



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific
Research



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Enhancing EFL Students' Reading Comprehension through
Using Formative Assessment Procedure

A Case Study of Third Year Students of English at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as
partial fulfilment for the Master's Degree in Sciences of the Language

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June 2015

Dedication

To my beloved mother and father

To my adorable sisters and brothers

To my whole family

To my dear teachers

To my closest friends

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have supported me during my university journey. First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah the first source of inspiration and blessings to me.

I owe a special debt to my supervisor **Dr. Saliha Chelli** for all her time, support, and extraordinary patience during my dissertation writing process. She always had faith in my potentials.

Last, but not least, I would like also to thank Jury members; **Ms. Warda Khouni** and **Msr. Imene Guettel**.

I would like also to heartily express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all my family members; my beloved mother “Allh Yrhamha”, father and my adorable sisters and brothers.

Special thanks to my closest friends; **Aboubakar, Ilyass, Hichem, Idriss, Yessin, soufiane, kamel, Youness, Housin, Karim, oussama,**

I would like also to thank my class mates, yahia, nebil, Ibrahim, bendou, Kenza, H., Kenza, B., Fella,

Abstract

Reading, as a receptive skill, encompasses the task of comprehending and interacting with the reading material's content. Hence, communicating the text content requires more than recognizing grammatical and syntactic rules besides memorizing vocabulary. However, it calls for the mastery of many cognitive processes such as critical and analytical thinking. Thus, many students still face notable difficulties in understanding the assigned texts. Therefore, the present study aims at emphasizing formative assessment techniques for the purposes of drawing teachers' and learners' attention to their reading comprehension difficulties. Moreover, through formative assessment procedure, we intend to diagnose students' weaknesses and develop their abilities. The next objective is drawing teachers' attention to the importance of formative assessment to assist them in raising students' reading comprehension abilities. In an attempt to find a therapy to this serious problem a main hypothesis was put forward which states that if EFL teachers use formative assessment in the classroom, EFL students' reading comprehension will be enhanced. A sample of hundred third year students' of English at University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra were used in this study, in addition to six teachers have been requested to answer the research questionnaire and the adapted method is the descriptive one. The results obtained in this research revealed that learners face different obstacles during the reading process due to their insufficient level in understanding the material to be read. Moreover, both teachers and students agree with the importance of formative assessment in developing learners' reading comprehension achievement and assisting teachers to manage this skill in the classroom. Finally, we can conclude that the research work has confirmed the validity of our hypothesis as a matter of fact all the results indicate that the proposed technique contributes in enhancing learners' performance in reading comprehension skill.

List of Abbreviations

CFS: Classroom Fluency Snapshot

CTT: Classical Test Theory

EFL: English as a foreign language

F: Frequency

FA: Formative Assessment

FV: Face Validity

GT: Generalisability Theory

H1: Hypothesis number one

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

IRT: Item Response Theory

PBAS: Performance-Based Assessment Systems

SA: Summative assessment

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1. Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension process comprises both comprehending and interacting with the reading material's content. Therefore, recognizing grammatical and syntactic rules with memorizing some vocabulary and read fluently are not enough to understand and communicate the text content successfully. However, it requires the mastery of many cognitive processes such as critical and analytical thinking, connecting a new text with past experience, interpreting, evaluating, synthesizing and being able to monitor what they understand. Although students have acquired considerable amount of background knowledge in English, many of them still face remarkable difficulties in reading comprehension skill.

Seemingly, students who could not master these skills yet are always feeling anxious and stressful when they are asked to read and analyze a text. In fact this issue affects negatively learners' performance during practicing reading skill. Thus, teachers need to take into account these issues and should do their best to find out what really behind their weaknesses. Therefore, they need to search for a variety of strategies and procedures which could assist them in diagnosing these weaknesses and developing a variety of learners' abilities in reading comprehension. Formative assessment is perceived as a worthy procedure through which learners' weaknesses could be diagnosed and competences could be developed.

2. Significance of the Study

The present study is deemed significant in terms of diagnosing students' reading comprehension difficulties which represent the great fear for EFL learners since their readings show a low degree of comprehension. This research is also perceived important in terms of discussion of a vital problem that most of students suffer from. Notably, the core of study lies in filling gaps of knowledge and overvalues the subject matter.

This study is very significant because it may give close to both students and teachers to get rid of reading comprehension difficulties. That is, students need to know how formative assessment and reading comprehension are related to develop their reading comprehension. This type of assessment can be beneficial for teachers in classroom to

manage different encountered reading comprehension matters. Hence, teachers who use this procedure need to continue and those do not use it, they should start too.

2. Aims of the research

We intend through this research to call the attention for the learners' reading comprehension difficulties and assist them in overcoming the different encountered predicaments in managing this skill. Moreover, through presenting formative assessment procedure, we intend to diagnose students' weaknesses in reading comprehension and developing their abilities and performance. In addition, our objective is drawing teachers' attention to the importance of formative assessment to assist them in raising students' reading comprehension competencies.

3. Research Questions

What are EFL learners' reading comprehension difficulties?

What does formative assessment means?

Is formative assessment an important procedure to enhance learners' reading comprehension?

Do EFL learners advance in reading comprehension if they are exposed to much more formative reading comprehension tests?

Are EFL teachers aware of the significance of formative tests?

5. Research Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

If EFL teachers use formative assessment in the classroom, EFL students' reading comprehension will be enhanced.

6. Research Tools

This research is carried out using the qualitative approach in order to acquire and accumulate data for this dissertation. Moreover, a descriptive design is employed in the current investigation as a method which suits this research subject and which adopts an analytical framework to be implemented in the present study. Furthermore,

information is derived from any material relevant to this field of interest which is a new and a fresh area of research in the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. In addition, the research sample are one hundred who are randomly selected from third Year LMD Students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. population is deliberately chosen because it is put forward that those students have acquired sufficient linguistic foundations in almost all the subjects. In addition to six teachers of English in the same university. Finally, the results obtained through the questionnaire are analyzed and generalized to the whole population.

Chapter one

What is reading and reading comprehension?

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Introduction

Reading is perceived as a receptive skill which enables students to obtain considerable amount of knowledge. The constant encountering of new knowledge could assist learners to increase their level and performance in many other skills. Thus, it is considered at the head when listing language skills in terms of constructing a solid ground. Consequently, learners need to raise the attitude of reading and becoming active readers. In addition, they are required to increase their cognitive abilities which enable them to manipulate different encountered predicaments that hinder the comprehension of the assigned text. During the reading process, students are not only required to recognize words as a signal unit; however, they are invited to comprehend the whole meaning of the text. In this chapter we intend to provide definition of reading, types, models, and types of readers. Moreover, we aim to emphasize specific issues of reading comprehension which are considered as the basic part of this research. More importantly, we will present strategies of assessing reading comprehension, purposes and ways of assessing reading comprehension, and finally variety of affecting factors will also be included in this chapter.

1. Definition of Reading

Many studies have tried to provide a clear definition of reading; however, due to its complexity none of these trails have succeeded to include all aspects of the real nature of the reading process. Most of the proposed definition prioritizes one aspect over the other. In association with this, Baudoin et al. (1994) claim that reading is a sophisticated process which encompasses both word recognition and comprehension i.e. the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language and comprehension which means the process of making sense to the printed words, sentence, and connected paragraphs. This view offers a division between recognition of words during the reading process and comprehension. The reader's eyes move throughout the text to recognize the language first as a kind of input and then his/ her brain processes the recognized data in order to create appropriate concert image. Reading is a process involves two mental activities graphic identification and construction meaning of these graphics.

In contrast, other studies propose different opinion concerning the nature of reading, whereby; they present other definition because the previous one emphasizes only the importance of the term recognition over comprehension, so reading according to this view is recognizing written symbols, and then harmonizing them to corresponding sounds. To

support this Alderson (1984) states that reading is a matter of making sense of written language rather than decoding printed sound. Accordingly, reading in this case is not only a matter of decoding words in order to grasp the meaning, Goodman (1973) has claimed that reading cannot be simply a word by-word deciphering until the reader understands the given passage; however, he/she focuses upon text comprehension via using previous prior knowledge during the reading process. Goodman's definition offers another activity which should be taking into consideration by the reader which demonstrates that this latter has to explore his/ her background knowledge during the process of reading in order to fully understanding a text.

Moreover, other scholars perceive that reading is a complex mental activity which involves many cognitive processes, evidently Gates (1949, P. 3) states that reading is "a complex organization of patterns of higher mental processes...[that]...can and should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving". According to this definition reading requires mastering many competences i.e., the reader should be able to distinguish between the author's opinions and beliefs in the evaluation activities. In addition to using his/her thinking to relate different facts, imagination and reasoning are required in suggesting a variety of solution to the encountered dilemma.

To conclude, the reading skill is a highly sophisticated process due to its abstract nature in processing. Thus, each scholar provides a definition from one specific angle, whereby; some of them focus only on recognizing the graphics and printed symbols which construct the meaning of the text. However, other studies refer to the process of reading to co-occurrence of cognitive processes that the human brain performs with the process of moving eyes throughout the text. Others perceive the reading process as a question of making sense of written language rather than decoding printed sounds.

2. Types of Reading

Reading encompasses a variety of types, each one of them is completely different on the others. Adapting one sort of reading is mainly based on the designed objectives which are intended to achieve i.e., the reader has to think very well concerning the appropriateness of the chosen form of reading which could serve his/ her purposes. Seemingly the diversity of reading purposes leads to appear different sorts of reading namely; extensive reading, intensive reading, and critical reading.

2.1. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading as a one form of reading is designed to students for the purposes of gaining a general understanding of what is read. It furnishes considerable intention to quantity of reading. This sort is deemed to be highly suitable for developing good reading habits, constructing knowledge of vocabulary, and structure of a language as well as encouraging students for engaging in reading process (Richards and Schmidt as cited in Yamashita, 2008). The proposed definition reveals that extensive reading interests in habit formation for reading which means creating a routine and programme to raise students' tendency toward this skill. In addition to that through this kind of reading knowledge of vocabulary and language structure and writing proficiency could be enhanced. In the same vain "The Extensive Reading Foundation's" (2011, p. 1) suggested that "When students read extensively, they read very easy, enjoyable books to build their reading speed and reading fluency. The aim of Extensive Reading is to help students to become better at the skill of reading rather than reading to study the language itself.

Moreover, Davies (1995) have found that extensive reading means slow and careful reading of long written recourses such as novels and books for the purpose of general understanding. This procedure is extremely handy to promote readers' vocabulary, easy word identification and knowledge of the language. In association with this, Hedge (2003) argues that extensive reading varies in relation to students' motivation and school materials as well as it helps them to achieve their independency through practicing reading either in classroom or at home. In brief, extensive reading is a process emphasizes the quantity of the delivered input to students, this latter could help them to develop their performance. They are asked to state the general and sub- ideas of the given material which could indicate their understanding of the subject matter.

2.2. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is another sort of reading which is extremely different from extensive reading in terms of readers' objectives. It is commonly known that it is a practice which has been elaborated to beginners for the purpose of helping them to engage in learning and fostering their competences in reading skill. The reader in this case reads intensively the proposed text line by line as Nuttal (1982) has stated that intensive reading invites paying considerable attention to the text during the analysis process in terms of many levels of language. The designed objectives of this sort are to arrive at a profound

and detailed understanding of the text. According to these views, the reader is required to study the given passage in details through focusing on the levels of language- lexical, syntax, and semantic i.e., searching for words' meaning, combination of sentences, and expressions. To support this, Palmer cited in Day and Bamford. (1998) have found that intensive reading is close and line by line reading of a short text, and during reading; the learner sometimes goes back to the dictionary to search for the meaning of the encountered concepts. Moreover, readers are always paying attention to the structure of the language and grammatical rules. In addition to that, they practice the process of comparing, translation, retaining, and analysis of different expressions which encounter them.

Seemingly, the two sorts of reading –extensive, intensive- are quite dissimilar. The former is interested in providing a large quantity of L2 input and its purpose is managed for grasping general understanding, whereas the latter one is interested in providing short texts with much more tasks to perform.

2.3. Critical Reading

Critical reading plays a central role in learners' carrier because it reflects their competences and abilities in managing this skill. The purpose of reading in this case is quite different because it is not for enjoyment an entertainment. However, it requires careful and focus reading as states in “Critical reading strategies” (2004) reading effectively requires approaching texts with a critical eye; the reader evaluates not only what has been said, however; he or she ought to asking questions such as how and why it has been said it in this way. Being an effective reader also means being able to evaluate one's own practices and working to develop critical reading skill.

Moreover, critical reading is extremely different from reading for entertainment in terms of purposes, activity and focus. Firstly, the purpose of reading for enjoyment is only for surface understanding while critical reading is to form judgments about how a text works, secondly; the activity of the former is embedded in the observation whereas the latter one is used in the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation; thirdly, the focus of reading is essentially based on what a text says in contrast with critical reading which is based on what a text does and means (Dan, 2004). According to these views, critical reading is completely different from reading for entertainment. The reader is asked to read deeply the given material for better analyzing, interpreting the inserted facts, and criticizing the author's arguments. In addition to that, the precise description of characters

in the case of novel; thus, critical reading invites readers with advanced and proficient level in foreign language. To support this Kurland (2000) suggests that critical reading asks students to accomplish certain goals such as identifying the author's purpose which means inferring a basis for choices of content and language, and recognizing bias which involves classifying the nature of patterns of choice of content and language. They are also asked to understand tone and persuasive elements which invites classifying the nature of language choices.

To conclude, reading is a significant skill which enables students to develop their abilities in other skills such as writing, critical thinking, and fostering their views concerning different facts. Thus; students should take in to a count the importance of various sorts of this skill –extensive, intensive, and critical- reading to help them reaching their goals.

3. Models of Reading

Some scholars have tried to explain reading mechanisms; therefore they establish certain procedures through which reading processes could be described. These procedures have been labeled models. The concept model defined by Davies (1995, p. 57) as “A systematic set of guesses or predictions about a hidden process”. It refers to what occurs behind the human eyes i.e. on the level of perception and analyzed by the brain during the process of reading. Each one of these models describes the process of reading in different angle; these models are the bottom-up model, top-down model, and interactive model.

3.1. The Bottom-up Model

The bottom-up model emerged as a consequence of behaviorist psychology development in the 1950's, reading in this perspective is perceived as a response to stimuli (recognizing word- the printed words). In this respect Gough (1972) reveals that reading starts at the letter level since the reader is required to read letter by letter. After that he/she moves to the next stage, which is embedded in recognizing the sounds corresponding to those letters, and their syntactic characteristics. The final stage is getting meaning (Davies, 1995). In association with this LaBerge and Samuels (1974) introduced the theory of automatic information processing in which they claim that the reader starts with smaller text's components i.e., letters, then moving from letters to clusters, and finally

reaches words. This linear processing invites the readers to move through different stages. They should start with observing the letters via their eyes, and then creating an abstract image by combining them with each other to reach the recognition stage, and finally they produce what formed in the brain. The bottom-up model is the activity of identifying the graphics which plays the role of stimuli to readers' brain, after that this latter respond in relation to its experiences.

The Bottom-up model presents meaning as directly related to the text (or Text-driven); meaning exists in the text and the reader is supposed simply to get this meaning. Anderson (1994) claims that this model considers textual meaning as the sum total of the meanings of words that build up clauses of the text. This also means that the reader is not supposed to play an active role in the understanding process, such as using his/her previous knowledge concerning the topic of the passage, and about the world (Gough, 1972). The Bottom-up model is only concerned with what is existing in the text without activating any kind of previous knowledge.

3.2. The Top-Down Model

The top-down model is another procedure by which many researchers try to explain the variety of reading manifestations. This model is quite different if it is compared with bottom-up model i.e. this model takes into account the learner's prior knowledge and predicting meaning during the reading process in order to succeed in understanding the assigned text. To support this Goodman (1970) views reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, and he has stated that the reader is not merely a passive decoder of the text, as the scholars of bottom-up have claim. However; readers in this case possess some abilities to assist him in treating mental activities. According to these views the reader arrive at meaning essentially by going through a set of cognitive processes which construct the overall cognitive process of reading.

