

Towards Effective Reading Strategies

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Abstract: This study investigates the problems that EFL learners encounter in reading. Thus, it elucidates some proposed strategies that might facilitate the reading process. In other words, it's an attempt to tackle EFL learners' reading problems. The study comprises a number of different topics such as: basic reading problems, assessing one's current reading ability, the need for speed reading, factors contributing to reduced reading rates, goal setting, reading environment, materials needed for proper reading, the common reading techniques that are often used in the classroom, strategies good readers utilize, strategies for reading fiction as well as non-fiction texts, rapid eye technology, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). Then the study is supported with a test on reading conducted on two different groups of EFL learners together with the statistically analyzed results of the test through SPSS as well as a discussion of the results. The selected sample was (120) Saudi male students. Their ages range between (18-22) years old. They studied English as their specialization and as a foreign language in a formal setting. They were divided into two groups: the first group studied two semesters whereas the second group studied seven semesters. The first group studied only introductory reading courses at foundation year program while the second group studied several courses that contribute to enrich their reading skills and vocabulary. Finally the study is concluded with a conclusion, references and an appendix of the reading test.

Key words: regression, eye movement, reading environment, scanning, skimming, rapid reading, critical reading, extensive reading, rapid eye technology, neuro-linguistic programming, emotional freedom technique.

نحو الاستراتيجيات الفاعلة للقراءة

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المخلص: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي الصعوبات في مهارة القراءة التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية. تقوم الدراسة بتوضيح بعض الإستراتيجيات المقترحة التي يمكن أن تسهل عملية القراءة. بتعبير آخر هذه الدراسة محاولة لإيجاد حلول إلى معضلات القراءة لدى الطلاب. تشمل الدراسة على مواضيع عدة مثل: معضلات القراءة الأساسية، تقييم مقدرات القراءة الحالية لدى الطالب، أهمية القراءة السريعة، العوامل التي تساهم في حل مشكلة مستويات الطلاب المتدنية، بالإضافة إلى بيئة القراءة، المواد التي يحتاجها الطلاب لقراءة مثلى وفاعلة. تستعرض الدراسة أكثر طرق القراءة شيوعاً في صفوف الدراسة، والإستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها القراء المتمكنون، وإستراتيجيات قراءة النصوص الواقعية، وإستراتيجيات قراءة النصوص الخيالية، تقنية الفحص السريع بالعين، البرمجة اللغوية العصبية، تقنية الحرية العاطفية. لقد تم دعم الدراسة باختبار في مهارات القراءة والذي تم تطبيقه على مجموعتين من الطلاب بالملكة العربية السعودية بحيث يبلغ عدد الطلاب للمجموعتين ١٢٠ طالب مقسمين إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة (أ) وتتكون من ٦٠ طالب يدرسون بالسنة التحضيرية بالجامعة ولم يدرسوا مقررًا عدا مقرر "مقدمة في القراءة"، بينما المجموعة الأخرى (ب) والتي تتكون أيضا من ٦٠ طالب يدرسون بالسنة الأخيرة بالجامعة بحيث قاموا بدراسة العديد من مقررات القراءة. تم تحليل نتائج الاختبار إحصائياً ومقارنة النتائج ومن ثم تمت مناقشتها. اختتمت الدراسة بخاتمة وقائمة المراجع وملحق يبين اختبار القراءة الذي طبق على الطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة السريعة، القراءة الناقدة، القراءة بتوسع، تقنية العين السريعة، البرمجة اللغوية العصبية، تقنية الحركة العاطفية.

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Introduction

There is absolutely no single definition of reading; therefore, it is difficult to compose a perfect one. A broader definition presented by Rubin (1982:8) is that “reading is the bringing and the getting of meaning from the printed page”. This definition implies that readers bring their background, experiences, and emotion into play. Hittleman (1978:5) states that “reading is a verbal process interrelated with thinking and with all other communication abilities: listening, speaking, and writing”. Reading is a language process and communication that is a process which gives opportunity to readers to interact and communicate with different ideas. Herber's (1978:9) categorizes reading as a thinking process which includes decoding of symbols, interpreting the meanings of the symbols, and applying the ideas derived from the symbols.

