Investigating Teachers’ Attitudes toward the Effectiveness of Teaching Literacy and Phonics in Developing EFL Middle School Students’ Reading

The Case of First Year Middle School Students

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Sciences and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this modest work to:

• My parents
• My sisters and brothers
• My family
• My close friends.

And to all of them I say:

Thank you very much for your support and love.
Abstract

The challenge of identifying reading problems in the middle school has been a topic of increasing concern. It is mainly concerned with the effectiveness of teaching literacy and phonics at early stages so as to develop students' reading. To achieve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire has been distributed to 25 middle school English teachers whose information would constitute a corpus of analysis. The results obtained from that corpus indicate that literacy and phonics teaching would be of great importance for pupils provided that they are taught properly and in due time. On the other hand, the results have confirmed the stated hypothesis in that learners are deficient in several aspects of reading such as decoding and comprehending. This deficiency is the result of the absence of the teaching of literacy and phonics at early stages, and effectively.

Key words: literacy, phonics, decoding, comprehending, reading.
List of abbreviations

C: Comprehension.

D: Decoding.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

FL: Foreign Language.

i.e.: That is to say.

N: Number

NLT: National Literacy Trust.

Q: Question.

R: Reading.

US: United State.

%: Percentage.
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General Introduction

1. Statement of the problem

Foreign language learning is a very important process in learning and teaching, yet a complex one to achieve. Most schools throughout the world teach at least one foreign language, and through it a number of skills and strategies are also taught. Some educators and researchers from the Franco-Algerian scientific cooperation and other studies assume that the level of the Algerian middle school students is relatively low not to say weak in learning English because they point at the fact that Algerians read English through French. Since it is the dominant and the second language after their mother tongue language, teachers face even more difficulties when they are teaching the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). For example, when the teacher asks his students to read something written on the board, or on their books, they tend to hesitate, or mispronounce, or misunderstand. They sometimes find it even difficult to decode the graphemes they are reading. Many language teachers and educators think that this case could be the result of the ‘Don’t, won’t, can’t problem’; that is to say, students do not read in the ways that are expected, they won’t read unless they are pushed to, and sometimes they are even not able to read in the appropriate way. This situation has become very serious with middle school students, since they carry those weaknesses of reading until the university level where their difficulty of reading, decoding, comprehending is still tangible.

Many educators believe that the reading problems can be attributed to the absence of teaching literacy and phonics at early stages i.e. when they begin to learn the foreign language. Literacy is not simply the ability to read and write, but it compasses all the aspects of communication and understanding. It is the knowledge of standard norms of grammar, spelling, usage and mechanics. Phonics is the ability to identify the
relationship between the phonemes (sounds) of the spoken language and the graphemes (letters) of the written one. So, students need to know the letters, and how to associate them with sounds and with matching the visual, syntactic or semantic cues to get meaning from words and sentences (decoding), then they will understand what they are reading (comprehension).

Through this study, much focus is on the importance of teaching literacy and phonics, at early stages, particularly the middle school students because this is the beginning phase of learning English. And what may cause difficulties in reading, and how to treat those problems. So, the challenge is to teach students to read the word, therefore to give them the possibility of reading the ‘world’.

2. **Aim of the study**

This study aims at investigating teachers’ perspectives toward reading difficulties, and the probable reasons of students’ reading difficulties at the level of middle school that are principally related to literacy and phonics. In parallel, this would also imply the suggestion of the improvement of students’ reading.

3. **Research question and hypotheses**

3.1 **Research question**

Do teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching literacy and phonics to develop reading?

How to improve their reading through teaching students literacy and phonics?.
3.2 Hypothesis

Students of middle school face difficulties of reading and decoding in reading passages. In the light of the research questions listed above, we hypothesize that:

Provided that an effective teaching of literacy and phonics is undertaken by educators at early stage, middle school students would find less difficulty to read, therefore to comprehend the reading passages.

