words which often created problem and issues with ESP vocabulary.

Many factors created such a difficulty. The main reason of such obstacle was the poor level of word recognition. As it is explained in word recognition skills (2019), word recognition is the act of seeing a word and recognising its pronunciation immediately and without any conscious effort. If reading words requires conscious, effortful decoding, little attention is left for comprehension of a text to occur. This means, readers who are not able to recognise words easily face difficulty in getting

information from the text. Because poor word recognition is directly related to poor reading comprehension. Further, ESP teacher complained of the poor pronunciation of their student, and it was confirmed from the results of the questionnaire (see Appendix 7).

According to Walker (2014), when recognising words it comes the working memory then it goes into central executive, and centres around it. In order to be prepared for being sent off to the long-term memory it goes around the phonological loop. If the learner knows the pronunciation of the word it goes successfully, to the long-term memory and can be retained and manipulated by the learners. Hence, when reading, all the learner's cognitive abilities will be dedicated to understand the text. Along the same line, Dennis (2008) expressed that vocabulary influences the reading comprehension skill because readers apply decoding skills to understand the pronunciation and meaning of words they have not seen before.

3.5.2 Difficulties with grammar. The second difficulty was grammar, since students only focus on literal meaning of the reading, that is, to read and translate materials written in English, they make a lot of efforts to increase the size of their vocabulary and neglect learning grammar. It was reported by the ESP teachers that their learners almost know nothing about grammar. This goes because of the view of grammar, as Akbari (2014) described it, a discrete set of meaningless, decontextualised structures, and as a set of prescriptive rules about linguistic forms. Grammatical structures do not only have forms, but they are also used to express meanings (semantics) in appropriate use contexts (pragmatics).

If the ESP learners learn how to manipulate syntactic structures in a text while reading a text, their comprehension will be greatly promoted. At the same time, this facilitates reading comprehension, since it allows them to have a detailed reading comprehension, deepen their understanding and increases their reading speed. Pratomo (2010) highlighted that to teach grammar or not in ESP

courses is now no longer an issue. The real issue according to him should centre on which grammar items learners need most and how teachers can most effectively teach grammar for them.

3.5.3 Difficulties with background knowledge. The third problem was the lack of background knowledge, the results from the questionnaire contradict with what has been said by the teachers. From the results it is clear that background knowledge of the topic was difficult to the learners; however, the ESP teachers reported that the PhD students have already high background knowledge.

First, there is a relationship between reading comprehension and background knowledge. According to schema theory, there is a need to have a prior knowledge to understand the meaning. Having much knowledge or information about different matters, and subjects affects reading comprehension. Hence, it is important to have high prior knowledge to achieve high performance in reading comprehension. On the other hand, if the reader is not highly competent in the language, even with a high prior knowledge, there will be a poor performance in reading.

Thus, the difficulties concerning the lack of background knowledge is not a difficulty by itself, but it is only a matter of language proficiency. They do not have the necessary linguistic knowledge of the target language, so their reading process in English language reading is more difficult and complicated.

3.5.4 Difficulties with reading strategies. The next difficulty was the reading strategies. The problems that the students face in reading comprehension can lay in the lack or the absence of the reading strategies. Under the problem of reading comprehension may lay a lack of interest towards the subject of the text, not being able to understand a word or a sentence, not being able to establish a connection between the beginning and, end of the sentence if the sentence is too long, and not being able to reach the main idea and other more. Good readers know how to use different reading strategies to solve the problems they are faced with while deducing meaning from the text. Such strategies require explicit instruction and

consistent reinforcement from the teacher to the student, and need to be consciously practised by students each time.

3.5.5. Difficulties with the text. Moving to the following difficulty, the reading text. The participants pointed out in the questionnaire that the texts were too long and complicated; in addition, some authentic materials were difficult to be understood. There is a strong relationship between the text organisation and comprehension. The text organisation assists readers to comprehend written texts. Students in ESP settings are asked to read articles and papers related to their field of study and which they are supposed to know well their structures. In case students fail at recognising how texts are structured and organised, they will encounter difficulties in spotting the information and, so text comprehension. Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text. During reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension. This mainly concerns the wording of the text and how ideas represent meaning.