Spratt (2005, P.21) defines Reading as a receptive skill that involves responding to a text, rather than producing it. Reading involves making sense of a text. Moreover, Spratt (2005, p.22) mention several reasons for reading, ways of reading or reading sub-skills: Shepherd and Mitchell (1997, p2-3) state: Reading may be defined as an individual's total inter-relationship with symbolic information. Reading is a communication process requiring a series of skills. As such reading is a thinking process rather than an exercise in eye movements. Effective reading requires a logical sequence of thinking or thought patterns, and these thought patterns require practice to set them into the mind. They may be broken down into the following seven basic processes:

1. Recognition: the reader's knowledge of the alphabetic symbols.
2. Assimilation: the physical process of perception and scanning.
3. Extra-integration: analysis, criticism, appreciation, selection & rejection. These are all activities which require the reader to bring his past experience to bear on the task.
4. Retention: this is the capacity to store the information in memory.
5. Recall: the ability to recover the information from memory storage.
6. Communication: this represents the application of the information and may be further broken down into at least 4 categories, which are:
 - Written communication;
 - Spoken communication;
 - Communication through drawing and the manipulation of objects;

1. Basic Reading Problems

a. Regression

Regression is the re-reading that you do when your eyes make a mistake in following lines or words in a line. In some cases your eyes may skip back to the same line and in other cases you may find that you have missed a few lines because your eyes moved down too far. In any case, the result is that you have to readjust your focus and re-read material, thus slowing your reading speed.

As a speed reader you will virtually eliminate this problem. By using pointing devices such as a ruler or your fingers, this problem is very easy to eliminate.

b. Word-by-word reading

From the beginning of school, we have been taught to read one word at a time. You started at the beginning of the line, read each word one at a time until you reached

the end of the line. Then you began at the line immediately following the one that you had just finished, and read this new line exactly as you had read the previous one, one word at a time. Chances are that you never changed this way of reading and still read one word at a time.

As a speed reader, you will change this method of reading. You will begin to see words as groups rather than individual words, and you will learn to extract meaning from the groups of words that you see. This method is much faster for obvious reasons.

c. Pronouncing words as you read

This is the other problem that has probably stayed with you from the time that you were learning how to read. When you were first taught how to read, you probably were saying the words out loud as you read them. Your teacher taught you to read the word dog, for example, by pronouncing each one of the letters, d, then o, then g, and after that pronouncing the word dog itself out loud. When you progressed to reading silently to yourself, you took this method that was taught to you and internalized it. You began to pronounce the words that you read to yourself, in your mind. This is known as vocalization, that is, the process of lending sounds to what is being read. While learning how to read, it is in fact, necessary to pronounce the words since that helps you make the connection between the object and the word representing it. However, once your reading skills progress beyond the first few school years, vocalization is no longer necessary for understanding and is a major factor slowing you down.

As an example, when you see a dog in the park, you do not need to say the word “dog” to yourself in order to recognize that the animal that you are looking at is a dog. You gather that information automatically from your memory. However, if you were to read the word “dog” when it appears in print, you still find yourself pronouncing it in your mind.

As a speed reader you will learn to minimize the problem of vocalization. You will begin to see words as pictures. You will probably never eliminate vocalization, and will often use it when you come across an unfamiliar word. This brings us naturally to the next problem faced by the average reader.

d. Lack of sufficient vocabulary

You may be among the many readers who are limited by their current vocabulary. This in turn limits your reading speed. When you come across an unfamiliar word, there is little choice, but to consult a dictionary. Many readers however just skip the word and continue reading, thus compromising their understanding of the material. By doing so, they lose the chance of learning a word and placing it in permanent memory by relating it to the context in which they were reading it. One of the best methods of improving your vocabulary is to relate a new word to the context in which you came across it.

Many authors will tell you that a powerful method of learning new words and building your vocabulary is to learn the constructions, common prefixes and suffixes found in the language. Using word lists is also a great method of building word power. Each word appears along with a sentence in which it is used. After reading this sentence you must then make a sentence of your own using that same word. If you find yourself limited by your word power, working through one of the books that help build vocabulary is strongly recommended.

If your vocabulary is large enough you can deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context that it appears in. When combined with speed reading this becomes a powerful method, allowing you to continue reading without loss in meaning of the sentence.

e. Lack of concentration

There is often a lack of concentration on the material that you are reading. You get to the end of the paragraph, and find that you have no idea of what you just read. No matter how good your IQ or memory may be, if your mind is not on it, you are not going to understand what you are reading, and will not remember the information.