The reader initially forms predictions or guesses concerning what the text is talking about and connects them with background knowledge and then, compare his/her predictions with the real facts which exist in the text. The intended purpose from practising this kind of activities is developing self-correction to reach the actual meaning of the text. Anderson et al. (1984, p.48) claim that "every act of comprehension involves the knowledge of the world as well". Readers in this model are required to create kind of connection between the text's content and their prior linguistic, semantic and world's

knowledge. To sum up, in the bottom-up model the readers are required to start from linguistic knowledge which constructs the text until they reach its meaning. In the top-down model on the other hand the readers are invited to start from the meaning of the text via guessing with exploring their prior knowledge after that they turn back to the content of the text.

Arguably, Vacca. A., L., et al. (1996) have provided diagram which explains the process of reading through bottom-up and top-down models.

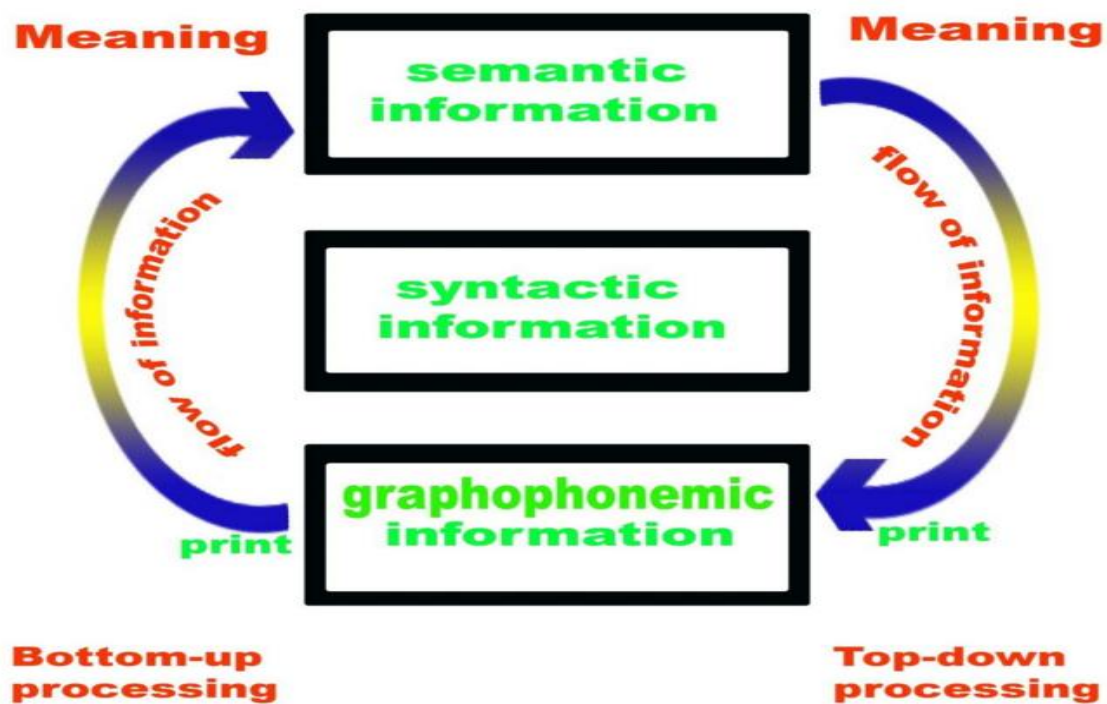


Figure 1.1: The bottom-up and the top-down processing (Vacca et al., 1996).

Cited in (May, 2009, P. 10)

This figure shows the process of reading from perspectives of the bottom-up and the top-down models. The former considers the process of reading starts from decoding the printed graphics which construct the text –graphophonemic information- through human brain. After that, readers move to syntactic information, in this stage they try to decipher the structure of sentences and phrases to reach the last stage –semantic information to grasp the meaning. In contrast the latter one begins from the semantic meaning to reach the print; in this case, readers use their prior knowledge to construct the meaning of the passage which to be read.

3.3. The Interactive Model

The interactive model tries to create a kind of combination between bottom-up and top-down models, through this model, researchers seek to account for both of model's processing. This model suggests that reading process is initiated by formulating predictions concerning meaning and by decoding letters and words. Rumelhart (1977) states that reading is an interactive process which involves both perceptual and cognitive process. Reading in this perspective is a process consists of an interaction between a set of a variety of orthographic, syntactic, lexical and semantic information, until the meaning is obtained.

Vacca. A., L., et al. (1996) have suggested a diagram in which they illustrate a clear example the interaction between bottom-up and top-down models.

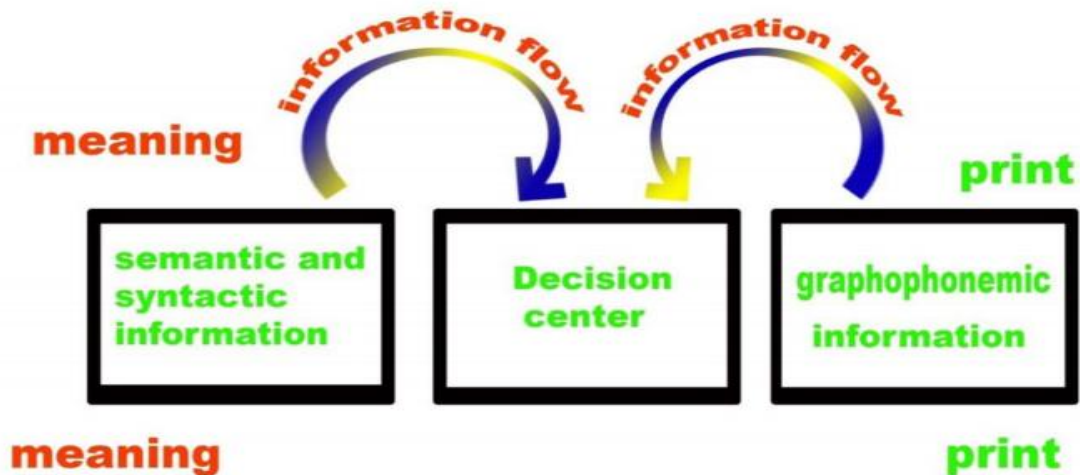


Figure 1.2: The interactive modal processing (Vacca et al., 1996)

Cited in (May, 2009, P. 11)

This figure tries to show how the bottom-up and the top-down models work together. Readers in this case do not rely only on the printed symbols; however, they start decoding these symbols with using their background information at the same time to reach the final decision in constructing the meaning.

Each one of these models has tried to provide a theory by which they intend to present a reliable framework. Whereby interactive modal explains the occurrence of the reading process and how readers move from one stage to another to succeed in understanding the assigned text. However; each one of them emphasizes on one aspect and undermines the other ones, for instance the bottom-up model focuses on the textual materials such as decoding

words of the text to reach its meaning. Whereas top-down model considers that the reading process begins from background information and prediction to the understanding text message. However the interactive model states that the two aspects go hand in hand.

4. Types of Readers

Readers should be characterized by many different features in order to succeed in mastering this skill. Readers have to possess mental competences such as good memory in remembering and critical thinking, they also need to acquire as much as of knowledge to monitor different encountered situations. In addition to that, they should motivate themselves and foster their attention in reading (Chair, 2002). Notably, many readers fail in this skill that is called poor reader while the one who succeeds is named good or active reader.

4.1. Poor Reader

A poor reader is a person who has problems in comprehension when reading an assignment text. These problems could be physical for example mental weaknesses, or problems related with language capacities or reading strategies which are adopted by the reader, so this latter has many characteristics which have been suggested by Oakhill, Cain and Elbro (2015) readers with language disorders often have comprehension problems for both oral and written language, problems in communicating orally or face-to-face communication, they also show problems with listening comprehension. Students with reading comprehension problems might also seem unengaged (or fail to fully understand the plot) when listening to a story being.

Read in the class, or even watching a film or instructional video. Other strategic characteristics as listed by “Teaching reading to adults” (2012) poor readers start reading without reading the title or predicting what is in the text. They fail to activate their prior knowledge or use their background understanding to connect their life experiences to the text and concentrate on decoding words, unaware that they do not comprehend. Notably poor readers suffer from a variety of predicaments either physical or strategic ones. They could be problems with comprehension or interpretation failure which represent cognitive capacities, in addition to language weaknesses such as semantic, syntactic rules.

Researchers tried to discover the reasons behind these problems, “Poor reading comprehension” (2012) states that problems with reading comprehension are preceded by

problems with spoken language comprehension. Moreover, it has been generally agreed that verbal ability is heritable, and since comprehension is strongly linked to verbal ability, so it is likely that there is some genetic influence underlying occurrence of poor comprehension. There is also some evidence that there are some differences in brain anatomy between poor comprehenders and individuals with dyslexia. Poor readers in this sense have problems in spoken language which highly influential on readers' comprehension in addition to genetic predicaments which are perceived to be another aspect that should be take it in to a count. Poor readers suffer from considerable predicaments which could frustrate their motivation in practicing this skill. However, they should straggle with their teachers to beak these problems down through searching for new techniques and tools.

4.2. Good Reader

Reading skill is a process which needs an active person who is always seeking for appropriate strategies to manipulate different encountered predicaments. A successful reader is the one who create opportunities to read under any circumstances; this is what is called good readers. They are an organized persons who are constantly looking for procedures to understand, analyze, and criticize the assigned texts out or in classroom and when ever he/she find a chance. To support, this Popova (2005) states that the good reader is the one who has imagination, memory, a dictionary, and some artistic sense.

Good readers according to this view should possess a fruitful imagination to engage with different mentioned facts in the given passage; they also need a good memory to remember every detail which helps them in summarizing or retelling processes, in addition to the artistic sense which enables them to create new stories or an end of endless story. Good readers are characterized by many features which assist them in manipulating different encountered problems in during reading process.

A good reader characterized by many features which makes him different from others in terms of planning, controlling the time in the case of exams. Stevens (2015) claims that good readers understand that they must take responsibility for constructing meaning by using their prior knowledge. They develop a repertoire of reading strategies, organizational patterns, and genre. Good readers in this sense posses the sense of responsibility toward how they solve variety of problems via exploring their background knowledge and establishing strategies. In association with this "Teaching reading to adults" (2012) argues

that good readers set purposes for reading and make prediction about the content of the passage, scanning and skimming the title and graphic. They also adjust their reading speed according to the ease or difficulty of a passage and could summarize what they read. Good readers do their best to reach their objectives and all the time searching for procedures to assist them in monitoring this skill.

To conclude, the two types of readers should be taken into consideration because poor readers need more attention to help them in overcoming their problems and creating new strategies to foster their abilities in reading. Good readers also need some kind of help in terms of guiding them to avoid falling in problems.

5. Definition of reading Comprehension

Reading is a complex mental process which involves variety of activities such as making a vision throughout a text to recognize meaning of words and general ideas, so this requires well-known of different rules of a language such as grammatical rules, syntactic rules. However, reading comprehension has been calcified by many studies as a highly sophisticated cognitive practice which could invite intelligent readers.

The word comprehension means constructing meaning from words which reveals that deciphering the graphic symbols via human mind and manipulate them, and then judging on whether it is correct or not. Reading comprehension as an intellectual process requires the mastery of many competences and abilities; the reader is asked to explore his/her prior knowledge and experiences during reading for better comprehension of a text and communicating its ideas. McShane (2005) suggests that students in reading comprehension construct meaning through both using the points in the text and their own prior knowledge, so comprehension involves interacting with text in various ways. Reading comprehension requires active reader, who manipulates the text not only from a surface level. However, he/she should move beyond that reach the deep meaning.

The proposed definition reveals that Reading comprehension is not only a matter of recognizing words as a single units and isolated from a text or just dealing with surface meaning and ideas, however it encompasses much more activities. Readers in this case should be aware of why they are reading initially after the suitable selection of the material to be read and then they start analyzing, interpreting, discussion, and communicating the author's opinions and arguments based on what they have studied and think about how

these ideas might be used in the future in addition to connecting them with previous experiences.

Moreover, reading comprehension according to Snow (2002, p. 7) is “The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction, and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text and the activity or purpose for reading”. Efficient readers design the intended objectives initially for the process of reading and then in the same time they have to create connection between the message in the text and their background. To support this, Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, and Snowling (2014) suggest that reading comprehension invites making connections between parts of the passage in order to build up an interpretation, so in order to make connections, readers are required to raise their count of vocabulary for well- recognition of the encountered words, ability to hold information in mind, ability to scan backwards and forwards to relevant words and phrases, understanding of cues from sentence structure and punctuation, and empathy with the character and many other skills and processes.

In brief, reading comprehension requires more than recognizing words as single isolated entities, thus; readers should take into account the importance of their background for better comprehension of a text and the mastery of many other skills.

6. Reading Comprehension Strategies

A reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension (McNamara, 2007, p. 6). “A reading strategy refers to a plan or a procedure for students to solve the encountered problems in constructing the meaning of the given passage”. Therefore successful readers are most habitually strategic readers because they are constantly searching for different reading strategies to accept, and good teachers are always searching for a variety of strategies to diagnose students’ comprehension. In this part we intend to present some strategies namely; prediction, activating background knowledge, skimming and scanning, summarizing, Generating and asking questions.

6.1. Prediction

Many scholars demonstrate the usefulness of using the prediction strategy to succeed in reading comprehension. Christensen (1980) claims that prediction refers to the reader’s ability to expect the happening of an action initially before its actual occurrence. Prediction

according to this view is perceived as a plan by which readers will be able to obtain the meaning from a text. Therefore, excellent readers are always balancing between their imagination, prior knowledge, and what they read in order to succeed in their future expectations. In other words, readers create kind of comparison between other texts which share similar ideas with the given text or looking for the author's life to know his opinions concerning different issues in his previous works. Prediction is a highly important activity which requires experiential and capable readers; it assists them to break the difficult ideas down for better understanding.

The previous steps could help readers to make predictions about what is going to happen next, or what thoughts or evidence the author will present to support an argument. Smith (cited in Bourbia, 2010) suggests that prediction, in psychological terms, is considered as a mental activity which the brain who is responsible for decision-making. In the act of prediction, one's knowledge of the surrounding environment (past or present events) provides him with possible occurrences, and then the brain is left to decide among these alternatives, until it comes to the most likely occurrence. According to psychological views, prediction is a cognitive process situated in the brain which could help readers to set a clear image concerning what they are going to read and succeed to comprehend different encountered texts. Prediction is mental cognitive activity which is different in terms of degree from one to another. Individuals' environment is deemed one of the main affecting factors on this process.

6.2. Activating Background Knowledge

Naturally human being activate their background knowledge, experiences, and memories before starting doing anything; opening a book, link to a website, or sit down in front of television to watch a movie i.e., background knowledge eases people's work at an level in their lives. Accordingly readers are asked to use this strategy for better comprehension of what they read.

Activating background knowledge is an interesting procedure which could help readers to comprehend what they are going to practice. In reading comprehension according to Moreillon (2007, p. 85) Background knowledge is "what the readers bring to the reading process and each reader's interpretation of the given text is unique regarding to the other's interpretation. In the other words, the reader understands in relation to what they called schemas". According to schema theory people learn from the environment

around them and develop a large quantity of knowledge and structures, this kind of schemas is constantly in growth and change from one to another (Bader, 2007). This process used by the readers who activate their prior mental pictures and imagine different components such as the setting and the characters in reading process to catch up the meaning of what they read. In addition to having knowledge concerning the world it is also highly important to have insights about the text's mechanisms to provide a clear picture concerning its ideas and to ease the understanding of the text.