3.5.6 Difficulties with motivation. The last difficulty is motivation to read. The teachers reported that their learners were not motivated to read any materials provided to them inside the classroom which contradicts with the participants answers in question 04. It seems that the majority of students read outside the classroom and are not much interested in what is provided to them from materials during their class time.

Learners' interest and motivation are very important in developing the reading comprehension skill. If readers find the reading material monotonous, they will have a lot of problems in concentrating on their comprehension. This can lead to a lowering of reading comprehension among readers. If the reading material is interesting for learners, they can easily understand it and can remember it clearly.

In addition, their teachers tried to motivate them to read more using different methods but to no avail. According to one study that investigated the relationship between reading motivation, and

reading comprehension, the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were identified. That study found that intrinsic reading motivation positively affected the reading ability. However, extrinsic reading motivation negatively affected reading ability. Moreover, intrinsic reading motivation increased the amount of reading comprehension than extrinsic motivation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). It was very important to emphasise on developing intrinsic reading motivation instead of extrinsic reading motivation.

3.6 Synthesis of the Findings

From the above analysis, the following conclusions about the difficulties in ESP reading and the causes of them can be arrived at.

Firstly, reading is a very important skill in learning ESP. It has been given the first priority and paid more attention to than the other language skills. Based on the results of the questionnaire as well as the results of the interview, it can be seen that when reading ESP, the students encounter various difficulties in almost all aspects of language. The existing difficulties are in ESP vocabulary, subject background knowledge, grammar aspects, the text discourse, reading strategies, in addition to the motivation to read.

Secondly, as perceived by the students and teachers, the reading difficulties might come from different sources. Many are caused by the ESP materials or the students themselves: their inadequate linguistic knowledge, their motivation to read, and reading strategies.

Thirdly, the students suggested that in order to improve the teaching and learning of ESP reading, the reading materials should be modified simpler and more motivating with a limited number of new words in each text. Also, the teaching methods should suit the level of the students. Besides, their

teachers suggested their learners to read more to enhance their reading performance, and to be more motivated to read, specifically and to learn English, in general.

Conclusion

To conclude, this final chapter discussed the fieldwork and data analysis. First of all, a theoretical background was provided to shed light on the methodology adopted to conduct the present study. The data were obtained from two tools: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Also, the data were analysed descriptively, and discussed in the last section of this chapter. At the end of this chapter, it can be said that the difficulties of the first year PhD students at the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra University were somehow identified with the sources behind those difficulties.

General Conclusion

Reading is one of the four important skills in learning English, specially ESP. Reading has been given the first priority and has been paid more attention as the students have to read English materials related to their own specialist subject. However, they have encountered a lot of difficulties in reading ESP materials and, therefore, failed to become efficient readers. This study provided an analysis of some difficulties in ESP reading and the sources and the causes of the unsuccessful reading comprehension of the first year PhD students at the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra University.

In order to achieve the intended purposes, we adopted a qualitative research approach. In relevance to this approach, we employed two data collection methods, namely: a questionnaire and an interview, in order to collect the appropriate data. The findings of this research revealed that the ESP students in the context under study encountered difficulties in almost all areas of language. The most common difficulties are in the area of vocabulary and grammar. The background knowledge, the text discourse, and reading strategies were perceived to have the same difficult level. Moreover, the findings of this study showed that despite the awareness of the importance of reading in ESP learning, some students had negative attitudes towards ESP reading, they were not interested or motivated to read, which made their reading more difficult.

From the analysis of the findings, the students were not equipped with the necessary skills to become successful readers since they lack essential linguistic knowledge which affected on their subject background understanding. Another cause of difficulties came from the students' poor word recognition. In addition, some ESP reading materials which were complex in structure and highly specialised and contained many difficult terminologies that the students could not cope with, and some of them were not inclined to the interest of the students.

Pedagogical Recommendations

This section suggests possible ways to reduce the students' difficulties in reading ESP and improve the quality of teaching and learning ESP.