This problem occurs mainly because you are not utilizing your brain at the level which it is comfortable with. As a result, your brain finds other, unrelated items to keep busy with. This in turn makes you lose concentration on your reading material. Many researchers believe that we use less than 10 percent of our brain power. When you speed read, you will utilize more of your available brain power for reading. Since your brain will be busier, it will wander much less than before. This also has the added benefit that you increase your comprehension and retain more of the material read.

2. Evaluate your current reading ability

Before you can measure your progress you have to know what your starting point is. This section will help you determine your current reading speed. You will also judge yourself on how well you do regarding the problems discussed above. Fill out the Start Evaluation sheet supplied to keep a record of your starting point.

Choose any 2 facing full printed pages in your practice book. You will time yourself as you read these pages. Place the watch so that you can easily and quickly make a mental note of the time.

Quickly glance at the watch, making note of the start time. Read the pages at a normal pace. At the end of the second page note the time again. This is the end time. Write both the times down on your Start Evaluation sheet. Fill in the rest of the items in the sheet. This is your current reading speed. Write this number down at the bottom of the sheet in the space marked Score A0.

The sheet also has each of the above discussed problems written on it. They are measured on a scale of 0 through 4. For each of the problems listed, consider carefully the processes that went through your mind while reading the pages. Now judge yourself according to the scale below and circle the number on the sheet.

- 0 - must improve
- 1 - room for improvement
- 2 - acceptable
- 3 - minimal
- 4 - does not exist

Add the circled numbers for each of the problems and write them down in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet marked Score B0.

Judge your comprehension of the material you read. Again score yourself on the 0 to 4 scale above. Circle the number and also write it at the bottom of the sheet in the space marked C0.

Scores A0, B0 and C0 are the numbers that you will judge yourself against as you work through the material in following pages. They are independent items related to reading and are therefore best evaluated independent of each other. For this reason, this course does not make use of a single representative number to judge your reading ability. As your reading skills improve, you should find that the scores A, B and C increase. You will evaluate your % improvement as you progress. There is a number of timing sheets supplied which you can use to keep track of your reading speed during practice reading sessions. There are also a number of evaluation sheets supplied. If you need more, make copies. In following pages, you will need to evaluate yourself several times. The evaluations will give you a good idea about your progress.

3. Do you need Speed Reading?

As we approach the start of the 21st century, we are undergoing a major revolution in information. Access to information is made easy by the many journals and magazines available on a multitude of subjects. In addition, there is a wealth of information on the World Wide Web (the Internet) which is available for access by all users. You can find information on almost any subject, common or obscure. Many search engines make it easy to find the information you want. It is up to you however, to find the exact information that suits your needs.

While information availability and access is increasing, most people find that they have less time available to read the material they are required to, or are interested in. In many cases, magazines and books lie on shelves waiting their turn to be read. You have to choose the material that you read in finer detail, at the expense of material that you would have liked to read if you had the time.

Speed reading will allow you to read more materials in the same time that you spend reading now. Thus, it allows you more time to read the materials that you want to. As your speed reading skills improve, you will also train yourself to focus in on important details within the reading material. You will begin to retain more of the material that you read, and also find time to continue doing the things that were preventing you from reading more in the past.

4. Factors contributing to reduced reading rates?

Some of the factors which contribute to a reduced reading rate are:

- (a) Faulty eye movements, inaccuracy in placement of the eye while reading.
- (b) Regression, or the re-reading of material already read.
- (c) Limited perception span leading to word-by-word reading.
- (d) Vocalization, the process of putting sounds to words you read.
- (e) The false belief that slow reading leads to better comprehension.
- (f) Poor evaluation regarding the relevant parts of the reading material.
- (g) Lack of concentration.

5. Goal Setting

It is very important to set an achievable speed reading goal for yourself, and work toward it. Make a decision that you will teach yourself how to read say, three times faster in the next three weeks. There are many exercises that are suggested in the

steps that will guide you toward reading faster. You should practice these as many times as needed until you become comfortable with the concepts that the step focuses on. Once you are comfortable, time yourself and calculate your reading speed. Use the timing sheets supplied for this. Also, always time yourself on the exercises within the course where indicated. This will allow you to determine how far away you are from your goal, and allow you to adjust your efforts toward meeting it. Use the timing and evaluation sheets supplied with this workbook to keep track of your progress. Please take the time to examine these sheets now. The sheets are at the end of the work-book. Make extra copies of the sheets if needed.