6.3. Skimming and Scanning

Readers necessarily recognize well the impact of the skimming and scanning in helping them to understand a text as well as their differences. Skimming is a quick reading through which the reader moves his/her eyes to find out words, phrases, or sentences or selects a part from the text and reads it for the purpose of knowing the main idea. The scanning process happens when a reader searches for particular information or a detail such as a date, a name, a number, or a place as additional information, Baudoin et al (1994) recommends that readers need to follow some steps once scanning a text for detailed information; the reader limits the target datum clearly, before starting looking for it and they asked to select a suitable source. In addition to that they should allow their eyes run over the print skipping all unnecessary words and stop only at the information needed and picks it up without going beyond. To sum up, Skimming and scanning are specific reading procedures compulsory for rapid and resourceful reading; they are similar in the sense that the reader is going through a selection, and different since in the former the required information is general, and in the latter the needed information is much more narrowed.

6.4. Summarizing

Summarizing is a process that exists in every one's life whether in spoken or written form, for example when your friend wants to know what the book you are reading is talking about, you will not tell him concerning every single detail; however, you will summarize its ideas in a single word or a phrase. Starting from the example above, summarizing is a practice in which the speaker or the writer includes only the general idea and the most important points. To support this Adolescent literacy (2015) states that Summarizing is a technique that enables students to focus on key words and phrases of an assigned text that are worth noting and remembering, moreover it teaches students to take a large selection of a text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding, in

reading a text. Summarizing according to these views is an accurate and precise description of the main points in a meaningful way of the given text with ignoring any irrelevant information. Summarizing is an important process which readers should work on to develop their abilities. It reflects readers' competences in manipulating different types of text even the difficult ones.

Summarizing helps students learn to determine necessary ideas and consolidate important details that support them; however, teachers should teach their students how to summarize first through constant practice; beginning by reading or students to listen to the chosen text after that the teacher asks them different questions such as what are the main ideas? /What are the crucial details necessary for supporting the ideas? /What information is irrelevant or unnecessary? / did they use key words or phrases to identify the main points from the text (Reading Rockets, 2015). These sorts of questions that have been asked by the teacher may help students to summarize the given passage. Summarizing is a very crucial strategy which reflects the degree of students' comprehension of a given passage. It is perceived as a highly difficult process because readers are asked to master many competences; cognitive abilities, semantic rules... and so forth.

6.5. Generating and Asking Questions

Generating and asking questions is a strategy that help students with their comprehension of text through which students learn to formulate and respond to questions about facts and ideas while engaged in understanding a text. To support this Young (2015) suggests that asking questions is an interesting strategy which could help students stay engaged with difficult or unfamiliar material. It stress the importance of stopping to consider what has been read along the way and let them know that turning the information into questions—even questions that they already know the answers and better comprehend what has been read. Generating and asking questions in this sense raise readers' curious concerning what is coming through asking themselves different and variety of relevant questions, and this later assist them to understand a text. Generating and asking questions is highly important procedure which assists learners to understand the assigned text and motivate them to read without prisons.

Questions that help readers to reach their objectives such as did this passage make sense to me? /What should I be on the lookout for in the next passage? this sort of

questions are labeled self-monitoring questions and the reader could ask another type of questions which is called Collecting Information as an example what are the facts?/ what are the main ideas?/who are the main characters?/what are the significant details. Moreover, the reader may ask some questions about the Author's intentions when giving an opinion/ what does this author seem to think is most important? /why is the author telling me this now? Finally and more important questions which reflect reader's abilities in understanding a text based on what I know, what might happen next? / How might this appear on the test? (Adolescent literacy, 2015). These sorts of questions could assist readers to understand the assigned text and analyze it successfully. To conclude, this strategy assists both students and teachers in many different aspects; first it helps students to improve critical and creative thinking skills and learn to ask questions about an assigned text in addition to that encourages them to develop life-long learning skills. This technique also could help teachers in terms of planning and organizing the whole class into small groups, administering individual activities, checking for comprehension, and designing homework and exams.

To sum up, reading comprehension strategies contribute to unlimited extent in the easiness of comprehension of any assigned material. These strategies refer to students' abilities in using them during the reading process, for instance, prediction requires high level of imagination and guessing the meaning of words, author's intentions. Summarizing also invites intelligent readers, whereby they should ignore different details and irrelevant ideas during the process. Similarly to skimming, scanning, and the last strategy students should be very careful in applying them in order to enable them in reaching goals.

7. Assessing Reading Comprehension

Teachers mainly are not only in charge of delivering knowledge and information in the classroom; however, they are also responsible to assess learners' comprehension, so they need to assess comprehension after limiting their different purposes, steps, and ways of assessment.

7.1. Purposes of Assessing Reading Comprehension

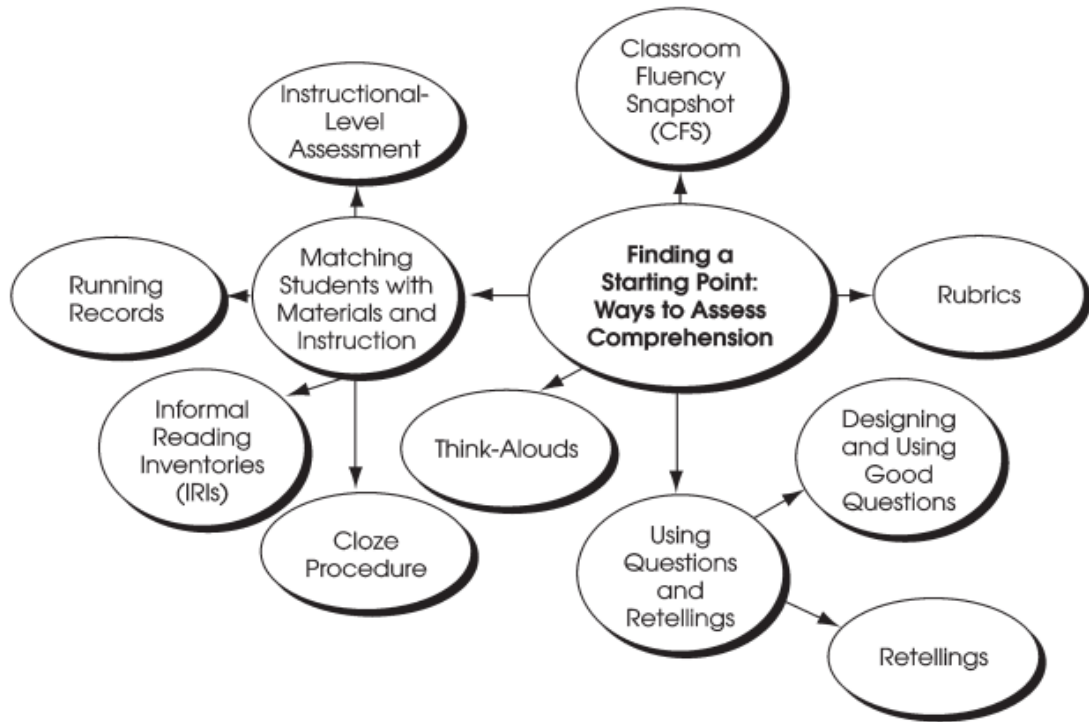
Assessing comprehension is fraught with challenges, because it could be difficult to determine how much students really know and what they are actually thinking; thus teachers should specify and narrow their purposes and objectives when assessing

comprehension. Klinger, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007) state that reading comprehension assessment has different purposes; one of them is to compare students' comprehension levels to those of students in a norming sample. Another one is to find out if students have met preestablished criteria for their grade level.

A third purpose is to notify instruction by determining when students understand what they read, and how efficiently they use reading comprehension strategies. Similarly, an important purpose is determining why a student may be struggling. According to these views assessing comprehension has different purposes which teachers are looking for; accordingly the research could state that there are different ways of assessing comprehension which are basically related to those purposes in terms of the selection. Teachers before starting any activity concerning assessing learners' abilities should construct the gained purposes from the assessment process.

7.2. Ways of Assessing reading Comprehension

The model below suggested by Blachowicz, C. & Ogle, D. (2008) presents a variety of ways that enable teachers to recognize their students in the first meeting and assessing their reading comprehension along the year.



**Figure 1.3: Ways of Assessing reading Comprehension,
Blachowicz and Ogle. (2008, P. 65)**

According to this model, Blachowicz, & Ogle, (2008) state that the Classroom Fluency Snapshot is considered as a starting point which enables teachers to recognize their students' face, name, and initial level in reading in the first meeting. It is also perceived as a curriculum-based; in which teachers use a regular piece of classroom text to collect a short sample of each student's oral reading, fluency and this latter is more related to comprehension. (CFS) could be used for gathering different types of information and it has basic goals such as obtaining a quick sense of the class, identifying those students who may need special support, and helping teachers in the selection of independent reading material. The teacher in this procedure selects a suitable text and assesses students individually with fixing time appropriately and preparing a record sheet in which he/she records student's mistakes. (CFS) is a very important tool which could be used by teachers to gather reliable information concerning learners' abilities in reading skill. It also enables them to measure students' understanding degree of the given passage.

In addition to that teachers may use many other tools to assess students' understanding such as using questions and retelling, matching students with materials and instruction. Rubrics are deemed to be another way to assess learners' reading comprehension which means a structured format for evaluating some performance; this

procedure assists teachers when looking at students' are talking or writing about reading . "Graphic organization" (2015) suggests that the think-aloud is another strategy of assessing reading comprehension in which a teacher asks students to say out loud what they are thinking about when reading, solving problems, or simply responding to the posed questions.

Teachers need to create available assessment system in which the real learners' abilities could be reflected, this system should be suitable for all students even the poor readers. To support this Chair (2002) suggests that an effective assessment system should be able to identify individual learners as poor comprehenders, not only in terms of prerequisite skills such as fluency in word identification and decoding, but also in terms of cognitive deficit and gaps in relevant knowledge. All these ways are perceived interesting tools that could be used by the teachers to assess learners' reading comprehension easily. Summing up, teachers could select appropriate procedures in assessing their students which could reflect the real readers' level. Moreover, they should looking at each student as part of the class and as an active individual that could affect positively or negatively in the classroom via his/her participation.

8. Factors affecting reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is not only a matter of recognizing individual words separately from the text; thus, it is perceived to be the heart and goal of reading. Regarding to its difficulty in nature, students face tremendous obstacles and challenges which could hinder their progress in accomplishing acceptable performance. These obstacles could be related to learners themselves or provided materials. Some researchers list different factors which are related to students' psychological state and interest for the provided material, and the nature of text's vocabulary. Readers' psychological state and positive attitudes toward reading play an important role in motivating students to read anywhere and create opportunities for reading and reading strategies. Demotivated students feel bored when they read which could affect negatively in understanding the assigned text.

To support this Zubiría, et al. (2008) claim that for most of the students, reading comprehension is more than a problem, when students are asked if they like to read most of them will probably answer no, explaining that reading is such a boring activity for them or they do not like the type of texts they are provided. In association with this Granados (2001) stats that many factors affect students' ability to comprehend text, such as

motivation, purpose, goals, engagement, vocabulary, word knowledge, background knowledge and use of strategies employed by effective readers, the nature of the text itself -difficulty and interest-, the type or genre of text, for example: fiction, nonfiction, poetry. All these different factors could affect negatively on the learners' comprehension i.e. Students with poor background and vocabulary of specific fields such as chemistry and medicine surely will face predicaments in manipulating the given text, in addition to that the appropriateness of the employed strategies. No one can deny that such factors could hold learners' comprehension back because they are considered as an integral part of this process and without which readers could not reach their objectives.

Moreover, the ability of readers in decoding is also playing a significant role in comprehending the assigned text. In definition of decoding Hirsch (2003, p. 8) claims that decoding is the process that readers use to quickly and automatically translate the letters or spelling patterns of written words into speech sounds. That goal requires many steps; getting a book and Print Awareness, a critical foundation for decoding which involves understanding the function of print and the characteristics of books and other print materials. Decoding in this sense refers to the reader's ability in deciphering the meaning from the printed symbols which enables them to identify correctly the main idea of the passage.

To conclude, factors which could affect learners' comprehension during reading are varied. Some of them refer to the readers themselves while others refer to the presented data. Learners' attitudes toward reading and psychological states direct the degree of comprehension of the material to be read. In addition to that learners' abilities in decoding the printed symbols are deemed to be one of the major factors which could hinder or foster the comprehension of the given text. The nature of the text and difficulty of its vocabulary also play an important role attracting learners' attention and interest to read and struggling to understand its meaning.

Conclusion

A variety of related issues concerning reading and reading comprehension have been presented. Reading has been defined by many researchers from different angles; however, all of them have met at one point concerning the nature of reading. They claim that reading is a complex cognitive process that includes two related cognitive processes word recognition and comprehension. That is, the reader first perceives the written symbols on the page as sounds and then makes sense of them actively using his background knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, his experience with the text, and other appropriate strategies. Moreover, it has been proved that reading comprehension is very complicated process which requires cognitive capacities. These capacities are flexible to change and to develop, consequently in the next chapter; we aim to provide a variety of procedures through which learners' mental capacities could be assessed and enhanced. These abilities are perceived as one of the main requirements to raise students' reading comprehension achievement.

Chapter Two

Formative Assessment

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Introduction

Enhancing learners' language proficiency is mainly considered to be a significant concern for teachers. Hence, they are required to furnish much effort in searching for new procedures which enable them to judge what progress students have made and assist them to set the next steps. Accordingly; formative assessment is one of these strategies which could be adapted by teachers to develop learners' abilities and skills "including reading comprehension skill". Formative assessment serves an important role in guiding learning and teaching processes when it is used appropriately in the classroom. Thus; in this chapter we will define a variety of terms which belong to this field, and then purposes, principles, and types of assessment will be presented. In this chapter we will also emphasize formative assessment which is mainly a basic concern in this research. Hence, we will give a brief history, definition, techniques, challenges, and other different subjects which could fulfill this research.

2.1. Definition of Assessment

Assessment as an integral part in the field of education has been defined by many scholars from a variety of perspectives. It is derived from the Latin word "assidere" which means to sit besides and make calculations. However, in applied linguistics it demonstrates to the process through which data concerning learner's behavior could be collected (Rabhi, 2013). Assessment in this sense represents the procedures and tools which could be used by the teacher to check learners' understanding and guides the learning process to reach the meant objectives. To support this, Hanaeur, Hatfull & Jacobs-Sera (2009) have argued that assessment is regarded as the form of a scientific inquiry which works for gathering materials concerning students' performance in order to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses.

In the same vein, Brown (2004) states that assessment is an ongoing process that underlies a number of subjects. During the teaching process teachers subconsciously make an assessment of students' performance when a student responds to a question, offers comments, or constructs a new words or structures. According to these views assessment is a continuous process which embedded in teacher's comments and grades by which students' presentation could be measured.

Assessment is an important existing process in the classroom, whereby a teacher could be able to determine learners' progress in different skills. It also enables them to check students' performance in a continuum way, and then establish the next step.

2.2. Definition of Testing

Testing is a prevalent process in everyday teaching and learning experience which considered as a concrete tool in terms of marks. This latter reflect to what extent students grasp the knowledge as well as teachers efforts in sending the message. Douglas (2010) a test is a measuring device through which different abilities could be measured. It is also similar to other measuring devices as a ruler, a weighing scale, or a thermometer in terms of principles. Measurement means the act of assigning numbers in relation with rule or along some sort of scale to represent quality and characteristics of something. In fact, the test is a tool which enables teachers to check different phenomena that occur during the teaching and learning processes. It also could be used as a scale for judging learners' behaviors; a test provides data concerning student's understanding, performance and attitudes toward the language as well as information concerning academic knowledge and skills. Testing is a measuring device has its own principles that guide a teacher to judge on learners' performance appropriately.