- It is necessary for the teachers to make the materials interesting enough to draw the students' attention. This is because the lessons contain long texts with too many new words, and about unfamiliar professional topics. Therefore, teachers should provide easy reading lessons by simplifying, adapting the materials to suit the students' level of proficiency so that the students can find themselves at ease and read on.
- Different texts need different strategies. So, it is useful to equip students with a variety of reading strategies, including: skimming, scanning, predicting, inferring, word-building and recognising organisational patterns.
- The use of visual aids not only is very helpful in motivating students, but also helpful for students to understand the meanings of words clearly and memorise them quickly, especially in the case of ESP vocabulary. Most vocabulary is highly specialised; therefore, it is advisable for teachers to use visual aids in teaching ESP vocabulary. Visual aids can be: pictures, real objects, flash cards, charts, maps, diagrams, and blackboard. Visual aids are better than any other explanations when introducing a new word because it can give what exactly what students need to know without translating into their mother tongue.
- It is very boring if the teacher only conducts the same reading activities from unit to another. ESP reading is naturally boring due to its specificity; therefore, during teaching process the teachers should vary the different activities, especially reading tasks in order to arouse students' interest.
- In order to enhance the students' reading interest and better motivate the students to read, it is

important for the teachers to help the students realise how useful reading is. Firstly, reading is one of the four language skills which is integrated. So, reading well will help the students pick up vocabulary, structures, or ideas to speak and write.

- Teachers should encourage the students to form the positive and extensive reading habit. Reading extensively outside the classroom can help them enrich their vocabulary and knowledge of the subject matter.

Study Limitation

Like any other study, this research had certain limitations. The most important ones are stated below:

- The researcher could not deal with the other important factors affecting the reading process, such as readers' general intelligence, language aptitude, attitudes, language exposure, and personality factors.
- The researcher could not conduct a group discussion or an interview with the sample to gain more information of the research problem due to the unavailability of the students all week and their tight courses schedule.

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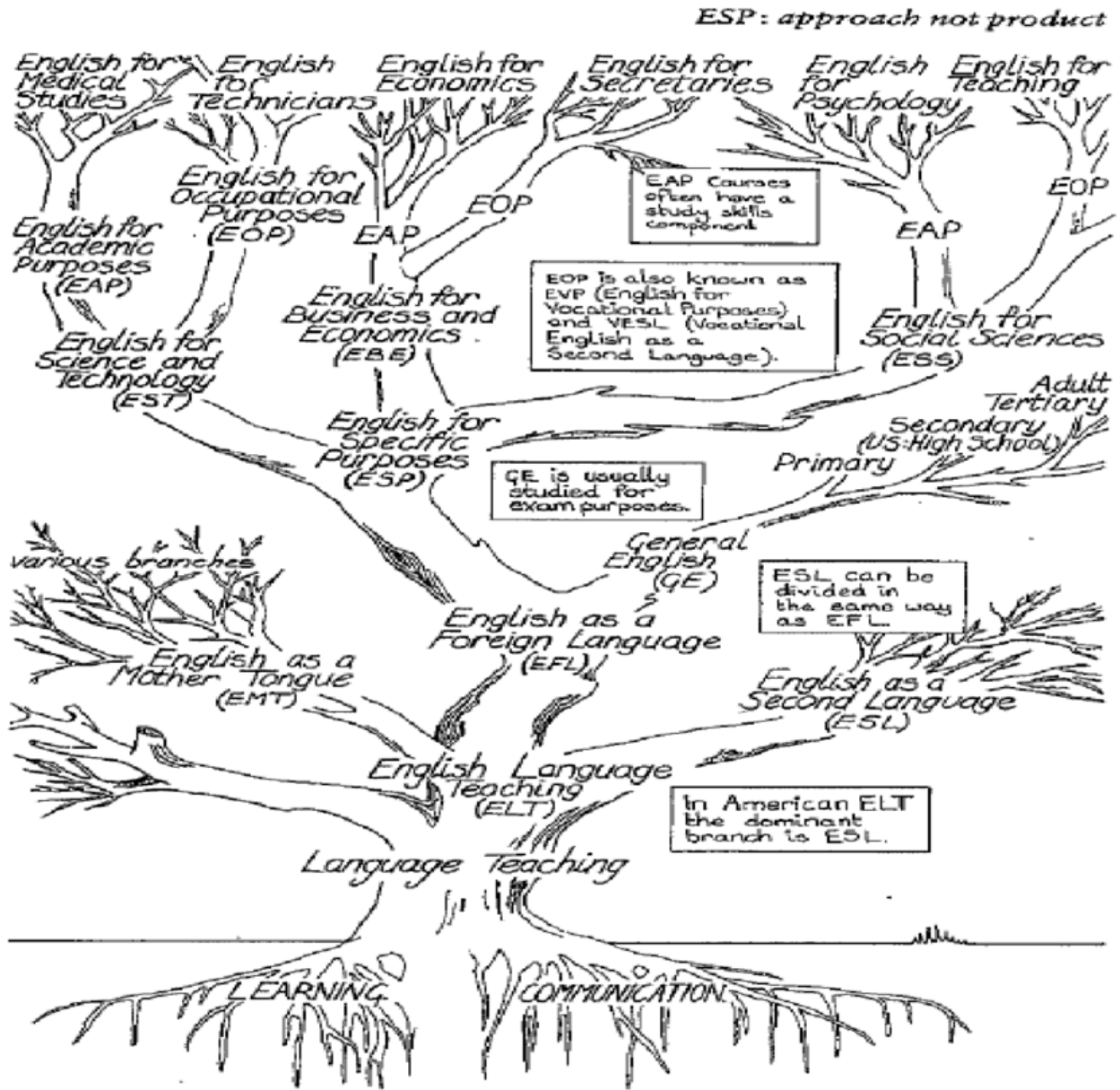
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Tree of ELT by Hutchinson & Waters (1987)