If you find that you are progressing faster than you had initially planned, achieve your original goal in the smaller time, then redo your goal statement for a faster speed. As an example, say that you find that you are reading three times faster at the end of week two rather than week three. Restate your goal at the end of the second week to read five times faster at the end of week four. Now work toward that goal.

6. Your reading environment

Before you start on the techniques of speed reading on following pages, evaluate the environment in which you will be doing your reading. Adjust it if necessary.

Treat this workbook for what it is, as learning material and not as leisure reading. Sit at a desk while reading this workbook, in a comfortable chair. Use a light fixture that is bright and falls evenly on the desk. Adjust the fixture so that the light does not hurt your eyes and there is no glare. An indirect light source is more pleasing than direct light falling on the reading material. Use your judgment and these few guidelines to arrange your work area accordingly.

7. Materials you will need

In addition to this workbook and the worksheets supplied, you will need the following materials. Take the time to gather these materials now.

A practice book - You will need a book to practice your reading. Choose a book that is of some interest to you, but one that you do not particularly want to read for understanding the material. It may be a novel or a non-fiction book. It should have reasonably sized type, neither too big nor too small. The type should be clear, and preferably, there are no illustrations in the book. You will read this book with the sole purpose of reading faster. Ignore comprehension while practicing your speed reading. You may even use a book that you have read before.

A pencil - This will serve to fill in the worksheets. It will also serve as a pointing device.

A foot-ruler - Serves as a pointing device, allowing you to follow lines within your practice book. Choose one that is not transparent, such as one made of wood.

A watch - You will use this to time yourself. It must have a seconds hand.

A calculator - Optional, but helps in the very few calculations you will make.

Keep all these materials in easy access while you are working on this course. It is very frustrating to stop what you are doing to find a pencil because you need to write

down your most recent achievement in a timing sheet. Use a pocket folder to keep all materials together while you are working on increasing your reading speed.

Preparing your practice book

Before you start on the course in the following pages, take some time to prepare your practice book. The pages of the book should be easy to turn. If the book binding is stiff, the book will tend to close when you let go of the pages that you are reading.

To loosen the binding, place the book on a flat surface and open it to about the middle of the book. Press down against the binding of the book until the book stays open without difficulty. Then grasp half the pages on either side of the middle page and press down on the binding again. Continue this, turning to about half the pages on all sides of the book.

Find the average number of words per line of the book. Count the number of words on ten full lines of the printed material. Divide the number by 10. Round the result to the closest whole number. Write this down on the preparation sheet supplied.

Example: Words in 10 full lines = 110

Average words per line = $110 / 10 = 11$ words per line.

Find the lines per page of the book. This is easily done by counting the number of lines in a full printed page of the book. Make sure that the page is not missing a few lines at the beginning or the end of the page. Now calculate the average number of words per page as shown below. Write down your results on the preparation sheet supplied.

Example: Lines per page = 34

Words per line = 11 (from above)

Therefore

Words per page = Words per line x Lines per page
 $= 11 \times 34 = 374$ words per page

8. The common reading techniques that are often used in the classroom:

- Scanning
- This technique involves moving your eyes quickly over a text to find something, or to see whether it contains anything you want to read.
- When using this technique, for example looking for a number in a telephone directory, you may be looking for a topic or phrase or searching more generally for words that are relevant to your task.
- Scanning, in contrast to skimming (see below), is useful when you are interested in finding out not so much the general drift, but rather whether or not the chapter or article addresses your particular area of concern - the textbooks are well-designed to help with this reading approach.

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- Skimming
 - Skimming involves looking quickly through the whole book, passage or text to get a general sense of what it is about - you read as little as you can, while still picking up some idea of what is being discussed.
 - Refer to the subheadings and a couple of sentences from each paragraph (the first and last sentence).
 - The main aim of this reading technique is to ascertain the main ideas.
 - If you are skimming you should skip over any material which develops, further explains, qualifies or illustrates, or provides evidence for the main idea.
 - Skimming is a method to help you find relevant material quickly – it is not a substitute for detailed reading and analysis of that material.
 - Regular skimming of texts can help you learn to read more quickly and prioritize - it can also help your understanding of text materials, quickly and effectively.
 - Rapid Reading
 - This technique is similar to skim reading in that you progress quickly through a text by not reading every word, sentence or paragraph.
 - Unlike skim reading however, with rapid reading you make fast progress because you are already familiar with the material – what you are doing is half reading and half filling the gaps from memory.
 - Rapid reading is useful therefore, for re-reading already familiar material and for revision.
 - Critical Reading
 - Critical reading involves gaining a complete understanding of what has been written. It also involves asking questions of it, for increased understanding and then applying the information.
 - Reading critically can take time and requires a high level of concentration.
 - The workbooks help you to succeed with this approach by providing quick questions and question times to test your understanding – make sure that you use them.
 - Extensive Reading
 - Extensive reading is a more thorough method of reading than skim reading.
 - When using this technique, you read everything but you do not necessarily pause to reflect - this enables you to read a large amount of text in a single session.
 - This is useful for reading many sources, reading background information or when reading for pleasure, such as a novel.