To support this Sarosdy, Bencze, F., Poor & Vadnay(2006, p. 132) suggest that: "language tests provide the means for focusing on the specific language abilities that we are interested in". Well-organized language test help students in different ways; it could help them to create positive attitudes toward the class which is considered as the main interest of the teacher, moreover it may encourage students to master the language (Madsen, S., 1983). Through tests teachers could be able to measure particular skill, so it is more narrowed than assessment and marks are very important in this case. Marks as well known very important in student's school career, as well as it encourage them to raise their attitudes toward specific domain of learning.

2.3. Definition of Evaluation

It is worthy to have insights concerning this concept which is considered to be an interesting area in the field of education regarding to its considerable impact on teaching and learning processes. Evaluation is gathering material systematically for the purpose of decision- making either through tests as quantitative methods or via observation, ratings as

qualitative methods (Richards & Schmidt 2013). Notably, evaluation in a broad term is gathering information accurately concerning variety issues in a rigger way and elaborating them through omitting, adding, or changing, as well as minimizing the negative effects.

Rabhi (2011, p. 58) reveals that “The word evaluation in teaching and learning processes means the judgments on student’s behavior”. According to these views evaluation means collecting reliable and relevant data concerning learners’ performance in order to check their level and to judge the effectiveness of the methods of teaching and tests being used by teachers. In the same vein Davies and Pears (2008) have found that evaluation is very broad domain because it encompasses the judgment of teaching, teaching materials and even tests as well as the learning process. (Rabhi 2013) suggested that evaluation involves both testing and assessment, and this later involves testing. Evaluation is a process of gathering data systematically concerning teaching and learning in a large aspect, it valuates teachers’ efforts learners’ abilities teaching materials even tests.

2.4 .Assessment Versus Evaluation

Although in many situations the two terms could be used interchangeable because they aim to serve the same domain. However, they are quite different in terms of usage in the professional education settings (school, teachers, administration, and education authority). According to Sarosdy, Bencze, Poor & Vadnay (2006) suggest that assessment encompasses testing, measuring or judging the progress of the learner’s abilities; it also could be seen as one part of evaluation. However, this latter is broader than the former one which could involve gathering reliable and relevant data systematically for decision-making. In addition to that it emphasizes on different components of the course involving the teachers, quality of the materials, the appropriateness of the objectives, the teaching methodology as well as the syllabus. Assessment in this sense interests in what occur in the classroom whereas evaluation exists this, it concerns with all aspects of education even the elaboration of the program by academic staff.

Moreover, assessment elaborates different issues such as gathering information concerning the student’s level of performance or achievement whereas evaluation is regarded as a tool of comparing a student’s achievement with others or with a set of standards (Fredricks as cited in “Assessment, Testing and Correcting Students' Errors and Mistakes”, 2011).“What's the difference between assessment and evaluation?” (2008) also

distinguishes between these two terms who suggest that assessment is the process by which a teacher/ or an examiner could measure how much a student has learned while evaluation is a process used to measure the effectiveness of a particular approach or method to achieve specific ends. More importantly through evaluation new used methods of assessment could be measured to ensure that they are valid, reliable, relevant, and fair.

In brief, the two terms are approximately similar in different aspects; however, they are actually different in terms of their uses; assessment elaborates issues which occur within the classroom such as controlling learners' abilities, attitudes, behavior, and motivates them while evaluation elaborates wide matters such as the effectiveness of programs, the appropriateness of curriculums, and the importance of assessment's methods and techniques. So the term evaluation is broader than assessment.

As a final analysis, the three concepts -assessment, evaluation, and test- contain one another from most general to the more specific. The figure below illustrates the relationships between the three terms (Harmer cited in Rabhi 2013).

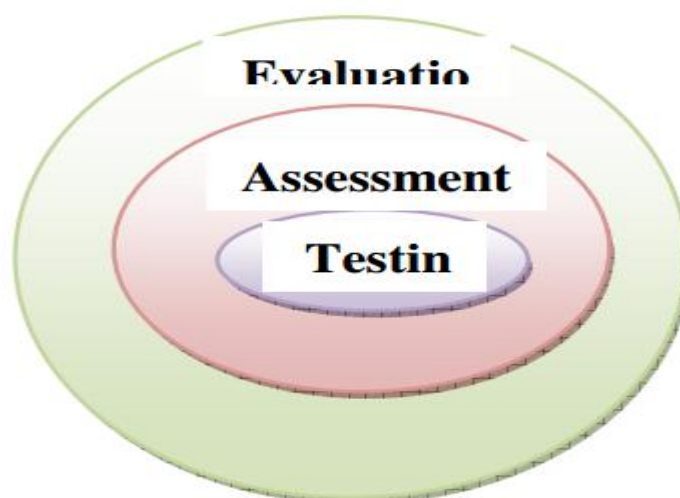


Figure 2.1: Evaluation, assessment, testing relationship

Harmer cited in (Rabhi 2013, p. 25)

2.5. Definition of washback

Many scholars note the widespread belief that tests have considerable influence on teachers, classroom, and students whereby they label this phenomenon washback or a backwash. The word washback is commonly used in applied linguistics; however, the term

backwash as defined in (New Webster's comprehensive dictionary) cited (Cheng, Watanabe and Curtis, 2004, p. 4) "the unwelcome repercussion of some social actions" whereas Collins Cobuild dictionary defines it as "unpleasant after-effects of event or situation". This term derived its roots from the notion that tests or examination could drive teaching and learning processes; in fact, this phenomenon occurs as a consequence of an overlap between the content and the format of the test and an overlap between the content and the curriculum (ibid). Seemingly, washback is a phenomenon which carries out the notion that test effects teaching, teaching methodology and learning as well as it has important consequences on individuals and institutions.

Washback is two folded; it could affect negatively or positively the teaching and learning processes. It could be harmful when the test dominates teaching and learning activities or the test content and testing techniques are at variance with the objectives of the course. Whereas, it could be positive in the case of non speaking-English countries, when the test has been administrated to determine the students who would be allowed to continue their studies or which one will leave the university (Hughes, 2003). Notably, it would be considered negative when teachers ignore subjects or activities which did not contribute directly to passing the exam; however it would be positive when it goes hand in hand with the designed objectives.

3.6.The purposes of Assessment

Assessment as a significant and integral part in educational practice has a great contribution in developing learning and teaching foreign languages. Therefore it has been designed to serve a variety of purposes such as informing students concerning their progress. It also provides data to teachers, parents, and academic staff concerning student's performance.

2.6.1. Assessment for Students

It has been proved that assessment is a very significant means in developing education, particularly as far as students are concerned. Regarding the purposes behind using assessment; enhancing students' performance and changing their behavior is deemed to be the main ones. McDonald, Boud, Francis & Gonzy (1992, p. 11) suggested that "summative assessment refers to the actions such as marking or grading in which the focus is on making judgments on students' work". In this sense, grading and judging students'

behavior surely influences their achievement; hence, it will be as a means of motivation which assists them to elaborate future plan in the learning carrier. In the same vein, Daimond (2009) claims that assessment could be used to help building learners' understanding in every day learning experience. Assessment in this sense plays as a motivation device in terms of different situations; it contributes in changing students' behavior and performance via grading their works. In other aspect, it estimates their performance in terms of abstract values

Accordingly, when teachers prepare well-organized assessment program, opportunities will be created this encourages students to engage in learning and develop their knowledge. It is also established to verify the acquired knowledge concerning a topic and to diagnose students' learning style or performance. In addition to that, it is used to determine the degree of proficiency in performing certain set of skills (Calilung, Masbang and Philippines, 2014). An additional purpose is that assessment could prepare students to future life if it is used as an input to employment or carrier advancement (Irons, 2007). In fact grading as a part of assessment would be helpful to one's future life, for instance, working opportunities, assessment serve variety of purposes for students at any level beside other purposes.

2.6.2 Assessment for Teachers

Among the discussion concerning purposes of assessment for students, other purposes have emerged which is embedded in helping teachers to monitor the teaching process. Assessment is considered as a means which provides reliable and relevant information concerning students' achievement. More importantly it enables teachers to be aware of students' weaknesses and strengthens and then manipulates these later hand in hand with different issues that encounter them during the teaching process. Achieving these results basically relies on communication i.e., the teacher uses assessment as a means of communication as Liljedahl (2010) -in his classification of purposes of assessment- suggested that assessment could be used as an effective medium for communication between both the teacher and learners.

In addition, assessment would be an useful procedure in judging the effectiveness and the quality of the used methods and these latter is differ according to the variety of reasons as Brown (2004) has found that different causes –motivating students, encouraging activities, providing guidance and feedback for remediation, grading and selection - will

influence on the choice of assessment tools which encompasses the wide diversity of under-used methods which are suitable in different contexts. Summative assessment which mirrors teachers' efforts and students' progress is considered as a reference through which teachers evaluate their abilities.

2.6.3 Assessment for Parents and Academic Staff

Furthermore, it is difficult to ignore that one of the primary purposes of assessment is providing information concerning students' progress to their parents and academic staff. Parents are highly cautious concerning learners' educational needs beside biological ones, thus, achievement test or summative assessment is considered to be one of the main channels which enables them to check their sons' and daughters' level and performance, to support this Pilligrino et al (as cited in Irons, 2008) suggested that assessment service a significant role in providing data to help students, parents, teachers and administrations to reach decision. Parents are at the head of classification concerning students' progress, so assessment is deemed to be a satisfactory device which enables them to check different issues concerning their sons' achievement.

More importantly, assessment could be used by academic staff as a source through which learning and teaching processes could be judged. Learners have been actually assessed for different reason –motivation, creating learning opportunities- to provide feedback to both students and academic staff (Rust, 2002). According to this respect academic staff extremely interested in the students' achievement and performance; therefore, they are always adding, editing and changing some subjects in the curriculum in order to fulfill learners' educational needs and to solve some predicaments in this domain. In the same vein Irons (2008) has found that summative assessment as a measurement of the success of learning and teaching processes has been used to provide feedback to academic staff. This latter is very cautious concerning developing learning and teaching processes; it pays much money to reach the designed objectives. Thus, assessment plays the role of knowledge provider which assists them to elaborate new suitable procedures for the betterment of educational areas

To conclude, the classification of the purposes of assessment differs from one perspective to another, so this classification has been designed according to people who are concerned with assessment inside and outside classroom. Villanueva (as cited in Calilung, Masbang and Philippines, 2014, p. 422) suggested that “better assessment means better

teaching. Better teaching means better learning. Better learning means better students. Better students mean better opportunities for a better life". Assessment in this case is considered as a channel which connect students' behavior performance with outside; administration, parents, teachers, and academic staff.

3.7.Principles of Language Assessment

Constructing an effective test or formative assessment requires considerable conditions to follow. Test principles are considered to be one of these conditions whereby without which the test will lose its value, more importantly they are considered as guidelines which limit its features. These principles are practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and Washback

2.7.1. Practicality

Practicality is one of the main components of the basic principles of foreign language testing and formal assessment which has been used as guidelines to design an effective test. Practicality derived from the word practical and this latter by its turn has a numerous characteristics. Brown (2004) suggests that the absence of practicality appears when administering a test for a group of a huge number of students who are controlled by a few of examiners while it needs to individual one-on-one proctoring. Designing a test requires a few minutes to accomplish by test-takers whereas the examiner suffer many hours to evaluate. Moreover, practical test should not be neither excessively expensive nor time consuming.

According to these views practicality means that much more attention needs to be paid to certain criteria and conditions which contribute in designing effective tests. Class size and the large number of students are listed at the head of obstacles which the test-designers suffer from, especially with the lack of the supervisors because in this case it will be very difficult to control. The lack of management and creating a relaxed atmosphere could mislead the examiner to fix the accurate level of the test-takers. Consideration also should be taken to the procedures of scoring which means that a test takes few minutes to accomplish by students; however, the examiner spend much time to evaluate students' performance, moreover the cost of the test should not be highly expensive to manage, attention should be paid also to the timing i.e., a test of language proficiency that takes

many hours to complete is impractical test, to support this Bloxham and Boyd (2007) suggested that practicability also relates to the amount and timing of assessment.

Apparently teachers need to know that some classroom tests should not be mathematically graded; however, they could be used as information provider concerning students' performance. Moreover, the practicality of these tests sometimes could be based on its objectives which are embedded into two main forms norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests. The former, on the hand has been used to measure individuals' abilities through grading which order them in accordance to a fixed standards as Brown (2007, p. 446) states that "the purposes in such tests is to place test-takers along a mathematical continuum in rank order" . The latter on the other hand has been designed to provide a feedback; seemingly, scores in such tests are not required and it demands more time and efforts to furnish by the test administer (teacher) evidently Brown (2007) purports that criterion-referenced tests have been elaborated to provide test takers feedback on particular course or objectives. Practicality means that tests are not only designed to gain marks and grading students; however, it also should be used as a reference that reflect the availability of the used techniques and strategies of teaching.

2.7.2. Reliability

The historical background of this principle is based on three main theories-classical test theory, generalisability theory and item response theory. They are considered as the major concern of psychometrics -field of psychology-, this field deals with the measurement of individuals' ability in terms of many characteristics, abilities, skills etc. Theories, (classical test theory), (Generalisability theory), and (Item response theory) have discussed the issue of reliability from different angles. First, CTT suggests that individuals' grads contains errors which could be minimized, but they never are totally eliminated it also asserts that the longer tests and population are more reliable than shorter ones, this rationale is based on the increased variance, or spread of scores, that allows the main error score to approach zero. Second GT is common theory which concentrates on the impact of various changes in measurement design which means that analyzing more than one measurement aspect at once. IRT is also another public theory which interested in the difficulty of an item and the probability to answer correctly i.e., it focus on the characteristics of both the individual's ability and the item (Meadowsand Billington,

2005). Each one of these theories prioritizes on aspect on the other, whereby one of them student is the main concern whereas the other the structure of the test is their main interest.

To sum up, reliability of the test embedded in its results i.e., the gained results should be the same. When the test is administered to the same test- takers under the same conditions in different times arguably Wiig, Semel and Secord (2013) stated that reliability refers to the consistency of the achieved grads in repeated tests by the same test-takers under the same conditions. If the test-designer manages the same test repetitively on the same order will gain the same results.

2.7.3. Validity

Validity is a very complex criterion of a good test, Brown, Bul and Pendebuy (1997, p. 239) state that “it is often described as the match between what is intended to be measured and what is measured.” Validity means that the test measures what the test-designer wants it to measure i.e., to what extent the test provides data concerning test-takers’ performance. Validity consists of several aspects; face validity, construct validity and content validity.

Face validity is regarded as the surface impression or plausibility of a test, examination or assignment (Brown, Bul & Pendebuy, 1997), FV built on the idea that does the test appears to test what is aims to test?(Mclead,2007) which means that does the designed test exactly measures the intended points being supposed. Second, from psychological views the term construct validity means an attribute, proficiency, ability or skills which happens in the human brain, construct validity has traditionally been defined as the experimental demonstration that a test is measuring the construct it claims to be measured (Brown,2000). The construct validity shows the degree to which test questions reasonably signify what the test is intended to measure.

Third, content validity is another aspect of validity Chris (2014) stats that it refers to how exactly an assessment device taps into the various features of the particular construct in question. More precise do the questions really assess the construct in question, or are the responses by the person answering the questions influence by other factors? Content validity in this aspect demonstrates that a test has to measure the behavior (abilities/ skills) which intended to be measured for instance, designing a test in which aiming to measure students’ abilities in prediction and summarizing whereas the test contains grammar

questions, in this case the test obviously will lost its intended objectives to support this, Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary. (2012) claims that content validity concerns with the degree to which an experiment or measurement actually reflects the variable it has been designed to measure. Validity in its aspects means that the test structure should evaluate the supposed and designed objectives. In addition to that, it concerns with to what extent the test measure the intended skill.