Appendix 2

Consent Letter for Teachers

Dear teacher,

I am conducting an investigation into some difficulties that hinder ESP learners' reading comprehension, as part of my Master dissertation at the level of first year doctorate students at the Department of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences at Biskra University. At this phase of research, I wish to conduct an interview with you as a part of my research tools.

This consent form is necessary to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to participate. Would you therefore sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- 1- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- 2- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by the researcher.
- 3- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to the researcher.
- 4- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available online will be anonymised so that you cannot be identified.

You are entitled to withhold your consent for this interview, and you may withdraw your consent at any time.

If you have any questions or comments relating to this interview, you may contact me at the following address.

HAZMANI IMAN
ENGLISH DIVISION
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
UNIVERSITY OF MAHAMED KHIDER OF BISKRA
Tel : 06 68 78 70 01
E-mail : Hazmani.iman@gmail.com

Yours Sincerely,

I voluntarily agree to participate in the interview carried by IMAN HAZMANI

Name of University:

Name of teacher:

E-mail:.....

Date:

Signed:

Appendix 3

Interview for ESP teachers

- 1- How many years have you been teaching ESP?
- 2- Are your students interested in your course?
- 3- What do you usually tackle in your course?
- 4- Do you use any reading materials?
- 5- What are they usually about?
- 6- Did you observe any difficulties encountered by your students when they read those materials?
- 7- So, I will give you a list of some difficulties and tell me if your students have them. You are free to add more.
- 8- In your opinion, what are the reasons behind such problems?
- 9- Using your experience, how did you treat such difficulties?

Appendix 4

Consent Letter for Students

أدعوك للمشاركة في دراسة بعنوان: تحقيق في صعوبات استعاب القراءة باللغة الانجليزية لأهداف معينة لدى طلبة لاولى دكتوراه بكلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير. انا طالبة بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة من كلية الادب و اللغات، وأنا بصدد كتابة اطروحة الماجستير. الغرض من هذا البحث هو: تحديد صعوبات القراءة لدى طلبة الاولى دكتوراه و اسبابها و اقتراح حلول لهذه الصعوبات.

مشاركتك في هذا البحث امر تطوعي، يمكنك الرفض ، أو ترك أي أسئلة لا ترغب في الإجابة عليها فارغة. ستظل ردودك سرية ومجهولة. لا أحد غير الباحثين سيعرف إجاباتك الفردية على هذا الاستبيان.

إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان ، فيرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة الواردة فيه قدر الإمكان.

شكرا لمساعدتكم لنا في هذا المسعى المهم.

انا أوافق على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان الذي تم القيام به من قبل هزماني ايمان.

اسم الجامعة:

اسم الكلية:

التخصص:

الاسم و اللقب:

التاريخ:

التوقيع:

Appendix 5

The Questionnaire: Arabic Version

إستبيان حول صعوبات القراءة

يبحث هذا الاستبيان عن الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلبة السنة الاولى دكتوراه بكلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة في ما يخص فهم القراءة في محيط الجامعة. نحيطك علما بأن جميع المعلومات التي ستقدمها هي فقط لغرض الدراسة. شكرا جزيلاً لك على توفير وقتك الثمين في هذا الاستبيان. يرجى وضع علامة في الخانة المناسبة.

