

The Effect of Implementing a Remedial Plan Based on Reading Strategies on Improving the Reading Comprehension Achievement of Jordanian EFL Eleventh-Grade Students in the Vocational Stream

Bassmah Fraihat^{1*}

¹Ministry of Education, Amman, Jordan.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 31 Mar 2022

Accepted 12 May 2022

Published 01 Apr 2024

*Corresponding author:

Ministry of Education, Amman, Jordan.

Email: bassmahf@yahoo.com.

Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the effect of implementing a remedial plan based on reading strategies on improving the reading comprehension achievement of Jordanian EFL eleventh-grade students in the vocational stream. The study participants consisted of 80 eleventh-grade male students, purposefully selected from the Northern Al-Mazar Directorate of Education, specifically from two intact sections of Hofa Comprehensive Secondary School for Boys. One section was assigned as the control group, which was taught according to the guidelines of the Teacher's Book, while the other served as the experimental group, taught using the reading strategies-based remedial plan. The study spanned seven weeks during the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The instrument used to collect data was a pre-/post-reading comprehension test.

The study's findings revealed statistically significant differences (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the students' performance on the reading comprehension test, favoring the students in the experimental group. The improvement in the students' reading comprehension could be attributed to the use of various reading strategies in teaching reading texts. Several recommendations were proposed for EFL researchers and the Ministry of Education.

Keywords: Remedial Plan, Reading Comprehension Achievement, Reading Strategies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical framework and previous study

Reading comprehension plays a significant role in learning the English language. Jordanian EFL students need to learn reading comprehension strategies and skills to enhance their information and increase their vocabulary knowledge as well as ensure success in Al Tawjihi.

Most scholars such as (Fraihat, 2003; Elashha, 2008; Fraihat, 2018) agree that reading comprehension needs the implementation of various reading strategies to improve the students' reading skills. Jordanian EFL students may face several problems while reading such as a lack of

ability in identifying main ideas as well as supporting ones. They struggle with learning to comprehend while reading.

According to Snow (2002), reading comprehension is an ongoing reading process in which the reader comprehends the meaning of the printed text through an interactive process that includes three phases of reading (pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading). (Gagen, 2007) defines reading comprehension as an active and complex process in which the reader interacts with the text using several reading strategies. One of these strategies may be their ability to classify the printed text into paragraphs as well as their ability to distinguish the main ideas from the supporting ones.

Cohen (1990) classify reading strategies into four groups: The first group aims at facilitating high-level strategies such as skimming and scanning. The second group aims at explaining meaning through simplifying syntax and identifying basic ideas. The third group aims at establishing coherence in text. The fourth group includes planning and remediating skills.

Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) believe that reading is one of the main skills in English as a foreign language (EFL). It is expected that reading practice helps foreign language learners to improve their reading comprehension skills using several strategies. Moreover, it may help them build their grammar and vocabulary knowledge and improve their speaking and writing skills.

In this regard, a good question might be raised: How does a remedial plan based on implementing reading strategies improve students' reading comprehension? Improving students' reading comprehension requires teachers to build a remedial plan that might help them to develop their students' reading comprehension.

1.1.1 Literature Review

Al-Rahahala (2005) explored the reading strategies used by tenth-grade students in Al-Salt directorate of education. The population of the study were 63 tenth grade students whereas the twenty students from the tenth grade were the sample chosen randomly and they were classified as high and low achievers according to their school records. The study revealed that both groups used the same reading strategies such as rereading, restating, activating prior knowledge, and fixing up strategies. Moreover, the results showed that the two groups differ in their use of reading strategies such as scanning, summarization, predicting, and keywords.

Al-Khawaldeh (2012) explored the reading comprehension strategies used by secondary stage Jordanian students. A proposed multiple strategy-based instructional program was used to collect the data. The findings of the study showed that Jordanian secondary stage students used many reading strategies. These strategies were: identifying the form and type of the text, reading the whole text to get a general idea, guessing meaning from the text, asking, and answering questions, rereading, summarizing, and drawing a picture of the text.