2.7.4. Authenticity

Authenticity is an important principle that one should take it into account; it supplies a higher value to the foreign language test. It means that foreign language test features should be correspondent to the daily life; in this case it will reflect learners thought and abilities in manipulating lived issues. Brown (2004) claimed that authenticity initials that the language test should be enacted in the real-world because of many test item types fail to imitate the real-world, arguably Pickett (2001) in his definition as cited in Threaurus (word Net based) authenticity means “the quality or condition of being authentic, trustworthy or genuine. Significantly, authenticity in a test may be appear in different ways, for instance, the test linguistically should be clear and natural as possible. The degree of difficulty of the chosen words should be related to the level of test-taker, the contextualization of items rather than isolation, using enjoyable, humorous and interesting topics. In addition to that, the tasks should closely approximate or represent the real-world tasks such as using lived situations in reading test (Brown 2007). Authenticity generally means that the test structure should not be designed isolated from the context and real world.

2.7.5 Washback

Test-takers receive information concerning their performance, this called feedback which is regarded as a useful tool to diagnose students’ strengthens and weaknesses. The effects of the test result in the educational environment is called washback whether these results positive or negative. Thus, considerable attention should be paid to this issue because it plays an important role in the teaching and learning processes. To support this Brown (2004) suggested that washback develop the main of basic principles of language acquisition such as autonomy, self-confidence, intrinsic motivation and strategic investment.

To conclude, these are the main principles of designing well-organized tests that one should take them into consideration in order to fit the designed purposes and objectives

2.8.Types of Assessment

Assessment is the use of deferent tools for the purposes of collecting data concerning learning, these tools is embedded in various types of assessment and each type by its turn has its own objectives; in this section summative assessment dynamic assessment, self-assessment, and formative assessment will be presented.

Summative assessment as a device of gathering data concerning students' achievements is deemed to be as an interesting type of assessment. As Johnson and Jenkins (2009) have suggested, summative assessment refers to an assessment of learning in which determining what the student has learned is the main emphasis. Summative assessment takes place at the end of a unit of instruction or at the end of grad level; moreover, it helps to determine to what extent the instructional and learning goals have been met. Summative assessment in this sense is regarded as a representative of the students' efforts during a long period of time thus marks are very important in this sort of assessment because it reflects the real level of a student. To support this "The Glossary of Education reform" (2014) suggested that summative assessments are elaborated to evaluate learners' performance, skills acquisition, and academic achievement at the end of instructional period (project, unit, course, semester, program or school year). Summative assessment is assessment of learning which means gathering information about the learners' performance through grads and order them in accordance to general standards.

Summative assessment could be determined by three main criteria. First, the tests, assignments or projects are administrated to verify whether students have learned what they are expected to learn or not i.e. what makes an assessment "summative" is not the design of the test, and assignment; however, the way it is used i.e. to determine whether and to what degree the learners have learned the material they have taught. Second, summative assessments are commonly evaluative rather than diagnostic and they are given at the end of a particular instructional period, in other words, they are more suitable when using them to determine the learning progress and achievements. Third, summative assessments are typically the major components of the grading process in most districts such as schools and courses. There are some aspects which could determine the nature of summative assessment one of them the way it is used and the marks.

Dynamic assessment according to Haywood and Lidz (2007, p. 1) “is an interactive approach to conducting assessments within the domains of psychology, speech/language, or education that focuses on the ability of the learner to respond to intervention”. Dynamic assessment is a broad approach which elaborates different issues in psychology and psycho education through using cognitive tools during assessment process. Sternberg and Grigorenko (as cited in Poehner, 2008) suggests that dynamic assessment procedures can be used to determine whether and how the participant will change if an opportunity is provided.

Self-assessment is a process of formative assessment during which students reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work and their learning, judge the degree to which they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly (Andrade and Du, as cited in Spiller, 2012, p. 3). Self-assessment in this sense means that students make judgment concerning their progress by their own, through constant checking of their performance which could motivate them to learn and work harder i.e. self-assessment encourage student ownership of the learning.

In brief, these are some sorts of assessment which could assist both teachers and students if it is used appropriately. Each one of them is different on the other in terms of application, principles, objectives, tools, etc. In addition to these sorts there is another one which is labeled formative assessment. It is considered the basic concern in our research, so it is another symbol of assessment which has been employed in the classroom to monitor the learning and teaching processes arguably Black and William (1998) as cited in Popham (2008) stated that formative assessment could help students to learn what is being taught to a substantially better degree.

2.9. Definition of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is deemed to be an interesting form of assessment through which students’ performance could be up graded. Formative assessment is a continuum process which takes place during teaching and learning activities. This term has been defined by Higgins, Grant, Thompson, and Montarzino (2010) as a work which a learner carries out during the course, for which obtain feedback to improve their learning, whether graded or not. In association with this formative assessment is seen as a process which encompasses a variety of acts which are used as an evidence to guide learning and

teaching, by which the teacher could be able to judge whether student grasp the ideas or not because of the teachers are not required only to provide knowledge and present what the curriculum contains; however they are also responsible for checking students' understanding through asking certain questions simultaneously within the lesson, so teachers' questions, students' responses and activities during the course are regarded as formative assessment. To support this Diamond (2009, p. 9) Argued that: "what a pupil does or says will be observed and interpreted by the teacher or other students, who build on that response to develop a dialogue aimed at helping learners to take their next steps."

In association with this, FA is also defined by Shute as cited in the teaching doctor (2008) as information communicated to the students that are aimed to change his or her thinking or behavior for the purposes of improving learning. Formative assessment in this sense is seen as an informal process which is embedded in the connection between the teacher and his/ her students across the lecturing. Through which diagnosing learners' strengths and weaknesses could be more succinct. Formative assessment is considered as an informal process because of it may or may not contribute to the final mark and official grading. According to "the concept of formative assessment" (2002) it is argued that formative assessment is the diagnostic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction. Thus, formative assessment has been interested to develop students' ability and performance more than measuring and grading their works. Lorrie, (2005) claims that formative assessment uses insights concerning a students' understanding to modify the course and to support the development of competences. Formative assessment marks and grades are not concerned, so it emphasizes much more on providing feedback, and it is used informally assist both teachers and learners to determine the objectives.

2.10.A Brief History of Formative Assessment

The term formative evaluation has been found in Michael Scriven's works (1967); formative evaluation for Scriven is gathering information to assess the effectiveness of a curriculum, and guiding school system choices as to which curriculum to adapt, and how to improve it. After that came Benjamin Bloom 1968 who took up the term in his book "learning for mastery to consider formative assessment", more particularly the broader conceptualization of assessment had not developed to the extent it is today. The term

achieved broad recognition when it was popularized in association with the influential by Benjamin Bloom in his work (Anderade, and Crizek, 2010).

2.11.Benefits of Formative Assessment

Starting from studies above which have shown that FA is an assessment for learning which could be adapted as a procedure by teachers to guide teaching and enhance the learning processes consequently; no one can deny the impact of this procedure on the areas of teaching and learning as well as its considerable benefits to both student and teachers.

To begin with student, using formative assessment in the classroom is highly beneficial for raising students' proficiency in performing variety of works. "Formative Assessment: Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms" (2005) states that formative assessment has been shown to be highly effective in raising the level of student attainment, increasing equity of students' outcomes, and improving learners' abilities. Furthermore, different studies have proved that when applying formative assessment in the classroom students' performance could be increased by between 0, 4 and 0, 7 of grads (Marshall, 2011). Formative assessment is beneficial for students in terms of increasing their knowledge, understanding, or skills and guides them through providing the necessary instructions to obtain their goals. Moreover, it raises their focus and attention when explaining the lesson. It generally contributes in the betterment of quality of summative assessment -final results- in different aspects.

Formative assessment could be also highly beneficial for teachers in terms of many aspects. Teachers will be able to control the teaching process via applying different techniques of formative assessment; thus, they should avoid being slaves of textbook and should create new methods of teaching. To support this, "Formative Assessment: Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms" (2005) suggests that when teachers apply formative assessment mechanisms, they construct frequent and interactive assessments of student understanding which enables them to adjust their teaching to meet individual needs and to better help all of them to reach high standards.

To conclude, applying formative assessment techniques in the classroom is extremely beneficial to both students and teachers; developing their knowledge, raising their focus in the classroom, and fostering the quality of summative results. They also enable teachers to develop students' skills and abilities which assist them to learn better.

2.12. Formative Assessment versus Summative Assessment

Studies above concerning types of assessment, one might recognize that each one of them has its own objectives, features, and forms that could serve teaching and learning processes regardless to the subject matter. To consider the case of formative and summative assessment many scholars have tried to distinguish between them in terms of duration i.e. when is it conducted? What kind of information does it provide? And how can the results be used?

To begin with the time of application, formative assessment takes place during a course of instruction whereas in summative assessment a teacher designs tests at the end of a course of instruction or at the end of the semester “Formative assessment” cited in Mountagha, (2010). FA and summative assessment do not occur at the same time because each one provides different information concerning the learning and teaching processes, Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation (Formative VS Summative Assessment) suggests that formative assessment is used to monitor students’ learning through an on-going feedback. Thus it is generally perceived as “low stakes” which means the administered tests have low or no point value; they are mainly designed to reflect students’ understanding of a given topic and being able to identify the main points of a lecture.

Moreover the goals of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning by providing information on the outcomes while formative assessment is considered as “high stakes” which means it has a high point value and a teacher administers tests in this case to grade and rank students’ performance. Significantly, the gained results of the two sorts of assessments could be used differently; the results of formative tests are used to make decisions and planning the next steps in terms of instructions. In addition to that, they could help both teachers and students to create opportunities for learning to ensure success. In the other hand concerning the gained results of summative assessment are used to make some sorts of adjustment for instance classify a student in the classroom, measure program effectiveness, etc.

In brief, although the two sorts of assessment share the same objectives – developing and checking students’ learning abilities”, they have different characteristics and effects in teaching and learning processes. Consequently different studies consider summative assessment as an assessment of learning and FA as an assessment for learning.

Formative assessment is elaborated to enhance learners' performance not to grade their works. Daimond (2009) states that formative assessment aims to develop students 'knowledge and understanding, it is also an on-going process which can give feedback to the pupil and the teacher at once. In one hand formative assessment is mainly focuses on the establishment of the learner' behavior and in the other hand it enables the teacher to evaluate and judge the methods of teaching which have been followed.

Formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. Teachers who are using formative assessment approaches and techniques are better prepared to meet diverse students' needs –through differentiation and adaptation of teaching to raise levels of student achievement and to achieve a greater equity of student outcomes” (Center for Educational Research and Innovation, 2008).

To sum up, formative assessment is considered as an assessment for learning because grades and marks are not concerned. However, teachers in this case aim to meet learners' needs, to gain suitable level of understanding. They also intend to reach acceptable progresses by adapting appropriate formative assessment techniques, strategies, and tools in the classroom.

2.13. Techniques and Strategies of applying Formative assessment

Teachers sometimes ask certain questions during the lesson to check for understanding; “Does every one understand? Is everything clear?”. Answering such questions is not enough to move on the next step or a topic because they could not reflect the real degree of students' understanding and then, teachers later will be shocked by the results. They start wondering “I taught all this”; thus, to avoid such issues they should apply the following procedures - oral language, performance-based assessment systems, some other exercises, and writing- to make sure those students understand the acquired knowledge;

Oral language is deemed to be one of the most significant techniques that teachers have through which they could be able to check whether a student understands the acquired knowledge or not. It includes both speaking and listening skills which means the students are required to receive much of input from the teacher and then produce different behaviors; this means interaction during the lesson has considerable impact on the learning process, specifically when the teacher asks certain questions related to a particular point in

the given topic or text orally and the students in their turn answer immediately. For instance, asking students to summarize the main ideas of the text orally or describe some facts during reading process. Through these procedures teachers could be able to check students' understanding and abilities which enable them to make decision concerning the next step.

Nancy and Fisher, (2007) state that developing oral language is not simply teaching children and youth to speak; however, it must focus on students' abilities to communicate more effectively which reflects their thinking, knowledge, and skills. To speak in highly effective ways requires attention and practice; consequently, the teacher should focus more on interaction and communication in the classroom to raise students' abilities in expressing their opinions and thoughts. This reflects the effectiveness of the adapted methods.

Moreover, teachers could adapt performance-based assessment systems as one procedure through which checking students' understanding will be very useful. (PBAS) is also termed performance system, this system as Andrade, and Crizek, (2010) have suggested is designed to demonstrate what a student knows and can do at any point along the continuum, projects, in-class work, and assignments in which students are engaged form the basis for high-stakes exhibitions. (PBAS) requires students to engage in time-intensive, in-depth research projects, papers, and other rigorous performance tasks that require students to think like historians, solve problems like mathematicians, and conduct experiments as scientists do, critically interpret works of literature, and speak and write clearly and expressively.

In brief, (PBAS) requires students to reveal that they have mastered a particular skill and competence by performing certain tasks or producing some works. These later are signals and feedback that could be used by teachers to evaluate students' awareness concerning any point that is included in the program and the appropriateness of the adapted methods.

Moreover, the teacher could use concept map, one minute essay, hand singles, observation and one sentence or one word summary. To begin with concept map, a teacher asks students to organize several forms, graphic, diagrams and inserting the acquired key words for determining to what extent they perceive the relationship between those concepts, he also could ask them to display a designated hand signal to indicate their

understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process, for instance, a learner writes some notes such as I understand the techniques of summarizing a text/ I do not yet understand or I am not completely sure about any point in the lesson.

In addition to that one minute essay (one minute question) is another tool for checking understanding. It is focused question with a specific goal that can, in fact, be answered with few minutes. The teacher could also walk around the classroom and observes students how they work to check for learning through using check list or anecdotal records. The last tool which could be used is asking students to invent one word or one sentence that represents the whole meaning of the topic (cardinal consulting group, 2010).

The teacher could be able to use writing as a mechanism to check for understanding. Miller and England (as cited Nancy and Fisher, 2007, p. 57) have found that “writing offers an excellent pathway for brainstorming, clarifying, and questioning. There is evidence of increased student performance when writing is used as a tool for thinking”, Nancy and Fisher, (2007) state that using writing in classroom as a technique for assessment focuses on three areas; first using narrative writing or telling a story in this kind of writing a teacher asks students for example to imagine an end to endless story through using their imagination and creativity. The second area is informative writing in this way the writer tries to provide the reader with information and the last one is persuasive writing which means the writer seeks to persuade the reader to do an action or change an opinion concerning some issues.

Including writing as a tool of assessing students’ performance and competences is very successful and because writing presents reliable source concerning learners’ thinking toward the encountered knowledge.

To sum up, formative assessment is embedded in the variety of applied strategies in the classroom through which teachers could be able to check students’ understanding of the acquired knowledge. These techniques may help both students to focus more in the classroom and teachers to verify that students have grasped the ideas, so teachers play a major role in applying these mechanisms.

2.14. Teacher's Role in Applying Formative Assessment

Teachers are not just commended to deliver information and knowledge in the classroom; however, they are also required to assess students' learning through guiding and adjusting their behavior and performance. The application of formative assessment techniques requires an expert teacher because some of these techniques go hand in hand with teaching process. Assessment Reform Group (2003) state that observing, questioning, listening to informal discussions and reviewing written work, information derived from all these strategies of formative assessment may be used immediately to help pupils or it may be stored and used for planning future learning opportunities.

The teachers' role in applying formative assessment mechanisms would seem quite sophisticated in terms of controlling and managing time, creating appropriate atmosphere, and choosing suitable tools to reach goals. In addition to that, Coffey (2009) states that teachers are needed to pay close attention to the nature, contextualization, and timing of formative assessment because undermining any of these aspects lead to negative outcomes.

Furthermore, teachers should make sure to focus on quality rather than quantity i.e. emphasizing more on learning over grading; Thus, considerable attention should be paid to the point that formative assessment focuses more on creating cooperative atmosphere rather than competitive one. More importantly, teachers should provide opportunities for students to express their understanding through dialogue (Block and William as cited in Coffey, 2009). Teachers should confine themselves to apply formative assessment principles without any deviation to achieve satisfactory results.