ملاحظة:

المواد التعليمية الأصلية: هي مواد (نصوص او حوارات) تاخذ من حياة الواقع للمتكلمون الأصليون للغة الانجليزية و تستعمل في التعليم على عكس المواد التعليمية و التي يتم تصميمها من قبل الاساذ و تتصف انها ابسط و اسهل من المواد التعليمية الأصلية.

معلومات عامة

1- العمر

2- صف مستواك في اللغة الإنجليزية

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ضعيف جدا |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ضعيف |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | حسن |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | جيد |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | جيد جدا |

3-كيف تصف اهتمامك بحصة اللغة الإنجليزية

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | غير مهتم على الاطلاق |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | مهتم نوعا ما |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | مهتم جدا |

4- هل تقوم بقراءة نصوص متعلقة بمجال تخصصك باللغة الانجليزية؟

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا |

5- هل تواجه أي صعوبات عند قراءة مواد متعلقة بتخصصك باللغة الإنجليزية؟؟

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | نعم |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | لا |

الجزء الاول: صعوبات في فهم نصوص تخصصي باللغة الانجليزية

فيما يلي بعض الصعوبات التي قد تواجهها عند قراءة نص من تخصصك باللغة الانجليزية يرجى وضع علامة في الخانة المناسبة

1- صعوبات مع الكلمات التخصصية

صعب جدا	صعب	سهل	سهل جدا	
				أ. نطق الكلمات التخصصية.
				ب. فهم معنى الكلمات المتخصصة.
				ج. حفظ الكلمات المتخصصة.
				د. معرفة أي معنى يتم استخدامه عندما يكون للكلمة في النص العديد من المعاني.
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)				

2- صعوبات بسبب نقص في الخلفية المعرفية

صعب جدا	صعب	سهل	سهل جدا	
				أ. فهم محتوى الموضوعات غير المألوفة.
				ب. فهم محتوى موضوع النص مع معرفة خلفية محدودة حول هذا الموضوع.
				ج. فهم المواد التعليمية الأصلية.
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)				

3- صعوبات في قواعد اللغة

صعب جدا	صعب	سهل	سهل جدا	
				أ. فهم معنى الجمل الطويلة في النص.
				ب. فهم محتوى النص عندما يحتوي على بنية نحوية جديدة (زمن جديد ، شبه جملة).
				ج. تذكر جميع الهياكل النحوية التي تم تعلمها من قبل.
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)				

4- صعوبات في تصميم النص

صعب جدا	صعب	سهل	سهل جدا	
				أ. تحديد نمط النص.
				ب. معرفة الفكرة الأكثر أهمية في النص

				ج. فهم كيفية ربط معاني الجمل المختلفة معًا.
				د. معرفة كيفية تنظيم الفقرة في النص
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)				
.....				

5- استراتيجيات القراءة

صعب جدا	صعب	سهل	سهل جدا	
				أ. معرفة ما يجي قرائته عن كُتب وما يجب تجاهله.
				ب. إدراك ما يريد الكاتب التلميح اليه في النص .
				ج. معرفة كيفية استخدام الرسوم التوضيحية (الجداول والأشكال والصور) لفهم النص بشكل أفضل.
				د. معرفة كيفية الإجابة على أسئلة الفهم لنص القراءة
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)				
.....				

الجزء الثاني : أسباب صعوبات القراءة

هل تكمن العوامل التالية من بين اسباب صعوبات القراءة لديك؟

لا	نعم	
		أ. دروس اللغة الانجليزية غير مفيدة بالنسبة لي.
		ب. النصوص طويلة جدًا وملينة بالكلمات التخصصية.
		ج. النصوص مليئة ببنيات القواعد الجديدة والمعقدة.
		د. بعض النصوص مأخوذة من مواد تعليمية أصلية ، مما يجعل من الصعب علي فهمها.
		هـ. الاستاذ لا يعلمنا استراتيجيات القراءة الكافية.
		و. الاستاذ لا يمنحنا ممارسة كافية للقواعد والمفردات.
		ز. أفنقد للثقة والتحفيز.
		ح. أفنقر إلى المفردات وخاصة مفردات المتعلقة بتخصصي.
		ط. أفنقر إلى المعرفة حول الموضوعات التي أدرسها.
غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)		
.....		