9. Strategies good readers use

As a high school student, you read for many purposes, such as to:

- learn to do something
- conduct research
- seek specific information
- relax
- be inspired

Whatever the purpose, there are certain strategies which proficient readers use to make sense of what they read. Cathcart and others (1999:P1) state that these strategies include:

- recalling prior knowledge and experiences which relate to the material being read.
- thinking of what they already know about the genre or the author.
- predicting what will happen next.
- creating visual images of what the text is saying.
- summarizing important ideas and concepts both during and after the reading.
- drawing inferences, based on the text and their own prior knowledge, about ideas the author suggests but does not explicitly state.
- generating questions about author's purpose, character motivation, confusing passages, etc.
- developing an understanding of the message the author wishes to communicate by synthesizing the literal textual information into a thematic whole.
- making connections from the text to one's personal knowledge and experiences, as well as making connections with other texts and with one's understanding of the world (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world).
- being mentally aware of when reading does and does not make sense, and knowing what to do when the meaning breaks down.

In the years before you entered high school, you probably spent more time reading fictional stories than you did reading informational text. In high school, that will undoubtedly change, and you will find that you are reading a much larger proportion of non-fiction, informational material than you did in the past.

Proficient readers do not approach reading informational text in the same way that they approach reading a narrative story. In order to make sense of nonfiction text, skilled readers use the strategies described in the box on the next page.

10. Strategies for reading nonfiction texts

A textbook or other text meant to give information is a nonfiction text.

- a. BEFORE YOU READ, Cathcart and others (1999:P2)suggest:

Preview and skim the material.

1. What do you already know about the topic? Think about past experiences with other subjects you know about and how they may connect to what you are going to read.
2. What can you expect it to tell you?
3. How is the text organized?

- Non-fiction text is typically organized using one of the following structures:

Generic List Compare/Contrast

Sequential List Problem/Solution

Description Cause/Effect

When you preview the text, as well as while you are reading, pay attention to which text structure(s) the author has used to organize the information.

- Read the boldface chapter, headings, other titles and subtitles, focus questions, and any questions at the beginning of the chapter or text.
 - Read all the boldface print.
 - Look over all typographical aids such as italics, and visual aids such as graphs, charts, maps, pictures and diagrams.
 - Read the first sentence of each paragraph to determine the topic of each.
 - Read the last paragraph or summary and any end-of-the-chapter material.
4. Make a graphic organizer (chart, map, timeline, outline, etc.) to help you organize the material.
 5. If your purpose is to find a specific piece of information, think about where you will find it according to your preview and then read only the portion of the text necessary to find your answer.

b. AS YOU READ:

Increase your understanding by interacting with the text:

- Think of how the information you read fits with your overview.
- Fill out your graphic organizer or outline, make note cards, or keep a reading/learning log.
- When text becomes difficult, slow down, or reread sections as necessary.
- Summarize.
- Paraphrase – translate the material into your own words.
- Ask yourself questions about the subject.
- Predict what will come next.

c. AFTER YOU READ:

Check your understanding by asking yourself, "What did I learn?" Relate this new information to what you already know.

11. Strategies for reading fiction texts

When reading fictional text or any text that utilizes a story structure, proficient readers also utilize specific strategies to make sense of what they read. The box below summarizes those strategies.

a. BEFORE YOU READ:

Survey the material.

- Look at the title, chapter titles, pictures, etc. for clues to the content.
- Read the blurb or story synopsis on the back cover to get a sense of the overall plot of the story.
- Think about past experiences you may have had that might connect to the story.

- What do you already know about the genre? The author?

b. AS YOU READ:

Ask yourself questions and answer them, almost the way a teacher does.