4. Methodology

4.1 Sample and population

The target population of the study is made up essentially of middle school teachers. They are 25 teachers who are selected randomly, with different ages, gender, abilities, social and cultural backgrounds from six middle schools, located in Ain Kercha.

4.2 Method of investigation

In order to test the study’s hypothesis, a questionnaire is designed to teachers to measure their perceptions of their students’ reading problems as well as the concepts of literacy and phonics as being two basic elements in improving their students reading. The questionnaire is divided into five sections. The first section deals with demographic questions in order to gain information about teachers’ teaching level, gender, age and teaching experience. The second section asks questions about literacy. The third section deals with phonics. The forth one seeks to ask questions on reading. And the fifth section is about further suggestion.

The questionnaire is distributed to EFL teachers with the ultimate aim to gather teachers’ views, conceptions as well as their pedagogy, methodology in teaching reading and how to remedy to their students' errors. The responses will be collected and analyzed.
5. **Structure of the study**

This research is made up of two chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical part, the second one is the practical one.

Chapter one is divided into three sections. The first section is about literacy and the second one is about phonics, and the third section deals with reading.

Chapter two examines the teachers’ views on the reading difficulties, and tackles the analysis and the interpretation of the questionnaires’ findings. Then some suggestions as how to remedy to the reading difficulties would be drawn from the teachers’ questionnaire.
Chapter One

Literacy

Introduction

Literacy varies from one place to another and from situation to situation, and its meaning can be extended beyond reading and writing to other areas of knowledge. For instance what literacy means in African-American communities (Health, 1983 as cited in Richards, 2000) is not the same as what it means for people of Liberia; we find that literacy related much more to economic and social progress. Literacy has to do with written language and visual forms, with a tied relationship between written and oral modes of communication. Linguistically speaking, literacy has to do much more with 'mode' and 'medium'. Widdowson (1978) assumes that there are communicative abilities that relate to mode i.e. literacy has to do with language usage: reading and writing correct sentences, and those communicative abilities go beyond linguistic skills relate to medium i.e. in relation to language use: understanding and creating meaning through written texts.

This chapter consists of three sections; the first section is literacy, the second one is phonics, and the third section tackles reading. The first section ‘Literacy’, it contains definitions and the most important issues within literacy.

1.1 Literacy

1.1.1 Definition of literacy

Generally, literacy is defined as the ability to do two main actions: reading and writing. In other words, it means to understand the literal content of a word and decode its written form. More precisely, literacy is the mastery of the writing system; and by this it is meant: the knowledge of the language and how to use this language with recognition of
the alphabets which is the graphic representations of words and morphemes, and the knowledge of rules that govern sentences to form a paragraph, and how this latter organized into large pieces of writing. Linguistically speaking, literacy is not restricted only to transform verbal forms into graphic symbols, or the opposite, but also master knowledge about phonology, orthography, semantics, syntax and morphology i.e., the knowledge and the recognition of standard norms of grammar, spelling, usage, and mechanics. Also, how to relate between the oral and the written discourse. Once these language elements are acquired, the reader will get full language literacy (Kelly. 2000).

The individual acquires a collection of representations and processes as an obligation and a straight result of learning to read and write; that is why educators should provide literacy at early stage (Tankersley, 2003). The earlier things are presented to learners, the faster they will acquire them.

Literacy begins to emerge as the student notices symbols and printing in the environment. He begins to understand that these printed symbols represent meanings, words and thoughts. Literacy then is the acquisition of the ability to decode an alphabetic writing that enables the individual to do oral language tasks requiring an awareness of the ability to employ linguistic units. As a first step to master literacy, it consists of teaching the letters’ names and their shapes in order not to confuse between them (Ellis, 1991). It is very important for beginners students to clarify for them every detail related to letters, the basic alphabet in order to avoid complications later on.