In association with this teachers' role in applying formative assessment embedded in the wisdom of choosing appropriate strategies through which they could achieve the designed objectives and the ability to control and organize the time when applying these strategies; consequently many teachers face variety of predicaments and challenges in applying formative assessment.

2.15. Challenges and Problems related to Formative Assessment

Implementing techniques of formative assessment suffer from existing of noteworthy challenges at the classroom level. Each of these challenges will be listed as follow.

The lack of expert and trained teachers is regarded as one of the most predicaments that could hinder the successful implementation of formative assessment principles. Phelan, (2010) claims that for formative assessment to be fruitfully implemented in the classroom essentially based on well- prepared teachers and educators in the domain of assessment. Training teachers and make them aware of formative assessment principles and guiding them may lead to the correct application of its mechanisms. Strategic threat is another problem that teachers may not consider its effects. Higgins, Grant, Thompson, and Montarzino (2010, p. 6) state that “a significant concern about contemporary practice is that summative assessment receives far more attention than formative one”. The existing problem in this sense is that formative assessment increasingly under threat i.e., teachers increase their attention on summative assessment over formative one. The teaching process in this case may lose its effectiveness because the teachers focus only on the including points in the test and students learn only for the exams. It also has been documented that one of the biggest challenge concerning applying formative assessment in classroom is time, Anderade, and Crizek, (2010, p. 11) claim that

A key to successful implementation of formative assessment will be the development of high-quality assessment events, the purposeful integration of formative assessment into classroom activities, and the interactive use of formative assessment results to inform the next instructional steps for teachers and refinement of learning goals for students. Each of these requires a considerable investment in time to plan and conduct the activity—time that is currently allocated to different purposes in many classrooms.

In order to succeed in implementing formative assessment strategies in the classroom, teachers need to pay attention to a variety of point. They should for instance seek for the designed goals from every activity with increasing the interaction between students to know how they could move to the next step. They also should pay attention to the problem of time.

Fixing time is deemed to be one of the biggest fears of teachers when applying different formative assessment strategies because teachers are always trying to create balance between using these strategies and meeting learners’ needs. In addition to that they use the results to set the next instructional steps, and the following challenge is validity of the used strategies i.e., which evidence supports the interpretations or interferences that are intended to be drawn from assessment information (Anderade, and Crizek, 2010). Classroom teachers need to know that assessment bias exists, especially those that are less

formal and formative in nature; consequently, teachers should pay considerable attention to these issues.

To recapitulate, applying formative assessment in classroom undergo from different challenges which they could be related to the teachers or the nature of the techniques themselves or concerning time management.

Conclusion

Summing up, we can say that the relationship between assessment and education are two faces of the same coin. Each one could not exist in isolation; we cannot succeed in designing education programme without assessment and we could not elaborate assessment techniques without constructing programme, because what could we assess if there is no program. Therefore, assessment plays a significant role in managing and guiding the teaching and the learning processes. Moreover, it assists teachers to manipulate different issues which encounter them during their profession. Thus in this chapter, we have intended to draw teachers' and educators' attention to the weight of formative assessment as one sort of assessment in developing learners' performance in reading. Accordingly, a variety of matters concerning assessment and formative assessment have been presented in order to decipher some ambiguities in this field.

Chapter Three

Data Analysis

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Introduction

The value of any research study is extremely based on the quality of the collected data and the quality of this latter is highly related to data collection tools. Therefore the adapted procedure in this study is the questionnaire which is perceived as a suitable tool in conducting this research. Accordingly, in this chapter we will present means of research which is embedded in the questionnaire. Moreover, we intend to present the aim and description of the questionnaire, and then piloting the study in which we will discuss the encountered predicaments in delivering administering students' questionnaire. How administering the questionnaire also takes part in this chapter, and finally we will present the analysis and discussion of the results.

3.1. Population and sample

For our investigational part, we have randomly selected a sample of one hundred students from the whole population of Third year students of English LMD “two hundred and fifteen”; at Biskra University. Whereby age and gender are not taken into a count in this case because they are not influential variables, this sample has been chosen for many reasons. First, students have been studied two years but they have not mastered reading comprehension yet. Second, reading skill plays an important role in student's learning career. Third, they need this skill as future teachers. We have randomly selected a sample of six teachers from the same university.

3.2.Means of Research

Questioning is one of the most natural ways of gathering information; thus, many people consider it a reliable source (Dornye, 2003). Therefore, to accomplish this research we have chosen the questionnaire as a data gathering tool.

3.3.Aim of the Questionnaires

The main purpose of students' questionnaire is to attain students' general background in their learning carrier; their attitudes toward reading and their level. It also aims to gather data concerning variety of encountered difficulties and predicaments during reading process. Moreover, it intends to discover learners' impression toward using formative assessment techniques in the classroom to achieve suitable level in this skill.

It aims to obtain teachers' opinions concerning students' level in reading comprehension skill, and their potentials to encourage them to read. It also aims to locate the adapted strategies to check learners' comprehension of the assigned texts. In addition to that this tool aims to obtain teachers' attitudes toward applying formative assessment strategies in the classroom as a procedure to assess and develop learners' comprehension.

3.4. Description of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire of this study consists of 21 items, the chosen format of questions is varying from one question to another and it sometimes would be open ended questions, and Semi-structured questions, and open questions, so its variance based on the sort of information that intended to gain. In the first section "Background information", the format of questions is most of them close questions whereby students are restricted to answer by choosing among a number of alternatives (a, b, and c). This type of questions are as expected useful, since questions are easily completed by the subjects and easily analyzed by the researcher. This section focuses on student's level, in which language they prefer to read, their attitudes toward reading, and where they read.

The second section of this questionnaire consists of open and closed questions by which the researcher aims to investigate the types of adapted strategies to check students' understanding. In this section students are asked how often their teachers encourage them to read in MCQ format, do teachers open oral discussion when reading a text. Moreover, to what extent written strategies and summarizing are important to check student's reading comprehension with justifying their answers, and do they practice these strategies or not.

The third section of this questionnaire includes questions concerns with variety of used assessment strategies to develop reading comprehension. This section also contains close and open questions, whereby the researcher asks students to classify certain techniques that could be adapted in the classroom to develop their understanding of the assigned text. The teachers' questionnaire contains 16 items; the selected format of questions is varying from one question to another, including an open ended questions and close-ended questions. Items (1-5) ask teachers concerning learners' level and tendency toward reading, and how often they push them to read. Moreover, items (6-9) are seeking to locate the used strategies which would be suitable to check students understanding. Finally, items (10-16) ask teachers about techniques through which learners' abilities in reading comprehension could be enhanced.

The variety of questions is very important in the questionnaire because it helps students to answer easily in the case of close questions and allows them to provide their opinions and suggestions in the case of open questions.

3.5. Piloting the Study

In order to confirm that all the questions and instructions of the questionnaire are clear, the questionnaire was handed to ten students who belong to the same population i.e., they are all third year students of English. Those students were asked to fill all the questionnaire and write down their suggestions. They are also asked to mention if there are any ambiguities in the questions. However, only seven questionnaires were handed back.

As to results of piloting, four students face some difficulties to answer the question number seventeen “How much do you think applying concept map strategies “diagrams and graphic” is important to develop reading comprehension?”, we kept this question, but during delivering the questionnaire we have tried to explain it to the learners. Whereas some of them fail to understand some key terms such as formative assessment, diagrams, and graphic, in this case the researcher has tried to explain these concepts through giving an examples and synonyms of these terms. In addition to that principles and how formative assessment has been explained to them for better understanding the questions.

3.6. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered at the end of the course, whereby students were reminded to answer individually. Problems met when piloting the students’ questionnaire, completely disappeared when we handed it because piloting plays an important role. It has helped us to adjust and modify the format of some questions; in addition to that, before administering the questionnaires, students were given guidelines to simplify the adopted procedure while dealing with the overall sets of questions.

3.7. Analysis of the results

3.7.1. Analysis of students’ questionnaire

Section one: Background knowledge

Item 01

How do you consider your level in English?

Via this question we aim to discover learners' level of proficiency in the language they are studying. The results are summarized in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	6	6%
Good	46	46%
Average	42	42%
Poor	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.01: Students' Level in English

Table 02 reveals that 46% of students have good level in English, and 42% of them in the situated in average level. However, the results of very good and poor levels have showed the same percentage 6%.

Item 02

Do you like reading?

This question intends to check students' preference toward reading skill; the results are demonstrated in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	24	24%
A little	70	70%
Not at all	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.02: Students' Attitudes toward Reading

The table above indicates that the majority of students 70% from the whole population (F=100) have selected the choice "A little", and 24% of them have chosen "A lot". However the students who choose "Not at all" are very few whereby they represent 6%.

Item 03

In which language do you prefer to read?

This question intends to check in which language students prefer to read, whether in English, Arabic, or French. In order to obtain general information concerning their reading process in general and reading in English in specific. The results are provided in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Arabic	34	34%
French	18	18%
English	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.03: The Most Readable Language

The table reveals that the most readable language is English language, whereby its percentage 48% which represents the half of the sample. However, there are 34% who have selected the choice Arabic language, and only few of students 18% prefer to read in French language.

Item 04

If you do not like reading in English, please say why?

We intend to investigate through this question, to what extent they are satisfied on their choice to learn English. Then we aim to discover the reasons behind pushing students back to construct the habit of reading in English. Moreover, it is enabled us to get general information concerning learners' degree of motivation to practice reading.

Item 05

How often do you read in English?

The following question aims at confirming to what extent students make efforts to build the habit of reading in English language. The students' claims are presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	6	6%
Sometimes	60	60%
Rarely	34	34%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.04: Students' Reading Frequency in English

This table shows that the majority of students “60%” do sometimes read in English. However, 34% of them who rarely read in English and students who frequently read are few 6%, whereas there is no one who select the last choice 0%.

Item 06

Where do you read?

This question intends to provide information concerning the local in which learners prefer to read. The results are presented in the next table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
In the class	16	16%
In the library	14	14%
At home/at the dormitory	52	52%
Elsewhere	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.05: The Local in which Students Prefer to Read

The table reveals that most of students “52%” prefer to read at home/at the dormitory. The last choice “elsewhere” is the second preferable local; its percentage is 18%. However, the students who prefer to read in the class are 16, and 14% of them who like reading in the library.

Item 07

If you do not prefer reading in the class please says why?

This question aims to investigate the causes that hinder students to read in classroom, predicaments such as anxiety, and the fear of feeling that they are laughable. The lack of comprehension also could frustrate students.

Section two: The frequent used strategies to check understanding

Item 08

How often does your teacher encourage you to read?

This question intends to discover to what extent teachers encourage their students to read and create opportunities to do that for the purpose of developing their abilities. The students' claims are presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	28	28%
Sometimes	56	56%
Rarely	12	12%
Never	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.06: Students’ Opinions toward Teachers’ Encouragements for Reading

The table above reveals that a half of learners “56%” state that their teachers sometimes encourage them to read, but some of them have selected the choice frequently 28%, while others have chosen the third one 12%. In addition to that, few students have selected the last choice 4%.

Item 09

How often does your teacher open oral discussions when reading a text?

This question aims at checking the frequency of using oral discussion strategy by the teacher during reading process. The students’ answers are presented in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	36	36%
Sometimes	44	44%
Rarely	14	14%
Never	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.07: The Frequency of Using Oral Discussion Strategy

The table above shows that the half of the sample has selected the choice sometimes which represents 56% from the total sample. However, 28% of them have choice frequently, whereas the students who have selected the choice rarely are 12% and few of them who choose the last suggestion “never” “4%”.

Item 10

Using written strategies is very important to check student’s reading comprehension, please justify your answer.

This question aims at checking the importance of using written skill by the teacher as a strategy to ensure that whether students understand what has been taught or not. The results will be presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	32	32%
Agree	56	56 %
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly disagree	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.08: Students’ Opinions Concerning the Importance of Written Strategies

The table shows that 56 % of the total samples agree with the importance of using written in diagnosing students’ comprehension of the assigned passages. However, others have selected the choice strongly agree 32%, and some of them are disagree on this 8%. Moreover, few students strongly disagree on its importance 4%.

Item 11

Summarizing strategy is an important tool to check your understanding

The intended objectives from designing this item is to obtain learners' opinions concerning to what extent summarizing strategy is important to verify learners' understanding. The students' claims are presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	36	36%
Agree	60	60 %
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.9: Students' Pre opinions about Summarizing Significance

The table above demonstrates that most of students agree with the importance of summarizing procedure in confirming their comprehension of the given text which represents 60 %. However, 36% of the total sample is strongly agreed with this procedure, and few of them state that are disagree 4%, and no one has chosen the last suggestion 0%.

Item 12

Do you practice summarizing strategy?

This item aims to gain information about students' efforts in creating opportunities in practicing summarizing strategy. The results will be presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	56%
No	44	44%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.10: Students Potential in Practicing Summarizing

This table shows that 56% of the total sample have selected the first choice "Yes", whereas the rest 44% have chosen the other one "No".

Section three: Assessment strategies to develop reading comprehension

Item 13

Do you understand when your teacher asks you to read a text?

The results are summarized in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	32%
No	68	68%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.11: Students' Comprehension of the Assigned Text

The table above indicates that the majority of students could not understand when they are invited to read in the classroom 68%. However, 32% of them claim that they could comprehend when they read the assigned text.

Item 14

-If "no", does this refer to the inappropriateness of the chosen techniques of reading?

This question aims to discover to the appropriateness of the adapted strategies by the teacher to guide learners and develop their reading comprehension abilities. The results are provided in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	50%
No	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.12: Students' attitudes toward the adapted reading techniques

This table reveals that half of the students 50% claim that teachers' adapt suitable procedures in the classroom during reading process, whereas the second half have selected the other suggestion 50%.

Item 15

If “yes”, how would you classify the following accepted techniques to develop your understanding of the assigned text in the classroom? ‘Order the statements using numbers from 1 to 4 in terms of their importance for you?’

A-Teacher asks me certain questions about the text

B-Teacher asks me to retell.

C- Teacher asks me to think-aloud

D-The predict an end of endless story

Through this question we intend to find out students’ opinions concerning the acceptable technique though which their comprehension abilities could be enhanced. In addition to that they should order them according to their preferences. The results will be presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
A	23	23%
B	36	36%
C	24	24%
D	17	17%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.13: Students’ Classification to the main Techniques which are Accepted to Develop Students’ Comprehension Abilities

The table above reveals that 36% of the total sample has chosen the suggestion B “the teacher asks me to retell” whereas some of them prioritize the offer C " the teacher asks me to think-aloud” 24%. However, others have recommended that they prefer the first suggestion “the teacher asks them certain questions about the text” 23% and the rest of them they prioritize the last one “they predict an end of endless story” 17%.

Item 16

How much do you think applying concept map strategies “diagrams and graphic” is important to develop reading comprehension?

The intended objective from asking such question is to obtain learners’ views concerning the significance of using some strategies. These strategies may assist them to

guess the meaning of the text before reading; they also could help them to understand any unambiguous idea or concept of the assigned passage after reading

Item 17

Does the title of a book, a text, or an article give you an idea about its content before you start reading?

This question intends to discover learners' abilities in infer and guessing the meaning of the text content from the title before reading the text. The results will be presented in the next table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	37%
No	63	63%
Total	100	

Table 3.14: Students' Abilities in Guessing the Text Content from the Title

This table reveals that the majority of learners could not deduce the content of the text from the title, before they start reading 63%. However, the rest of them could guess the meaning of the assigned text 37%

Item 18

-If "yes", do you rely only on the title to predict (guess) what comes next in the text?