Banditvilai (2020) investigated the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension of the second-year English major students who enrolled to study English Reading at the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, to find out whether, after being trained in reading strategies, they were able to apply any of these strategies to their reading processes. The data were collected from a questionnaire and reading tasks and semi-structured interviews. The study revealed that reading strategies had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension.

1.1.2 Concluding Remarks

Previous research supported the idea that using various reading strategies while teaching reading comprehension affects the students' comprehension positively. These studies revealed that there was a close relationship between reading strategies instruction and students' comprehension.

The current study attempted to investigate the effect of a remedial plan based on reading strategies on improving eleventh-grade students' reading comprehension achievement. The current study differs from the previous studies in the sense that the plan was designed according to the students' needs.

2. Statement of the Problem

As a supervisor of English as a foreign language, the researcher has noticed that many Jordanian EFL students still find difficulty in comprehending what they read. This difficulty may be due to the students' lack of knowledge of reading texts construction such as the paragraphs, the main ideas, and the supporting ones.

Several Jordanian researchers such as (Fraihat, 2018; Smadi & Alshra'ah, 2015), reported that the low reading comprehension that students suffer from may refer to the inappropriate use of reading strategies. According to (Tashtoush, 2008), learners are supposed to select the appropriate strategies that facilitate their comprehension and improve their self-confidence. Otherwise, reading becomes a pointless exercise. The researcher believes that building a remedial plan based on reading strategies by teachers properly helps teachers to improve students' reading comprehension.

2.1 Question of the study

The study sought to answer the following question:

1. Are there any significant differences between the students' scores in the experimental and control groups on the post-reading comprehension test due to the students' reading strategies-based remedial plan?

3. Purpose and Significance of the study

3.1 Purpose of the Study

This study aims at finding out the effect of implementing a remedial plan based on reading strategies on improving Jordanian EFL eleventh grade students' reading comprehension achievement.

3.2 Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study can be summed up in helping the Jordanian EFL teachers by providing them with a reading remedial plan that helps in responding to the students' reading comprehension.

4. Operational Definitions of Terms

A remedial plan

A plan based on reading strategies that is prepared by the researcher to respond to the students' needs.

Reading Comprehension Achievement

It is the amount of comprehension that is achieved while reading. In this study, this achievement is measured by the students' scores on the reading comprehension tests.

5. Limitations of the Study

The generalizations of the findings of this study can be limited by the following factors:

- The study is limited to the eleventh-grade students of the vocational stream at Northern Al Mazar Directorate of Education schools, so the findings are generalized to students studying in similar contexts.
- The plan was supposed to address the two groups of eleventh-grade students of the vocational stream in the Northern Al Mazar Directorate of Education during the first semester of the academic year 20121-2022.
- The plan was carried out in seven weeks.

6. Sampling, Instrumentation, Data Collection and Data Analysis

To achieve the purpose of the research, a sample of two intact eleventh-grade classes was purposefully drawn from Hofa Al Mazar Secondary School for Boys, Al Mazar, Jordan since the researcher works in the Northern Al Mazar Directorate of Education. One 39-student section was randomly assigned to the control group and another 41-student section to the experimental group. The control group was taught by the conventional methods outlined in the Ministry-prescribed Teacher's Book whereas the experimental group was taught through the remedial plan based on reading strategies. The two groups were pre-and post-tested on reading comprehension. Between the pre-and post-test, the remedial plan, which comprises the seven reading comprehension texts, was implemented over a seven-week interim, with two 40-minute sessions a week.

To answer the research question, which addressed the potential effect of implementing a remedial plan on reading comprehension achievement, means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and ANCOVA were used to determine any potentially significant differences in the participants' reading comprehension learning, which can be attributed to the treatment.

6.1 The Remedial Plan

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher designed a remedial plan consisting of the required strategies. The total number of activities of the remedial plan was eleven. These activities are shown in Table (1).