Teaching reading for EFL students requires more than teaching those letters and sounds. They must understand the alphabetic principle that printed words are not an arbitrary groups of letters to be memorized, but that letters represent a limited number of sounds that combine to form spoken words, with a strong desire to succeed in reading. This means that students should be motivated to learn reading (Mullis, 2001). Students must be
taught the English letters as early as they can, and that groups of letters build words and that words have meaning. They will learn gradually that letters and words can be attached to give thoughts or meanings. In addition, by learning the names of the letters of the alphabet, they will keep to learn more specifically the sounds that can be joined to letters and to written words (Roberts & Geoffrey, 1999).

1.1.1.1 Definitions of concepts

Before moving to tackle the other elements of our section, it is important to explain some words that may be ambiguous for the readers. In his book *How to Teach Pronunciation*, Kelly (2000) makes these points clear and then raises some important issue concerning pronunciation in relation to these small elements and their effect on the whole language:

a. **Grapheme**

   It is a unit that represents a phoneme of a writing system. Generally, a letter has a particular phoneme in any word.

b. **Syllable**

   It is a unit that is found between the segment and the word. It is described as containing a centre which consists of little obstruction to air flow, and which sounds loud at the beginning and at the end of the syllable.

c. **Segment**

   It is a continuous stream of sounds divided into small pieces. The word ‘car’ for instance is pronounced with a first segment ‘c’, a second segment ‘æ’, and a third segment ‘r’. In other words, breaking down a spoken word into word parts by inserting a pause between each part.
d. **Rhyme**

It is a pair of lines, a couple of words or more that end with the same sequence of sounds like: moon and June, pat and cat.

e. **Homophone**

It is a word which is spelled differently from another word but pronounced identically: to / too / two.

f. **Diphthongs**

They are sounds that consist of a movement from one vowel to another, they are similar to long vowels; they are eight (8) in English. Diphthongs may be ‘centring’ (ending in ə), or ‘closing’ (ending in i / ending in u).

g. **Triphthongs**

They are a combination of three vowels; they are complex sounds, different to pronounce and to recognize. It is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third. They are five closing diphthongs described with ‘schwa’ added in the end.

1- əɪə ------------- → player.
2- aɪə------------- → fire.
3- ɔɪə------------- → royal.
4- əʊə------------- → lower.
5- aʊə------------- → power.

1.1.2 **Literacy components**

Students must have background knowledge in order to be good readers. They begin to learn from the smallest unit until they reach the ultimate goal that is reading. In order to have sufficient literacy knowledge i.e., the knowledge that permits them to read, students need to know about the following points:
1.1.2.1 Alphabetic and graphic symbol

Alphabetic; from classical Greek alpha + beta, the first two letters of the Greek alphabet (Webster’s New World Dictionary). Alphabetic is the science of representing spoken sounds by letters. It is a system of letters of a language either written or spoken in a traditional order.

The alphabets are set of signs, characters, symbols, letters used when writing in a language. The English alphabets are 26 characters.

To be able to read in English, students need to have functional knowledge of the principles of the English alphabetic writing system. They have to know about letters, their sounds, and how to associate those letters together to utter a word, and they should understand the basic alphabetic principle that requires an awareness of the fact that spoken language can be analyzed into series of separable words, and words into sequences of syllables and phonemes within syllables.

Children regularly acquire abilities on how words are represented with letters at early age. This process moves ahead successfully if instruction in sounds and letters is systematic, explicit, and structured. That is to say; introducing the simple then the complex elements, the regular then the irregular ones, directly and clearly taught, and in a structured way (Harmer, 1998).