This question aims at investigating whether students rely only on the title of the text in guessing its content or there are further tools which they are rely on to infer the meaning. The students' claims are presented in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	28%
No	72	72%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.15: Students' perceptions about the Role of the Title to Guess the Text Meaning

The table above shows that the majority of learners do not rely only on the title to predict its content; however they also rely on many other tools 72%. Whereas others have selected the first choice “yes” i.e. they rely on the title 28%.

Item 19

If "no", what other things may help you in your prediction (or guess)? (You can tick more than one box. In this case, please rank your choices by giving 1 to the most important until 3 or 4 to the least important).

A-prior knowledge

B-Author’s background information

C-Pictures, charts, diagrams and tables

D- None of them, you just understand after reading the text

Through this question we intend to obtain procedures which could be assist learners to understand the meaning of the text content. In addition to that, they are asked to rank them in accordance to their preferences. The results are demonstrated in the following table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
A	26	26%
B	15	15%
C	37	37%
D	22	22 %
Total	100	100%

Table 3.16: Procedures that Could Assist Learners’ in Comprehending a Text

The table above shows that 37% of the total sample has selected the choice C “Pictures, charts, diagrams and tables provided with the” whereas others “26%” prefer the choice A “prior knowledge”. However some of them have prioritized the suggestion D “None of them, you just understand after reading the text” 22 % and the rest have selected the offer B “Author’s background information” 15%.

Item 20

Do you compare your prediction about the topic with the real content of the text?

The objectives of this question is to what extent they compare their guesses and prediction with real meaning of the text content, and concerning the correctness of their inferences. The students' answers are presented in the subsequent table:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	26%
No	74	74%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.17: Students' Comparison of their Guesses with the Real Text Content

The table reveals that most of learners do not compare their predictions and guesses with actual meaning of the assigned text 74%. However, the rest of them "26%" they do this practice.

3.7.2 Analysis of teachers' questionnaire

Section one: Background information

Item 01

How long have you been teaching English? 10 years

The following question aims at confirming the teachers experience in teaching,

Item 02

How do you consider students' reading comprehension level?

The intended objective from asking such question is to gain teachers' expectations concerning learners' proficiency in reading comprehension. In order to determine to what extent they could manipulate the encountered problems which hinder their advance.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	0	0%
Good	1	17.67%
Average	3	50%
poor	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.18: Teachers' View Concerning Students' Reading Compression Level

This table reveals that 50% from the total sample agree with suggestion "average", whereas 33.33% have selected the choice "poor". However, some of them have stated that their level is "good" 17.67% and the first suggestion "very good" 0%.

Item 03

Do you think they have any tendency or interest toward reading?

This question aims at investigating teachers' hint about students' attitudes and impression toward reading skill. This enables us to provide suggestions which could assist them to solve some predicaments.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	33.33%
No	4	66.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.19: Teachers' Opinion about Learners' Attitudes toward Reading

The following table shows that 66.67% from the whole number state that the majority of students do not appreciate reading. However, the rest of them "33.33%" have selected the first choice.

Item 04

How often do you encourage your students to read?

The main objective of this question is to check to what extent teachers create opportunities for their students to practise reading process in classroom. The Teacher is

considered to be the most suitable person who could construct the habit of reading via pushing and encouraging them to read.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	4	66.67%
Sometimes	2	33.33%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.20: Frequency of Teachers’ Efforts in Encouraging Students to Read

This table reveals that the most of teachers claim that they frequently encourage students to read 66.67%. However, the rest of them have selected the second suggestion “sometimes” 33.33%, whereas the choices “rarely, never” no one has selected them.

Item 05

If you encourage them to read, please specify how?

We intend, through this question, to obtain the used techniques by teachers to encourage their students to come across reading. In addition to that, we try to gain their views concerning specific procedure.

Section Two: strategies used to check students’ understanding

Item 06

Do you use some strategies to check students’ comprehension of the assigned text?

The intended objective from asking this question is to investigate teachers’ efforts in adapting some techniques to check students’ weaknesses in comprehension of the given passage.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.21: Teachers’ Views Concerning Adapting Certain Strategies to Check Learners’ Comprehension

The table above indicates that “100%” have selected the first choice i.e., all teachers use certain strategies to check learners’ understanding. However, on one of them agree with the second one 0%.

Item 07

If “yes”, please mention some of them

The main objective of this question is to push teachers to mention particular strategies which could assist learners in raising their motivation, becoming good readers, exploring any opportunities.

Item 08

What do you think about using summarizing and opening oral discussion as techniques to check students’ understanding?

This item aims to discover to what extent summarizing and opening oral discussion are fruitful tools in checking learners’ comprehension of the given passages.

Item 09

Do you use classroom fluency snapshot as helping tool to diagnose the degree of students’ comprehension of the assigned passage?

This item intends to check whether teachers use classroom fluency snapshot as a procedure to diagnose learners’ understanding of a text or not. In addition to that, it aims to obtain their views in applying this technique in their classroom.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	33.33%
No	4	66.67%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.22: Teachers’ Opinions about Using CFS to Diagnose Learners’ Comprehension

This table reveals that 66.67% from the whole frequency state that they do not use classroom fluency snapshot strategy. However, the rest of them “33.33%” use this technique to diagnose learners’ understanding.

Section three: Assessment strategies to develop reading comprehension

Item 10

Do you think learners' reading comprehension could be developed?

The intended objective from asking such question is to interpret teachers' impression concerning students' comprehension development, and to what extent they believe in that.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0 %
Total	6	100%

Table 3.23: Teachers' Suggestions Concerning Learners' Reading Comprehension Development

The table above shows that all of teachers "100%" agree with the first suggestion which means that learners' abilities in reading comprehension could be enhanced, whereas no one of them has selected the other choice 0 %.

Item 11

If, "yes", how could we develop this skill?

We intend in this case to investigate how teachers could enhance learners' competences in reading comprehension through providing particular technique and procedure to apply in the classroom.

Item 12

What do you think about applying formative assessment strategies to develop learners' reading comprehension?

This item aims to discover to what extent formative assessment is an effective technique in overcoming some reading comprehension predicaments and developing students' abilities.

Item 13

Do you use written exercises "narrative writing or telling a story" as a formative feedback to enhance students' comprehension of a text?

The main objective of this question is to obtain information concerning using written skill in managing reading comprehension. Moreover, it emphasizes on particulate exercises “narrative writing or telling a story” which could be used as a sort of formative feedback to develop students’ comprehension.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	66.67%
No	2	33.33%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.24: Teachers’ Efforts’ in Applying Written Exercises to Enhance Students’ Reading Comprehension

The table in this case indicates that the majority of teachers “66.67%” use written exercises as a sort of formative feedback to enhance students’ comprehension, whereas, 33.33% of them do not use it in classroom.

Item 14

If “yes” please specify how?

This item intends to obtain teachers’ claims concerning how they apply certain writing exercise which could be basically delivered as a formative assessment to develop learners’ reading comprehension.

Item 15

How often do you use thinking-aloud and prediction?

The intended purpose of this item is to investigate to what extent teachers ask learners to sum up their ideas and thoughts concerning any passage and predict or not.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	2	33.33%
Sometimes	4	66.67%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.25: Frequency of Using Thinking-Aloud and Prediction in Classroom

The table above reveals that 66.67% from the total sample have selected the choice sometimes, and 33.33% of them have selected the first suggestion. However, no one has chosen “rarely, never” 0%.

Item16

These strategies affect positively on students’ comprehension level

The objective that intended to reach in this case is obtain teachers’ hints concerning the appropriateness of the supposed techniques in developing students’ understanding of given text.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	66.67%
Agree	2	33.33%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Table 3.27: Teachers’ Opinions Concerning the Effectiveness of the Proposed Strategies in Raising Learners’ Comprehension

This table indicates that 66.67% of learners are strongly agreed with the effectiveness of the suggested techniques. However, 33.33% of them agree with this, and no one has selected the rest suggestions 0%.

3.8.Discussion of the Results

In this section, we will discuss the obtained results from the students’ questionnaire.

It is worth knowing how much time learners spend in studying English. Item one shows that the majority of students have studied English for ten years, and the other at least they study nine years which indicates that they have acquired considerable linguistic background. Therefore, they could easily recognize a variety of language levels; phonology, morphology syntax, and semantic. They could also elaborate many skills. Thus

from the obtained statistical results above we deduce that learner need to foster their level in English in order to succeed in manipulating the different encountered predicaments. This level is not enough for third year students because they could be teachers in the near future and this later requires capable teachers in different language levels and skills, such as reading skill. Therefore learners should develop their abilities in reading skill. Spending much time in learning a foreign language is very important to develop their level.

Knowing learners' attitudes toward reading, in which language they prefer to read, and why do not like reading in English is highly significant in conducting this research. Item three reveals that the majority of learners "70%" practise a little the reading process which means that they do not prefer reading skill. Learners should be aware of the importance of reading skill in assisting them to reach an appropriate level in other skills i.e., it is deemed to be as a channel which enables them to move from one stage to another in acquiring language structure. Item number four indicates that approximately a half of learners prefer to read in English "48%" which reflects students' satisfaction in learning this language. Moreover, they need motivation to come across toward reading. Learners' attitude toward reading in Arabic language refers to the nature of preferring reading in the mother language which assists them in reading in English language –positive transfer of rules- from mother tongue to foreign one. Reading in French refers to the relationship between Latin languages. Item five; our purpose is to determine the reasons behind pushing students back to promote the habit of reading in English. It is very important to push learners to read in English because it assists them to develop other skills.

It is interesting to know the frequency and where the learners read. The item number six shows that the most of learners are sometimes read and some of them rarely who read in English. This indicates that the learners have luck in practesing reading. Therefore, as teachers we had better motivate them to read different sorts of texts which could help them to reach their background knowledge. The item number seven reveals that many students do not prefer to read in the classroom. This indicates that learners feel anxious and uncomfortable in the classroom, so we should mitigate this sense in order to raise their performance in the reading skill. In addition, the majority of them do not like read in the library which perceived as frustrated reason. If learners construct habit of reading they will never face difficulties in manipulating the encountered predicaments.

It is worth building insights why learners do not like reading in classroom and whether they open discussion or not in classroom. The item number eight intended to push learners to tell us about their feelings in the classroom which could hinder them to participate and read comfortably. Learners' feeling is perceived an affective reason in motivating or frustrating the learning process generally and reading comprehension particularly. The item number nine reveals that the half of learners stated that teachers sometimes encourage them to read, this is natural because there is no specific course of reading and teachers of grammar, written expression, and oral expression do not pay considerable attention for the reading process. They sometimes ask students to read and create opportunities for reading process. However, other have stated that teachers are frequently encourage them. Generally teachers are required to motivate learners to read under any circumstances. Item number ten shows that 56% of learners state that sometimes their teachers open oral discussion during reading process. This indicates that there is lack of sense of communication and this latter is very important in the classroom. It offers an opportunity for learners to provide their opinions and suggestions concerning a variety of reading angels. Whereas others "28%" claim that teachers frequently open oral discussion during reading process. Seemingly some learners mainly prefer to discuss in the classroom others do not like. It relies on the personality of learners, this appears in their answers. Overcoming on frustrating reasons such as anxiety is extremely significant in developing many abilities.

Item number eleven reveals that 56 % of learners agree and 32% strongly agree with the importance of written strategies in diagnosing learners' weaknesses in understanding the assigned texts. This indicates the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, one affect on the other. If the learner read a lot he/she will succeed in developing his abilities in writing and if he writes a lot, it will assist him in prediction process if he/she asked to do that. Writing also is perceived as a concrete evidence of learners' understanding in the classroom; it reflects the degree of their abilities in manipulating reading comprehension matters. The Writing skill is deemed to be as a mirror of reading skill.

Item number twelve indicates that summarizing play an important role in checking students' understanding if they are asked to read. This appears in their answers "60 %" of them agree and "36%" strongly agree. Summarizing reflects to what extent they receive enough information from the text; it represents learners' understanding succinctly. Item number thirteen reveals that 56% of learners practise summarizing process, whereas 44%

of them do not. Constructing a habit of practising this strategy is deemed to be one of the teachers' major concerns, so they need to pay attention and focus on this point take this procedure. It may help them in developing their comprehension capacities. Summarizing is regarded reflects abilities in managing this skill.

According to item number fourteen the majority of learners' answers indicate that they could not understand "68%", when they have been asked to read in the classroom whereas "32%" of could understand. This problem refers to many issues, for example, learners understand the text words in isolation i.e., they recognize them as a signal units not in relation to the context. They also fail to discover the hidden meaning or the author's intention when he/she uses metaphors in his/her works. Moreover the lack of grammatical rules recognition and the structure of language "syntactic level". Thus learners need to be exposure to a variety of texts' type narrative, descriptive, scientific, and argumentative, etc. This means that they should constantly read and tested through formative assessment techniques. Item number fifteen concerning the adapted techniques to reading manage the reading process, a half of the sample claims that the accepted procedures are inappropriate and the other half states that they are suitable. In this case teachers need to select the right technique which could fulfill learners' needs for the purpose of raising their performance. Choosing suitable technique by the teacher assists learners to understand without difficulty.

In item number sixteen, we intend to provide a variety of techniques which could assist learners in raising their understanding of the assigned text. Learners are required to classify these procedures in accordance to their preferences. "36%" of learners have prioritized retelling technique; according to them, it is a very important strategy in developing their abilities in understanding a passage through presenting their thoughts orally. Others prefer thinking-aloud, readers in this case are required to transform their comprehension of the text content from abstract ideas to concrete ones i.e., they introduce what they understand in a form of phrases or sentences. Some of them have selected "Teacher asks me certain questions about the text" this requires some intelligence because they are direct questions concerning particular point in the text. However, others prefer predicting an end of endless story" 17%, this invites reader has good imagination to manage this technique. Generally, teachers need these procedures to enhance students' understanding of different types of texts.

Item number seventeen, learners state that concept map strategy diagrams, and graphics are very important techniques to develop their reading comprehension. It enables them to remember the text content easily and sum up its ideas systematically. These procedures visualize the text thoughts and connect text's ideas with each other, starting from general concepts and thoughts to reach the specific ones. These techniques are highly significant in assisting learners to understand effortlessly. Item eighteen reveals that the majority of learners "63%" could not deduce the content of the text from the title, before they start reading while others could 37%. This indicates learners' weaknesses in manipulating this skill, so they need to practise reading process. Teachers also are required to provide many exercises and test students to derive the meaning from the title. Item number nineteen, shows that the majority of learners "72%" do not rely only on the title; however, they also rely on other tools in guessing the meaning of the passage. This indicates that they do not practise reading regularly. Therefore, they need to focus more and do their best to reach the level though which could be able to deduce the meaning before reading the text "from the title". Teachers also should deliver considerable exercise in a form of formative assessment, which enables them to diagnose weaknesses and develop competences.

Item number twenty shows that Pictures, charts, diagrams and tables is the most selectable choice "37%" which indicates that learners prefer this sort of activity. It is extremely significant in assisting readers to recognize easily what has been read, it also visualizes the learned ideas whereby they will become easy to remember. Others have selected prior knowledge "26%", it is naturally to be selected by learners because previous acquired knowledge in the same domain will obviously help them to manipulate the coming information. Some of them "22%" prioritize the last suggestion "none of them, you just understand after reading the text". These learners need to develop their level because they could not understand before reading the given text; they should learn how to predict the meaning from the title. Finally the less chosen suggestion is Author's background information. It is very important strategy which eases the comprehension of the text; author's background assists learners to guess what the type of information is in the text before reading. The majority of authors confine themselves to write in specific domain, hence if learners know the writer's background they will easily predict the text content. Teachers should construct a habit of doing such activities.

Item number twenty-one reveals that the greater part of learners does not compare their guesses and prediction with the real meaning of the text, if they practise prediction process. Prediction is very important process; it raises learners' wisdom and imagination. Thus they should increase their interests in practising this strategy.

To sum up the majority of learners face considerable predicaments in managing a variety of texts and understanding their content. Therefore they agree with appropriateness of greater part of the proposed formative assessment strategies.