Table (1): The Content of the Remedial Plan

Week	Day	Remedial activities	Number of periods	Number of activities	Duration (minutes)
Week One	Day one	Dividing the reading text into paragraphs.	1	1	15
	Day two	Identifying the main topics	1	1	15
Week Two	Day one	Dividing the reading text into paragraphs.	1	1	15
	Day two	Identifying the main topics	1	1	15

Week Three	Day one	Dividing the reading text into paragraphs and identifying the main topics	1	2	30
	Day two	Matching the main topics with the supporting ideas	1	2	30
Week Four	Day one	Finding pronoun references and connecting ideas	1	2	30
	Day two	Guessing the meanings of the new vocabulary items	2	2	30
Week Five	Day one	Summarizing each paragraph alone.	2	2	30
	Day two	Summarizing the whole text.	1	1	15
Week Six	Day one	Expressing opinions.	2	2	30
	Day two	Expressing and justifying opinions and justifying	1	1	45
Week Seven	Day one	Making suggestions	2	2	30
	Day two	Summarization	2	2	2×45
Total		11	25	25	18.45

6.2 Content Validity of the Remedial Plan

To ensure the content validity of the remedial plan, it was given to four EFL teachers and two English supervisors. The jury made several suggestions which were all taken into consideration in the final versions of the plan.

The Reading Comprehension Test

The researcher designed a pre- post-reading comprehension test. The test included two reading passages with varied questions. Table (2) presents the specifications of the test.

Table 2: Specifications of the Test

Question number	Question type	Reading strategies	Percentage
1	Wh-Questions	Finding answers to questions	20%
2	Completion	Predictions	
3	Multiple choice	Finding pronoun reference	74 %
4	Multiple choice	Guessing meaning from context	
5	True /False	scanning	
6	Multiple choice	summarizing	
7	Completion	Analyzing	6%
8	Completion	Thinking critically	
8			100 %

Table (2) shows that the total number of reading comprehension questions was eight. One hour was given to the students to answer the given questions.

6.3 Validity and Reliability of the Reading Comprehension Test

The pre-post-reading comprehension test was checked by a jury of four EFL teachers and two English supervisors to establish its validity. The jury made a few suggestions which were all considered in the final versions of the instrument.

To establish the reliability of the pre-post-reading comprehension test, it was administered twice to a sample of 20 students, who were excluded from the main sample of the study, with a two-week time lapse. Pearson correlation coefficient between the first and the second administration amounted to 0.85 which was deemed suitable for purposes of the current research.

Test Correction Criteria

To correct the test, the researcher used the statistical model of proportional scaling to classify the means of the test and reading strategies as in table (3).

Table 3: The Statistical Model of Proportional Scaling

Degree	Means
High	70 and above
Moderate	51-69
Low	50 and below

7. Findings of the Study

To answer the research question which asked if there were any significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) between the students' mean scores on the reading comprehension test due to the remedial plan, means and standard deviations of the student's scores on the pre - and post-tests were calculated. Moreover, the researcher calculated the adjusted means and the standard errors of the student's scores on the posttest due to the remedial plan; the results are presented in Table (4) below.

Table (4): Means and Standard Deviations of the Students' Scores on the Pre- and Posttests Due to the Remedial plan and the Means and Standard Errors of the Posttest

Group	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Adj. Mean	Std. Error
Conventional	12.90	1.8	19.2	2.2	17.4	0.25
Remedial plan	6.2	3.1	28.3	0.70	30.1	0.24

It can be concluded from Table 4 that there is an observed difference between the two means of the students' scores on the posttest due to the remedial plan. To investigate the significance of the observed difference, ANCOVA was used for the students' scores on the posttest after excluding the students' scores on the pretest. Table (5) presents the results of this analysis.

Table (5): Results of ANCOVA of the Students' Scores on the Posttest

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial η^2
Whole Score Pretest (Covariate)	86.98	1	86.970	124.20	0.000	72.60%
Remedial Plan	697.36	1	697.361	995.84	0.000	95.51%
Error	32.92	47				
Total	1152.50	49	0.700			

Table (5) shows that there is a significant difference at $\alpha=0.05$ between the two means of the students at the post-test due to the teaching strategy in favor of the students in the experimental group. The practical significance of the remedial plan was 95.51 which is classified as a high degree.

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of implementing a remedial plan based on the Jordanian secondary stage students' reading comprehension in English needs of reading comprehension.