1. What is the setting? How does it contribute to the over-all effectiveness of the story?
2. Who are the main characters and what are they like? How do they change?
3. What is the main character's conflict or goal?
4. What obstacles or problems stand in his or her way?
5. What will be the outcome and how will it come about?
6. What is unclear or confusing?
7. What predictions do you make?
8. What are you visualizing in your "mental movie" as you read?

c. AFTER YOU READ:

Check your understanding by retelling the story.

What messages or insights about life might the author be trying to communicate (the theme)?

12. Rapid Eye Technology

Bennette (1997) reports: Over the past 15 years, I've been involved with Rapid Eye Technology (RET) - both practice and training. Early on, I recognized the possibilities for RET in the educational arena. RET is a stress relief process that is effective and fast. Much of the reason most people have trouble reading is their stress about reading out loud in front of judgmental others (a "flashback" to childhood reading problems).

In addition to the emotional and mental processes RET addresses; there is also a strong spiritual basis that encourages inner growth and development. I suggest that the basis for reading is the same basis that underlies RET. That spiritual basis is how you can read at astronomical speeds, beyond your wildest dreams or expectations.

You have within you the ability to read millions of words per minute and comprehend it all!

Now, aside from what you are capable of, you will probably allow yourself to read in the thousands of words per minute range. Realistically, readers will probably see a substantial rise in both reading speed and comprehension. (P: 7-8).

13. NLP

Bennette (1997) mentions: Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a powerful process for initiating and sustaining successful action. In a nutshell, NLP was originally developed after the "monkey-see-monkey-do" philosophy. That is, if you can see what someone is doing to achieve success, you can pattern after them and achieve success, too.

There are a number of successful reading strategies involved in this course. You will read and follow specific directions based on principles of NLP and other tactics of successful speed-readers and speed reading courses.

In addition to gleaning the most successful processes and techniques from many sources, this course includes processes and techniques for opening and increasing intuitive functions. (P: 8).

14. Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

Bennette (1997) adds: EFT is an emotional healing technique based on the idea that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system. EFT tends to relieve symptoms by use of a routine of tapping with the fingertips on various body locations. This tapping serves to balance energy meridians that become disrupted when the client thinks about or becomes involved in an emotionally disturbing circumstance.

EFT was developed by Gary Craig whose academic training includes a Stanford engineering degree. He is a Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and is a Certified Master of The Callahan Techniques. Many of the concepts underlying EFT came from Gary's training in Thought Field Therapy (TFT) under the tutorship of Dr. Roger J. Callahan.

3. Methodology, results and discussion

The selected sample was (120) Saudi male students. Their ages range between (18-22) years old. They studied English as their specialization and as a foreign language in a formal setting. They were divided into two groups: the first group studied two semesters whereas the second group studied seven semesters. The first group studied only introductory reading courses at foundation year program while the second group studied several courses that contribute to enrich their reading skills and vocabulary as in the following tables:

Courses studied by the first group

Group (1)

Semester	Courses
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Introductory Reading Course.
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Introductory Reading Course.

Courses studied by the second group

Group (2)

Semester	Courses
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Vocabulary. Techniques of Reading. Topics from the Internet. Literary Terms.
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media English. Introduction to Translation. Situational English.
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Short Stories.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic Terms. • Theories of Translation. • Discussion in English.
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate in English.
Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Linguistics. • Translation into Arabic.
Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine Translation into Arabic.
Seven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation into English.

The whole groups of students that are mentioned before studied in a governmental Faculty of Arts and Education in Turabah Branch, Taif University, Saudi Arabia. They had a similar language history or background in the sense that they all had spent six years learning English, three years at the intermediate level and another three years at the secondary level. They rarely used English in order to achieve real-life purposes outside the classroom. None of them had been to an English-speaking country.

Students seemed interested particularly in reading because they realized that they need to score well in the examinations. They knew that English will most likely be the medium of instruction in many workplaces and educational institutions in Saudi Arabia. Thus, all the above-mentioned reasons seem to make most of them very keen to acquire a good command and grasp of English.

Instrument of the Study (The Test)

It is a one-hour test which is deliberately assigned this time limit because time is a crucially important psychological factor in tests as well as examination questions. This test is designed in order to evaluate the reading skills of two groups of EFL learners who both studied reading skills courses; one group studied only introductory courses whereas the other group studied several vocabulary and reading skills courses. The researcher is very concerned with tracing the difference that reading courses make in promoting EFL learners' reading skills.