الجزء الثالث: حلول للتغلب على صعوبات القراءة

لتسهيل قراءتك، ما الذي يجب ضبطه في رأيك؟ (اختر أكبر عدد ممكن)

	أ. يجب أن تكون النصوص أكثر ارتباطاً بتخصصي.
	ب. يجب أن تكون النصوص أقصر.
	ج. يجب أن تحتوي النصوص على عدد محدود من الكلمات الجديدة.
	د. يجب أن تكون النصوص أكثر تحفيزاً.
	هـ. يجب شرح المصطلحات التخصصية بعناية أكبر.
	و. يجب أن تكون التمارين النحوية أكثر تنوعاً في الشكل.
	ز. أريد من الاستاذ أن يرشدنا لاختيار استراتيجيات قراءة مناسبة لكل نص.
	ح. أريد أن يقدم لنا الاستاذ المزيد من الأنشطة للمساعدة في تذكر المفردات بسهولة أكبر.
	ط. يجب على الاستاذ ان يكون كفؤ و على دراية بمجال تخصصي.
	غيرها (يرجى الإشارة هنا)

شكراً جزيلاً لك على توفير وقتك الثمين في هذا الاستبيان

Appendix 6:

The Questionnaire: English Version

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HINDER ESP LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION

This questionnaire is designed to investigate into the difficulties of ESP learners' reading comprehension of first year PhD students at the Faculty of Economic and Commercial Sciences and Management Sciences. Your assistance in completing the questionnaire is appreciated. All the information provided by you is solely for the study purpose.

General information

1- Age:

2- Describe your level in English?

Beginner

Pre-intermediate

Intermediate

Upper intermediate

Advanced

3- How do you describe your interest in English?

Very interested

Somehow interested

Not interested at all

4- Do you read any texts related to your specialty in English?

Yes

No

5- do you face any difficulties when reading materials in English related to your specialty?

Yes

No

Section One: Difficulties in reading comprehension

Here are some of difficulties you may encounter when reading ESP text. Please tick the appropriate box.

Very Easy (VE) Easy (E) Difficult (D) Very Difficult (VD)

6- Difficulties with ESP vocabulary

	VE	E	D	VD
6a. Pronouncing technical terms.				
6b. Understanding the meaning of specialised words.				
6c. Memorising specialised words.				
6d. Knowing which meaning is used when a word in a text has many meanings.				
6e. Others (Please indicate here)				

7- Difficulties related to Lack of Background Knowledge

	VE	E	D	VD
7a. Understanding the content of unfamiliar academic topics.				
7b. Understanding the content of a text with a limited background knowledge about it.				
7c. Comprehending authentic materials.				

7d. Others (please indicate here)				
--	--	--	--	--

8-Difficulties with Grammar

	VE	E	D	VD
8a. Understanding the meaning of long sentences in the reading text.				
8b. Understanding the text when it contains new grammatical structure (i.e. New tense, new phrase, etc.).				
8c. Remembering all the grammatical structures that had been learned.				
8e. Others (Please indicate here)				

9- Difficulties with the text

	VE	E	D	VD
9a. Defining the structure of the reading texts.				
9b. Finding out the most important idea in the text.				
9c. Understanding how the meaning of different sentences are linked together.				
9d. Knowing how a paragraph is organised.				
9g. Others (please indicate here)				

10- Reading strategies

	VE	E	D	E
10a. Knowing what to read closely and what to ignore.				
10b. Recognising what the writer wants to imply in a reading text.				
10c. Knowing how to use illustrations (tables, figures, & pictures) for a better understanding of the text.				
10d. Knowing how to answer comprehension questions of a reading text.				
10e. Others (Please indicate here)				

Section Two: Causes of reading comprehension difficulties

11- Please indicate if the following problems are the causes of your reading comprehension difficulties.