In this section, we will discuss the gained results of the teachers' questionnaire.

Knowing teachers' experience, their opinions concerning students' reading comprehension level, whether they have positive attitudes toward reading, and how encourage them is highly significant in constructing procedures which could assist them to solve some encountered predicaments. Item number one reveals that teachers' experience plays an important role in guiding learners to reach their goals. Through their experience in teaching they might be able to solve any expected problem which could hinder learners' success. They also could easily determine their abilities whereby others of have stated that learners' reading comprehension level is average. However, other students stated that they poor in this skill, others the suggestion "good". These results indicate that learners need to exposure to wide range of text types. Item number three shows that teachers' claims concerning learners' attitudes; hence; many of them stated that the majority of students do not appreciate reading whereas others argue that they prefer to read. Therefore teachers should motivate students to read and raise their tendency. Item number four reveals that some teachers always encourage students' to read whereas few of them stated that sometimes. Teachers are perceived to be the most appropriate person who could construct the habit of reading via pushing and encouraging them to read. In item number five, teachers encourage learners to read through assigning short stories, novels and different sorts of texts to read, and then practice certain activities such as summarizing its content in one word or phrase, suggesting solutions to the proposed problems.

Choosing an appropriate procedure in checking learners' understanding is deemed to be one of the teachers' major concerns. Item number six reveals that teachers are always searching for suitable techniques; this appears in their answers whereby 100% of them claim that they do their best in doing this. These strategies could assist both teachers and learners; teachers in checking students' understanding and evaluating their performance –

formative assessment techniques-. They also could help learners in knowing their strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of making possible adjustment. Item number seven teachers provide many strategies though which they could confirm whether learners grasp the meaning of the text or not. They propose particular questions which enable learners to scan the assigned passage to ease the comprehension process. Some of them open oral discussion, correction and feedback, quizzes, direct questions, synonyms and opposite, or writing outline. The teacher is the major one who could push learners to enhance their proficiency.

Applying techniques such as summarizing, opening oral discussion, classroom fluency snapshot is highly useful for developing learners' reading comprehension. In item number eight; teachers claim that through using summarizing and oral discussion learners will be at ease to speak, to read and to exchange opinions and knowledge. They also could detect any mistake or problem. Teachers state that, these techniques are very beneficial and that is truly what learners need. Item number nine indicates that the majority of teachers do not use classroom fluency snapshot in classroom 66.67%, however, the rest of them "33.33%" they do. (CfS) is a technique enables teachers to check learners' abilities of understanding the delivered texts in the classroom. Therefore teachers are required to apply it, for the purpose of diagnosing learners' failure in manipulating different reading matters. Assessing learners' performance is extremely valuable because teachers' through assessment process could lead their students to success.

Teachers' opinions concerning learners' performance, how they could develop it, and how they perceive formative assessment is highly significant. In item number ten; all teachers state that learners' abilities could be developed if we pay considerable attention and work harder than usual, it is naturally if some work hardly in developing such skill and provides the appropriate strategies he/she will succeed in doing that. Therefore, in item number eleven; teachers have presented some activities which could raise students' performance. They could contribute in developing their comprehension abilities through enriching their linguistic background, pushing them to a more critical thinking. We also could enhance their competences in comprehension via deconstructing certain texts, and then infer its outline. We also could apply self-correction strategy through feedback. In item number twelve; concerning the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies in increasing learners' performance, teachers have stated that it is crucial technique in helping students to grow up in reading comprehension skill. Therefore, as teachers first, we need to

gain insights concerning how formative assessment works for the purpose of applying its principles correctly. Second, it is worthy to know that formative assessment needs to continue practice and delivering much more tests and quizzes because it exists during the course. It is the same with reading, it requires learners work constantly in order to reach the designed goals. Hence, teachers claim that (FA) is very beneficial element in the learning and teaching processes; students' need to be motivated in order to realize their learning objectives.

It is worthy to know teachers' attitudes in using writing skill to better learners' understanding. Item number thirteen reveals that the majority of teachers "66.67%" use written exercises as a formative feedback, but the rest of them "33.33%" do not use it. Writing is perceived as a valuable technique, it reflects learners' abilities in both reading comprehension and writing at once. In item number fourteen, teachers have specified how they use writing strategies in developing reading comprehension. They state that asking them to write a story they have read in the past which affect them, or asking them to summarize a novel. Writing is extremely beneficial to develop learners' performance in reading comprehension.

Searching for new tools in enhancing learners' performance is perceived as one of the most priorities that teachers should take into account. Item number fifteen shows that "66.67%" of teachers sometimes apply prediction and thinking-aloud in classroom, but some of them "33.33%" state that they frequently use this technique. It is an important strategy which reflects learner's abilities in expressing what exists in their mind and their understanding of the acquired knowledge. In addition to that, it develops their critical thinking. Item number sixteen reveals that "66.67%" of teachers strongly agree with the proposed procedures, but the rest of them "33.33%" they only agree with this. This indicates that if teachers apply formative assessment strategies regularly learners' abilities in reading comprehension will be developed to considerable level.

To conclude, Teachers have stated that formative assessment is valuable and useful in raising students' abilities in reading comprehension when it is applied in the ground.

Conclusion

To sum up, we have noticed that although third year students of English have spent considerable time in studying English. However, they have not reached a sufficient level in managing reading comprehension skill. Therefore the majority of them face a variety of predicaments when they deal with this skill. Thus, formative assessment strategies discussed above have considerable effect in raising learners' reading comprehension proficiency. Consequently, teachers are required to assist learners and promoting a habit of reading through practising and testing in a form of formative assessment techniques and procedures that have been proposed above.

General Conclusion and pedagogical implication

Reading is a cognitive process which requires an active learner who possesses a higher level of mental capacities and considerable amount of knowledge concerning the target language. These capacities and knowledge could be developed through designing appropriate activities which enable teachers to assess learners' performance formatively. Therefore, formative assessment is perceived as an important channel which could assist teachers to enhance learners' reading comprehension achievement.

We intend through this research to call the attention of the learners' in the reading comprehension difficulties and assist them in overcoming the different encountered predicaments in managing this skill. In addition to that, we aim to provide some procedures and techniques which are embedded in formative assessment. This latter could help learners to develop their abilities and performance. Moreover, our objective is to draw teachers' attention to the importance of formative assessment in raising learners' achievement in reading comprehension skill.

After the interpretation of results, we infer that learners do not practise reading skill as they are required to do, they are also do not prefer reading neither in classroom nor in the library. Therefore, their performance in reading comprehension has not reached the required level yet as third year students. Consequently, Teachers claim that the majority of learners' level in reading comprehension is average and they need to develop it. Moreover, they should construct a habit of reading in order to succeed in enhancing their performance in this skill. Accordingly, both teachers and learners' have argued that, the presented formative assessment procedures could contribute to a considerable extent in increasing learners' abilities and performance in reading comprehension. In addition, teachers have stated that formative assessment techniques are highly significant. If it is applied in a form of written exercises -as has been suggested in the theoretical part- because in this case learners' will transfer their abstract thought into reality to become concrete and teachable. This technique will ease the assessment of reading comprehension; it also develops reading and writing skills at once.

The results have been explained in details and consolidated by the questionnaire in the practical part. Therefore, we can say that our hypothesis is accepted; we conclude that

formative assessment techniques are extremely significant in developing learners' reading comprehension achievement.

After analysing and discussing the data, we infer that reading is perceived as an important skill that learners should acquire. Therefore, through these findings we have proved that third year students of English suffer from different difficulties in managing reading comprehension skill, whereby the majority of them have insufficient level in understanding the assigned texts. Moreover, they need some guidelines and strategies for the purposes of overcoming these predicaments. Thus, we introduced the procedure of formative assessment as a helping tool to promote the learners' reading comprehension abilities. In addition, we suggested some reading strategies which can assist third year students to comprehend during practising the reading process. Finally, we proved that formative assessment is, to a greater degree, significant if it is applied regularly by teachers through giving them its principles and how it works.

The present research proved a valid and a valuable data concerning learners' competencies, difficulties in reading comprehension skill, and teachers' endeavors in overcoming these problems. However, there are some obstacles in presenting all these in our research. First, the students' cooperation proved to be somewhat lesser than what was expected. In view of this most of the students stated that they found the questionnaire a bit longer and it was time consuming for them in answering. Therefore, this last might negatively affect the students' attitudes while providing answers. Second, because of some compulsory delays, in terms of our exams, imposed by the administration, we face problems in managing time.

Finally, in this respect, it can be said that the findings of the present research study point to some important pedagogical implications. Firstly, teachers need to encourage students to read and create opportunities whenever it requires. Thus, it is necessary to tell students that they are not expected to perform well from the first stage for the purpose of decreasing their anxiety. It is very important to practise reading constantly because learners' linguistic background will be enriched in this case, and their mental capacities will be enhanced, consequently their critical thinking will be raised. Secondly, teachers should emphasize on formative assessment in the classroom because it is increasingly under threat i.e., they focus only on summative assessment. Formative assessment is important in terms of its nature –assessment for learning-hence; teachers should design

tests not only for the purpose of ranking learners' and giving them marks. However, they should design diagnostic ones which assist them in setting the next steps. Thirdly, they also need to explore the proposed formative assessment procedures in diagnosing learners' reading comprehension weaknesses and developing their competences.

To sum up, what has been highlighted out of this research results can be cited as a clear image about the importance of formative assessment in raising third year English students' reading comprehension at University of Biskra. In addition, providing some useful pedagogical implications, This problem has proved to be fruitful ground for further research, with the hope that the obtained results will encourage other teachers to try to detect their students' reading comprehension difficulties and try to help them in reducing them.

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Appendix One

Students' Attitudes toward Developing Reading Comprehension skill through Formative Assessment

Please answer the following questions by using this symbol (√) when you answer and justify your answer when it is needed.

1-Background information

1- How do you consider your level in English?

A- Very good

B- Good

C- Average

D- Poor

2-.Do you like reading?

A- A lot

B- A little

C- Not at all

3-In which language do you prefer to read?

A- Arabic

B- French

C- English

4-If you do not like reading in English, please insert why?

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

5-How often do you read in English?

A- Frequently

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D-never

6-Where do you read?

A- In class

B- In the library

C- At home/ in the dormitory

D- Elsewhere

7-If not the answer A please insert why?

.....
.....

2- Section two: The frequent used strategies to check understanding

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

A- Frequently

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D- Never

9-How often do your teachers open oral discussion when reading a text?

A- Frequently

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D- Never

10-Using written strategies is very important to check student's reading comprehension, please justify your answer.

A-Strongly agree

B-Agree

D-Disagree

D-Strongly

Why.....
.....
.....

11-Summarizing strategy is an important tool to check your understanding.

A-Strongly agree

B-Agree

C-Disagree

D-Strongly disagree

12-Do you practice summarizing strategy?

A-Yes

B-No

3- Assessment strategies to develop reading comprehension

13-Do you understand when your teacher asks you to read a text?

a- Yeas

B- No

14-If “no”, does this refer to the inappropriateness of the chosen techniques of reading?

A-Yes

B-No

15-If “yes”, how would you classify the following accepted techniques to develop your understanding of the assigned text in the classroom? ‘Order the statements using numbers from 1 to 4 in terms of their importance for you?’

A-Teacher asks me certain questions about the text

B-Teacher asks me to retell.

C- Teacher asks me to think-aloud

D-The predict an end of endless story

16-How much do you think applying concept map strategies “diagrams and graphic” is important to develop reading comprehension?

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

17-Does the title of a book, a text, or an article gives you an idea about its content before you start reading?

A-Yes

B-No

18-If "yes", do you rely only on the title to predict (guess) what comes next in the text?

A-Yes

B-No

19-If "no", what other things may help you in your prediction (or guess)? (You can tick more than one box. In this case, please rank your choices by giving 1to the most important until 3 or 4 to the least important).

A-prior knowledge

B-Author's background information

C-Pictures, charts, diagrams and tables provided with the

D- None of them, you just understand after reading the text.

20-Do you compare your prediction about the topic with the real content of the text?

A-Yes

B-No

Your additional information and suggestions.....

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

Appendix Two

Teachers' Attitudes toward Developing their Reading Comprehension skill through Formative Assessment

Please answer the following questions by using this symbol (√) when you answer and justify your answer when it is needed.

1- Background information

1-How long have you been teaching English?years

2-How do you consider students' reading comprehension level?

A- Very good

B- Good

C- Average

D- Poor

3-Do you think they have any tendency or interest toward reading?

A-yes

B-No

4-How often do you encourage your students to read?

A- Frequently

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D- Never

5-If you encourage them to read, please specify how?

.....

.....

2- Section Two: strategies used to check students’ understanding

6-Do you use some strategies to check students’ comprehension of the assigned text?

A-Yes

B-No

7-If “yes”, please mention some of them.

.....

8-What do you think about using summarizing and opening oral discussion as techniques to check students’ understanding?

.....

9 Do you use classroom fluency snapshot as helping tool to diagnose the degree of students’ comprehension of the assigned passage?

A-Yes

B-No

3- Assessment strategies to develop reading comprehension

10-Do you think learners’ reading comprehension could be developed?

A-yes

B-No

11-If, “yes”, how could we develop this skill?

12-What do you think about applying formative assessment strategies to develop learners’ reading comprehension?

13-Do you use writing exercises “narrative writing or telling a story” as a formative feedback to enhance students’ comprehension of a text?

A-Yes

B-No

14-If “yes” please specify how?

15-How often do you use thinking-aloud and prediction?

A- Frequently

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D-never

16- These strategies affect positively students’ comprehension level

A-Strongly agree

B-Agree

C-Disagree

D-Strongly disagree

Suggestions about how to develop learners reading comprehension

المخلص

القراءة هي مهارة استقبال المعلومات حيث تشمل عملتي الفهم والتعامل مع محتوى المادة المراد قراءتها، لهذا التفاعل مع محتوى النص يفوق تعلم قواعد اللغة وتركيب الجمل وحفظ الألفاظ اللغوية فقط. لكن على المتعلم أن يتقن مهارات اضافية مثل عمليات عقلية فهميه والتحليل النقدي، لهذا نجد الكثير من الطلبة يعانون من مشاكل مختلفة عند ما يطالبون بقراءة وفهم النص. كنتيجة لذلك هذه الدراسة تركز على استراتيجيات التقييم التكويني من اجل جلب انتباه الاساتذة والطلبة معا الى صعوبات مهارات القراء مع الفهم، إضافة إلى ذلك ومن خلال هذه التقنية نحاول تشخيص ضعف الطلبة في التعامل مع هذه المهارة وتطويرها إلى حد سواء. اضع الى ذلك جلب انتباه الاساتذة الى فاعلية استراتيجيات التقييم التكويني التي يمكنها ان تساعدهم في تطوير قدرات الطلبة في المهارة المذكورة اعلاه من خلال محاولتنا إيجاد علاج لهذه المشكلة المطروحة.

لهذه اقترحنا الفرضية التالية: إذا استعمل اساتذة اللغة الانجليزية استراتيجيات التقييم التكويني في القسم، فان مستوى الطلبة في القراءة والفهم سيتطور. حيث اخترنا لهذه الدراسة عينة تقدر ب 100 من السنة الثالثة من طلبة جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة اضافة إلى 6 من أساتذة الانجليزية نجلي في نفس الجامعة من اجل الاجابة على أسئلة هذا البحث، إضافة إلى ذلك اخترنا دراسة وصفية للقيام بهذا البحث. النتائج المحصل عليها تبرز ان الطلبة يواجهون صعوبات في الفهم أثناء عملية القراءة نتيجة للمستوى غير الكافي في فهم النص المراد قراءته. لهذه كل من الاساتذة والطلبة يتفقون على فعالية استراتيجيات التقييم التكويني في تطوير مهارات المتعلمين في عملية القراءة والفهم