The test is devoted to reading in which a comprehension passage entitled (Sporting Fever) has been selected in particular for the following reasons:

1. Sport is very popular among teenagers.
2. Competition is a very common trend among teenagers as well.
3. The passage presents a Nazi cultural background that learners are excited to know about.
4. The passage comprises a set of new words which are intentionally chosen so as to see if literature broadens learners' vocabulary repertoire.

Then the passage is followed by two main questions, the first is intended to check learners' comprehensibility at the word level (vocabulary test) and the second question is meant to evaluate their understandability at the sentence level (an overall understanding test).

The following graph shows the percentage as well as the rates of the learners in group one (60 students) who studied only introductory reading courses.

Group (1)

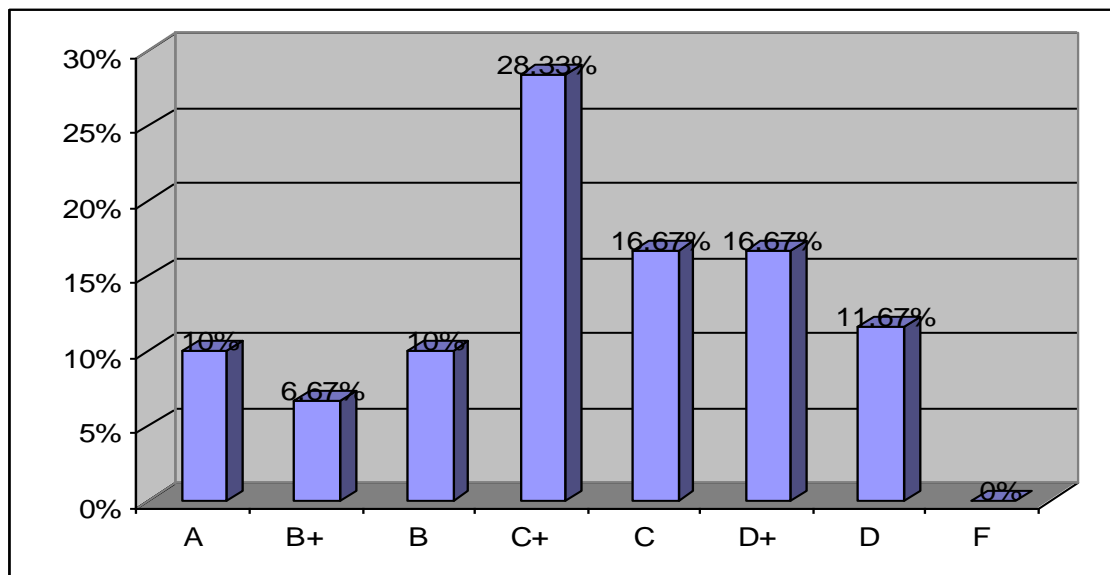


Fig (4.12) Number of reading courses (group I)

As the above graph shows that no student has failed the reading test F (0 %), whereas 7 students scored D (11.67%), 10 students scored D+ (16.67%), 10 students scored C (16.67%), 17 students scored C+ (28.33%), 6 students scored B (10%), 4 students scored B+ (6.67%), and 6 students scored A (10%).

The following graph shows the percentage as well as the rates of the learners in group two (60 students) who studied several reading courses.

Group (2)