When speaking about the alphabets, we make reference to graphic symbols and graphemes, from graphics, which is the study of written symbols, or combinations of symbols representing letters of the alphabet or single phonemes. The Graphic symbol is a written character, a visual image, signs that is used to signify words; they are the parts upon which language is built (Ellis, 2006); for example:
The Arabic alphabet has 28 characters: أ ب ث د س ط ػ د ر س ص ط ػ ص ع ظ ط ع غ ف ق ك ل و ﺪ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ ﺮ 

The French alphabet has 26 characters:

   a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z \rightarrow \text{small letters}

   A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z \rightarrow \text{capital letter}

Those graphic symbols are the alphabets of that language (Arabic and French) that are used to represent speech sounds or phonemes for example the word cat is spelled with three letters 'c', 'a', and 't'; each represents a phoneme /k/, /æ/, and /t/. Those letters are combined to form morphemes, then words and sentences. This process is mainly called blending.

Harmer (2001) pointed out that it is very important to associate the phonemes and the names of letters contributed to a success in learning the sounds that can be attached to letters for building good basis to pronounce them. This means that learning the letters’ names helps in learning letter-sound association.

Good readers are always those who learn the alphabet at their early age by heart, repeatedly. Teachers may present them songs to memorize the letters, bring or ask them to buy ABC books, or identifying pictures where the students are asked to name what is found on the picture. For example, a picture represents an apple is represented by the teacher to teach the letter ‘A’ and he asks the students to say what they see in the picture with an emphasis on the first letter, then they associate the name and the sound of the letter. Students will enjoy this method and feel motivated, and this helps them to read. Also, teachers should set everything clearly and early (Harmer, Ibid.). Teachers may include different methods, relaying on motivated activities in order to make pupils engaged in the task of reading. Moreover, students should also learn the names of letters of the
alphabet, and know how to write them and how to attach them to sounds. In doing so, the student have acquired the basic knowledge upon which they will build an understanding of the alphabetical order at an appropriate age, and in a suitable manner.

Some problems may occur at different levels of learning because many English words are spelt very differently from the way they are pronounced for example:

- The words: ‘right’ and ‘write’. The first one which is an adjective or an adverb, and the second one which is a verb and both have different meaning, written differently but pronounced the same.

Also other words are spelled in the same way but pronounced differently. For instance:

- The words: ‘letter’ and ‘letter’. The first word is a piece of paper written to be send to someone, and the second a, b, or c are letters.

Moreover, another interesting point is that the English alphabets contain 26 letters, and have 44 sounds without including triphthongs. Those facts make difficulties for students that prevent them from learning to read.

**1.1.2.2 Teaching letter-sound relationship**

At the very beginning of teaching students reading, teachers have to represent the sounds that letters make, and teach the letter names. As mentioned before, English contains more than 40 sounds, with 26 letters. So students need to know the letters, how to write, name, and which sound goes with each letter.

It is better to teach students providing them with sound sheets, those sheets consist of all the letter sounds and some activities concerning words containing the sound
and a line to practice writing the letter(s) on (Lloyd, 1998). Sound sheets are pieces of papers containing the English alphabets and the sounds that corresponds each vowel, children are asked to do an action with each sound; using body movement, ears, eyes and speech. This way help students to memorize and remember, hence to learn better, and at the same time, they have fun.

Lloyd (1992) mentions an efficient method to teach the letter- sound relationship, in her book “The Phonics Handbook” called “Jolly Phonics”; it is a learner-centered approach to teaching literacy and phonics. One of the US educational programs that gathers enjoyment and effectiveness at the same time. It is a very motivating way for students to learn the sounds of letters. The sounds are taught in a specific order (not alphabetically). This enables children to start building words earlier.

This is an example of the letter sound groups, which are taught in ‘Jolly Phonics’:

1. s, a, t, i, p, n
2. c k, e, h, r, m, d
3. g, o, u, l, f, b
4. ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or
5. z, w, ng, v, little oo, long oo
6. y, x, ch, sh, voiced th, unvoiced th
7. qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar

This program is an attempt to overlap difficulties that students may face at the level of the literacy knowledge acquisition. In this program, there are seven groups of sounds (from one to seven). The first group can be used to make simple words, e.g. 'tip' and 'sat', those letters can quickly be turned into words. Another point is that; the letters
that get easily confused are not put near to each other like b, d, p; this program includes also the digraphs such as sh, th, ai and ue.