	YES	NO
11a. ESP lessons are not useful for me.		
11b. The texts are too long and full of technical terms.		
11c. The texts are full of new and complex grammar structures.		
11e. Some texts are taken from authentic materials, which makes it difficult to understand.		
11f. The teacher does not teach us sufficient reading strategies.		
11g. The teacher does not give us sufficient practice of grammar and vocabulary.		
11h. I lack motivation to read.		
11i. I lack vocabulary especially ESP vocabulary.		

11j. I lack knowledge about the topics I am studying.		
11k. Others (Please indicate here)		

Section Three: Solutions to reading comprehension difficulties

12- To make your ESP reading easier, what do you think must be adjusted (choose as many as possible).

12a. Reading texts should be more related to my specialty.	
12b. Reading texts should be shorter.	
12c. Reading texts should have a limited number of new words.	
12d. Reading texts should be more motivating.	
12e. Specialised terms should be explained more carefully.	
12f. Grammatical exercises should be more various in form.	
12g. the teacher should guide us to choose suitable reading strategies for each reading text.	
12h. the teacher should give us more activities to help remember vocabulary more easily.	
12i. The teacher should be competent and have sufficient knowledge about my specialty.	
12j. Others (Please indicate here)	

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix 7:

Rank Order of The Difficulties

	Mean	Scale
Pronouncing specialised words	2.94	difficult
Understanding the meaning of specialised words	3.06	difficult
Memorising specialised words	3.06	difficult
Knowing which meaning is used when a word has many meanings	3.00	difficult
Vocabulary	3.0156	difficult
Understanding unfamiliar academic topics	3.16	difficult
Understanding a text with a limited background knowledge about it	3.00	difficult
Comprehending authentic materials	2.72	difficult
Background knowledge	2.9583	difficult
Understanding the meaning of long sentences	2.94	difficult
Understanding the text when it contains new grammatical structure	3.00	difficult
Remembering all the grammatical structures	3.00	difficult
Grammar	2.9792	difficult
Defining the structure of texts	2.53	difficult
Finding out the most important idea in the text	2.31	easy
Knowing how a paragraph is organised	2.50	difficult
Understanding how the meaning of different sentences are linked together	2.72	difficult
Text	2.5156	difficult
Knowing what to read closely and what to ignore	2.66	difficult
Recognising what the writer wants to imply in text	2.41	easy
Knowing how to use illustrations	3.03	difficult
Reading strategies	2.6328	difficult

ملخص

أعطيت القراءة الأولوية الأولى للطلاب الذين يتعين عليهم قراءة المواد المتعلقة بمواضيع اختصاصهم بالإنجليزية. ومع ذلك ، واجه المتعلمين الكثير من الصعوبات في قراءة مواد من تخصصهم باللغة الانجليزية ، وبالتالي فشلوا في أن يصبحوا قراء فعالين. ما هي إذن الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب عند قراءة مواد من تخصصهم باللغة الانجليزية؟ وما الأسباب وراء قراءتهم الفاشلة؟ وفقاً لذلك، يهدف البحث الحالي على البحث في الصعوبات التي تعيق فهم القراءة لديهم، بالإضافة إلى تحديد أسباب هذه التحديات. لمعالجة كل هذه القضايا تم تبني نهج بحثي نوعي. علاوة على ذلك ، كانت استراتيجية البحث التي تم استخدامها هي دراسة حالة. فيما يتعلق بأساليب جمع البيانات ، استخدمنا استبيان ومقابلة. مجتمع هذه الدراسة هم طلاب الدكتوراه في كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير بجامعة بسكرة و يبلغ عددهم 112 طالباً. تم اختيار فقط طلاب السنة الأولى دكتوراه للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. شارك 32 طالباً في الإجابة على استبيان ، ودُعي ستة من معلمهم في اللغة الانجليزية لاجراء مقابلة. أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن طلاب غالباً ما يواجهون صعوبات في العديد من مجالات اللغة ، مثل صعوبات في المفردات اللغوية ،القواعد اللغوية، تصميم النص، استراتيجيات القراءة، معرفة خلفية الموضوع و الحافز للقراءة. وكشفت الدراسة أيضاً أن فهم القراءة غير الناجح آتٍ من مصادر مختلفة: ضعف مستوى التعرف على الكلمات ، عدم وجود دافع للقراءة ، نقص استراتيجيات القراءة ، عدم امتلاك المعرفة اللغوية و النحوية الكافية.