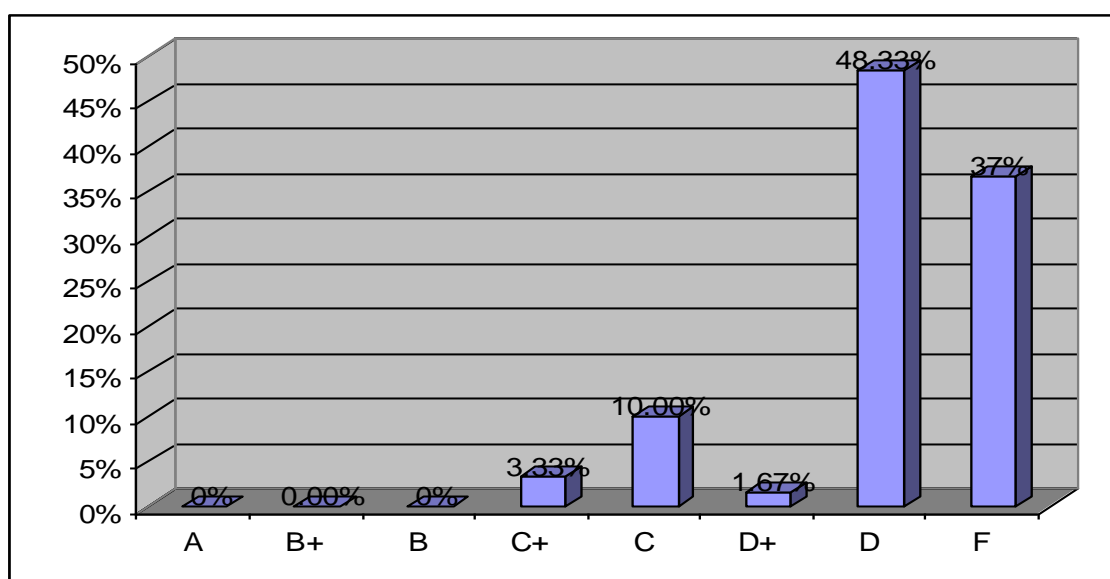


Fig (4.13) Number of reading courses (group II)

As the above graph shows that 22 students have failed the reading test F (37 %), whereas 29 students scored D (48.33%), 1 student scored D+ (1.67%), 6 students scored C (10.00%), 2 students scored C+ (3.33%), 0 student scored B (0.00%), 0 student scored B+ (0.00%), and 0 student scored A (0.00%).

The following graph shows a comparison between the rates and scores of learners in the two groups.

Group (1) and (2)

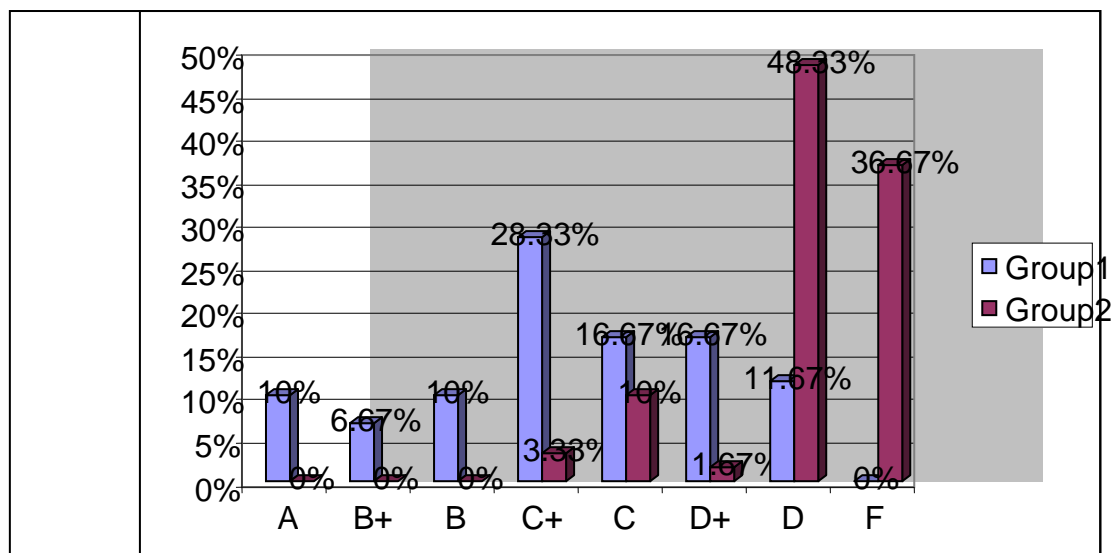


Fig (4.14) Comparison between group one and two

As the above graphs show the numbers, scores and rates of the two groups, this graph is summing up the above-mentioned two graphs.

15. Conclusion

This paper was devoted to the nature of comprehension process and highlighted the reading strategies that are necessary to be followed to achieve effective reading. The researcher encourages teachers and learners to review the techniques again and spend more time on the exercises and indicated practice sessions, repeating them several times each day until you are comfortable with the methods.

A summary of the techniques that will allow you to read faster is given below.

- (a) Improve placement. Use a pointer.
- (b) Increase your perception span. Read groups of words rather than single words.
- (c) Avoid vocalization. Do not pronounce words as you read them.
- (d) Improve your vocabulary so that you do not get stuck on a word you do not know.
- (e) Determine your purpose of reading the material. Skim to evaluate its relevance.
- (f) Read, Summarize, Question, Review. Improve comprehension and retention.

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