1.1.2.3 Letter formation learning and teaching

An elementary step in learning to read is to teach the students how to form and write the letters. Letter formation is practiced with a finger writing on the floor, a leg or in the air. It is better to get the start correct to avoid any form of obstacle later on, beginning with:

1.1.2.3.1 Pencil hold

It seems very ridiculous to talk about it since many people (by people it is meant: parents, teachers and students themselves) think that it is easy to hold a pen, and each may say that anyone can hold it the way he feels at ease.

However, the correct position for holding a pen is to put it between the thumb, the first finger, the next finger prevents the pencil falling down, and the last two fingers are tucked away. The hand should rest on something stable (the table), in order to prevent the movement of the hand.

1.1.2.3.2 Teaching how to form letters

Teachers should follow the easy, effective method to teach students letter formation, by writing them on the board. He utters the letter sound and he asks them to imitate, he may also provide them with sheet of papers, or using their books, or he may stick pictures of things or signs and ask them to take out the first letters. He may also ask them to write down later on, either on their copybooks or on the board.

1.1.2.3.3 Writing principles
All that is related to letters and writing should be taught at early stages of the course:

1.1.2.3.3.1 Handwriting

Teachers must encourage students' handwriting, hence they may ask volunteers to write on the board, or give them sheets of papers and ask them to look at- either letters, words, or sentences- then rewrite them down. Students need to have basic letter knowledge to have good handwriting such as:

- All the letters are the same size except: 'b, d, f, h, k, l, t.'

- The 'e' starts lower than the other letters and comes back over like a 'c'.

These are an example of two rules that should be taught to pupils when writing the alphabet, and there are other details related to the cases they are written.

1.1.2.3.3.2 Capital and small letters

Capital letters are the same size as the tall letters. It is important to know where to supply capitalization and when to write small letters. For example, capitalization should be supplied in proper nouns, names of known towns, at the beginning of sentences, and for the normal case of writing, small letters are used (verbs, subjects, prepositions and conjunctions…).

1.1.3 Blending

The blending of words is done with the sounds being called out aloud, such as:

fa, fe, fi, fo, fu
fra, fre, fri, fro, fru

The British Council (2000), defines blending as "one of the many ways new words are made in English. It refers to joining the beginning of one word and the end of
another to make a new word with a new meaning”. It is a teaching method for beginners to learn reading and spelling that is based on gathering parts of a spoken word into a full form. This method involves learning how letters or letter groups represent individual sounds, and that those sounds are blended to form a word. It is to edit then gather the different parts to form a new word. The difficulty in blending is to determine which parts of that new word have roots, which can be distinguished.

In the classroom the teacher has to raise discussion of blends; it is essential for reading because it enables learners to know the sounds for each of the letters then blend these sounds together to determine the word. It can help learners understand how words are formed in English (Ogle, 2008). For example, asking learners to identify root words. Learners can also invent new blend words. Blends are divided into different groups, according to the ways in which they are formed:

1- Phonemic overlap: it is a syllable or a part of it, which is shared between two words.
2- Clipping (or cutting the shortening of two words and then compounding them.
3- Phonemic overlap and clipping: shortening of two words to a shared syllable and them compounding them.

One of the following methods forms most of those blends:

1- Adding the beginning of a word to the end of another one, like :
   Smoke + fog ⇒ smog.
   Breakfast + Lunch ⇒ brunch.
2- Combining the beginnings of two words, for example:
   Cybromatic + organism ⇒ cyborg.
3- Blending two words around one sequence of sounds, like:

Motor + hotel ➔ motel.

4- Blending different sounds from two component words and keeping the order of the sounds:

Lithe + slimy ➔ slithy.

By teaching letter sounds, blending, student will understand easily any printed word without needing to ask the teacher.