The findings as shown in Tables 4 and 5 showed that there is a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha=0.05$) between the students' post-test scores in the experimental and control groups due to implementing a remedial plan in teaching reading comprehension in favor of the instructional program. The practical significance of implementing the remedial plan was 95.51%. The remedial plan succeeded in increasing students' scores on the posttest.

The researcher believes that the remedial plan addressed students' needs in a proper way, so it helped in developing various reading strategies with different reading topics that might encourage them to answer the questions correctly. One of the aims of the remedial plan was to develop students' reading comprehension by engaging, encouraging, and involving them in different reading activities.

In this respect, the researcher took into consideration the students' individual differences, so she designed activities that require students to work individually, in pairs, or in groups. Most of the time, students were asked to do their reading activities individually or in groups. For example, in guessing the meaning from context, students were asked to read the passage silently and individually to guess the meaning of words. Then, they were asked to work in pairs with the same group to compare their answers and check them in the whole group. Finally, they were asked to compare their answers with another group to check their answers. It is worth mentioning that such a procedure may provide students with several benefits such as motivating students and ensuring their good participation. As a result, students' self-confidence is developed.

In the researcher's opinion, the improvement in the students' reading comprehension could have been a result of the number of reading activities that provide them with the opportunity to utilize reading strategies in their reading. The students were asked to read aloud and silently, ask questions, and work individually or in groups.

Reading strategies are considered keys to reading comprehension and they can help readers to develop their reading ability and become good comprehends. These findings are supported by many researchers who investigated the effect of reading strategies on developing students' reading comprehension. For example (Al-Alrabiya, 2004; Fraihat, 2003; Fraihat, 2018).

7.1 Conclusion of the Study

After conducting the study, it is found that.

1. The remedial plan improved the participants' reading comprehension.
2. The study showed that involving reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and guessing meaning from context improved students reading comprehension.
3. It is worth mentioning that using individual work, pair work, and group work are necessary to be involved in remedial plans to develop the readers' reading comprehension.

4. It is worth mentioning that providing students with explicit strategy instructions enabled and helped them to become good comprehends.

7.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher presented the following pedagogical implications:

1. Students' needs should be taken into consideration when designing any remedial plan to guarantee their effectiveness, success, and progress.
2. Reading stages should be taken into consideration and designing proper reading activities matching the aims of each stage.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. EFL teachers are advised to use various numbers of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, using the dictionary, and guessing meaning from context.
2. EFL teachers are advised to take into consideration the reading stages and provide students with an adequate number of reading activities that encourage them to participate and use proper reading strategies.

Conflicts of interest statements

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

References

- Al-Arabiyyat, A. M. (2004). *The effect of cognitive and metacognitive instruction strategy on the reading comprehension of higher basic stage students* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies, Amman, Jordan.
- Alkhawaldeh, A. (2012). The EFL reading comprehension challenges faced by secondary school students in Jordan. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, (3), 454-465.
- Banditvilai, C. (2020). The effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 10(2), 46-50.
- Cohen, A. (1990). *Language learning: Insights for learners, teachers, and researchers*. Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- Elashhab, S. A. (2008). *EFL reading strategies of main idea comprehension and identification: Awareness and use of Arabic-speaking university students* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Ottawa, U.S.A.
- Fraihat, B. (2003). *The effect of seen and unseen reading texts on the comprehension and reading strategies of tenth graders* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.
- Fraihat, B. (2018). The effect of using graphic organizers on Jordanian EFL tenth grade students' reading comprehension and their attitudes towards using them [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

-
- Gagen, M. (2007). Developing and improving reading comprehension skills: Overview of reading comprehension and specific actions to help students develop comprehension.
- Hedgcock, J. S., & Ferris, D. R. (2009). *Teaching readers of English: Students, texts, and contexts*. New York: Routledge.
- Smadi, O., & Alshra'ah, M. (2015). The effect of an instructional reading program based on the successful readers' strategies on Jordanian EFL eleventh grade students' reading comprehension. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(15), 76-87.
- Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Tashtoush, H. I. (2008). *Reading comprehension and strategies used by Jordanian EFL secondary stage students in four text type situations* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.