Teachers need to follow some instructions to teach blending. Here is an example of instruction to teach sound blending:
The teacher says the word 'bad' slowly, holding each of the sounds for 1-2 seconds “bbbbbaaaaaddddd”. The learner listens to the sounds, blends them together in his head, then he determines the word, and sounds it out.

1.2 Teaching literacy

Teaching English literacy should be done by a focus on a set of decoding skills, phonological awareness, phonics, and comprehension that are going to be explained and discussed in the coming sections. Another important point should be considered in teachers’ minds, that is the choice of print materials that suit their students (Kruidenier, 2002). If students learn those sub skills or components, they will become proficient readers. So, teaching literacy has to be introduced by understanding the alphabetic principle (the writing system relies on the alphabet; this means that in the system of writing, letters, shapes, and symbols are used to produce sounds). Then, reading at the word level uses phonics instruction; in this period the students are taught how to make up words from a group of letters. As a progressive case, blending comes as a result of pronouncing the whole word. Finally, they will have the ability to join all what precedes to read the whole language.
Teachers have to include methods and instructions that are appropriate for their students’ level and capacities otherwise it will be unhelpful for them to succeed in mastering literacy, even if the method is useful and the teacher is skilled because it is the student who should improve his reading, beginning from the letter, then the word, then the sentence, until he reaches the comprehension of the whole text or paragraph.

Conclusion

So far we have discussed what literacy is, and its importance in teaching reading. We have tackled also the basic steps that should be followed by teachers to teach reading effectively. And also we shed lights on some difficulties that may complicate their learning of literacy. The next section will shed light on a crucial element in reading, without it, literacy alone would be useless.
Section Two
Phonics

Introduction

The English language has 21 consonant letters, making 24 sounds, and 5 vowel letters making 20 sounds. This may explain the reason of the difficulty in spelling or pronouncing for English learners, especially with the vowel case. Phonics is the science of sounds that should be emphasized in early stages in order to develop a real basis for the other skills, and to avoid the obscurity of learning consonant and vowel sounds.

Phonics teaching is an elementary process to master reading. Readers must be taught how to use all the cues and strategies that will help them make sense of text, and this will include strategies to decode words as well as strategies for comprehending text. Phonics teaching is an important part but it is not all the part; Literacy as being mentioned before in section one is of great importance too.

When teaching students reading and writing, they have already learned to speak, since speaking in the ranking of skills’ acquisition comes before reading. This means that they have succeeded in segmenting the stream of sound they hear into meaningful words, and learned how to pronounce some words of English. Since the 20th century, phonics has been widely used in primary education and in teaching literacy via the English-speaking world. For the educational system, it would be better to use phonics practice in class to improve the level of pupils' reading to improve the level of students reading, as suggested by Kelly (2000).

1.1 Definition of phonics

Phonics is a method for teaching elementary reading and writing by teaching the sounds of letters, letter groups, and syllables. It is to be able to identify the relationship between the letter and its sound. To be more specific, there is a link between the phoneme /ai/ in the spoken English and the grapheme ‘a’ of the written English. It may be defined
also as the learning of the sound-symbol correspondences; since each symbol (letter) we
utter, particular sound is therefore produced.

Phonics is an instructional method for teaching word identification that
emphasizes letter-sound associations, and how to blend the sounds to recognize words.
The Department of Education, Science and training (2005: 11) wrote the following:

The evidence is clear… that direct systematic instruction in phonics during
the early years of schooling is an essential foundation for teaching children
to read. Findings from the research evidence indicate that all students learn
best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to reading that explicitly
teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and
comprehension.

Students should receive systematic, direct, and explicit phonics at early age in order to
master the basic skills that build their literacy such as the graphic symbols, blending,
etc…as a platform for reading effectively. Moreover, they should receive at the same time
the skills of phonics by the same way (explicitly, direct, and systematic); significantly, all
what is concerned with grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

1.2 The difference between: phonics, phonology, and phonetics

1.2.1 Phonetics

It is a broad field; it deals with the body of speech sounds. It is not concerned
with the study of language itself but only with the physical reality.

1.2.2 Phonology

It is the study of the speech sounds of a particular language. Its concern is the
interpretation and the system of sounds that exist in language.

1.2.3 Phonics

It is an approach to reading instruction that emphasizes letter-sound
relationships and generalized principles that describe spelling-sound relationships in a
language.
1.2.3.1 The Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that changes the meaning of spoken words. The word ‘men’ has three phonemes, /m/ /e/ /n/. Substituting /t/ for the first phoneme changes the word to ‘ten’. Phonemes may be of two categories:

1.2.3.1 Vowel sounds: they are the most challenging one to learn the alphabetic code.

They can be single vowels; either short /ɪ/, or long /iː/, or they can be diphthongs (as explained in section one).

1.2.3.2 Consonant sounds: they can be voiced (when the vocal cords in the larynx are vibrating) or unvoiced (no vibration of the vocal cords).

1.3 Phonics instruction

Phonics instruction is a method for teaching word recognition that emphasizes letter-sound associations. This way of emphasizing letter-sound association involves teaching the sounds that letters represent, and how to blend the sounds to identify words. When the term phonics is used to refer to instruction, the meaning is referring to what teachers do, and decoding is used to refer to what readers do. Phonics instruction starts by learning to join the individual consonant letters to their sounds. Phonics instruction consists of three major components: phonemic awareness, letter–sound associations, and decoding.

The conclusion that Adams (1990) attained after her research review gives some suggestions to how phonics instruction should be approached (pp. 93-94):

To learn to read skillfully, children need practice in seeing and understanding decodable words in real reading… The purpose of word-identification instruction is to establish paths from the print to spelling, speech, meaning, and context. This can best be done when phonics instruction is part of a reading program that provides ample practice in reading and writing.
In her conclusion, Adams calls for equilibrium between teaching phonics as an elementary step for reading, and applying the skills that students have been taught in reading and writing. She states that practice is one of the elements that enable students to read in a proficient way, and to have full practice, phonics instruction should be provided systematically, directly, and explicitly for students to acquire the essential of reading (Ellis, Op. cit). Students learn best when teachers use an approach that teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, vocabulary explicitly.

Students must learn that there are systematic relationships between letter combinations and spoken sound. While phonics instruction is important, it should not take up more than 25 percent of available reading instruction time. Students should be engaged in actual reading much more than they are engaged in discussing the act of reading (Allington, 1991). Phonics should be a strong component for the primary levels of schools so that students build strong word attack skills as a foundation for all of their reading skills. Instruction should consist of a planned sequence of instruction taught in a systematic way. While there are many commercial phonics programs available for consideration, it is important that teachers in a school choose one consistent method or approach for phonics instruction so that everyone is continuing to reinforce the same strategies and techniques in the same manner with the students.

Kelly (Op. cit, 143) has created a different chart of pronunciation for students to learn sounds by practice. This chart categorizes sounds in terms of their place of articulation, and whether they are voiced or voiceless (in case of consonant). He also emphasizes the importance of practice in class.

1.3.1 Types of phonics teaching methods

Phonics is taught basically at the very earliest stages, by following systematic instructions as cited in The National Literacy Trust (2015). [The NLT is a registered charity]
and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in Scotland] the types of teaching methods related to phonics may be synthetic, analytical (contains analogy), and embedded phonics:

1.3.1.1 Synthetic phonics

Synthetic phonics is also called embedded phonics. In this approach, all of the phonemes and graphemes found in a word for instance, are pronounced in isolation then synthesized (blended). Here students are taught the rules and the exceptions explicitly. For example, students are taught to take a single-syllable word such as *bad* apart into its three letters, pronounce a phoneme for each letter in turn /b, æ, d/, and blend the phonemes together to form a word.

1.3.1.2 Analytical phonics

In this case, both phonemes and graphemes in a word are not pronounced in isolation. Students analyze sound-symbol correspondences. They consider the frequent sound in a group of words in which each word contains the sound to be pronounced, the sounds are taught and a unit. For example, teacher and pupils discuss how the following words are alike: *sat, sand, surf,* and *sell.*

1.3.1.3 Analogy phonics

The word ‘analogy’ in the Oxford dictionary means: the comparison of one thing with another that has similar features. In phonology the term is still refers to the similarities but at the level of phonogram. It is a type of analytic phonics where students analyze phonic elements according to the phonograms in the word. A phonogram (known in linguistics as *rime*) is composed of the vowel and all the sounds that follow it, such as –
ake in the word take. Students use these phonograms to learn about “word families” such as cake, sake, and fake.

1.3.1.4 Embedded phonics

Usually, it is used in the whole language program. The skills to be taught in this method are not systematic; they are defined as being irregular, they are applied just in some lessons and others not. In addition, the basis is on phonics elements that students face troubles with, or difficult. Sometimes the focus is made on how to associate individual sounds and the symbols that represent them. This method differs from the preceding ones in its way of representation because learners receive information that are related much more to context as presented by the National Literacy Trust (2014).

1.4 Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is a pre-reading skill. It is the ability to notice and employ the difference in sounds within words. The language students hear is a constant flow of speech, not a sequence of word units divided into breaks in the written language (Westwood, 2001). This leads us to say that phonemic awareness deals only with sounds and has nothing to do with print. The specific term refers to phonological awareness involving the recognition that a spoken word is composed of a series of individual sounds. More precisely, phonemic awareness is the ability to distinguish the sounds within words, it is very important for reading because it would not be able to use letter sounds to figure out a word, unless students would be able to identify one sound from another

Castle (1999) holds 'Children do not seem to benefit much from instruction in letter –sound correspondences, until they possess an adequate level of phonological awareness'. This means that phonemic awareness is a primarily step in learning to read
since the students will not be able to correspond a letter with a sound until they acquire an awareness of the task of reading, recognizing a loss of concentration, and understanding that language is made up of different utterances.

Phonemic awareness is an essential skill that should be emphasized at early ages of students' school life by learning them how to match rhyming words when words begin or end with the same phoneme, how to segment phonemes and then to blend them together.

1.5 Decoding

Decoding is a reading skill that involves the use of letter-sound correspondences to recognize written words. Decoding, or word identification, means to sound out a word, and blend the sounds represented by symbols. Meaning is not important because any student may decode without needing an understanding of the word meaning. If a reader initially identifies a word by decoding, after many experiences the word will be stocked in memory and can be quickly recognized. In this way, all words become "sight words". Some words- those that have phonetically irregular spellings- are primarily taught to be recognized on sight, to enhance reading fluency.

Decoding is the use of knowledge of rules of spelling-sound associations and knowledge about pronunciation of irregular words to get the pronunciation of written words.

Decoding is a key element for beginning readers to identify words when reading and to get the spelling of words when writing, but it does not work alone. In addition, other elements like phonics and comprehension have an integral goal in the success of the reading process (Adams, Op, cit.). In the light of these important instructions (phonics, comprehension), decoding occurs when the students learn first the letter-sound relationships, the spelling of words, and their pronunciation, then as a final step they try to locate it in an appropriate context.
1.5.1 Teaching decoding

The ultimate goal of reading instruction is comprehension. Systematic decoding instruction must be taught at early stages of students’ learning. Decoding is necessary for comprehension, but in many cases learners seem to have difficulties with sounds; either they are not able to produce the phoneme correctly or they can’t make difference between them (Roberts, G. R. 1999). Reading in a foreign language is difficult in itself, and going to details such as phonemes and graphemes would make it complex. They even can’t remember the names and sounds of the letters. It is better to make everything clear from the beginning in order not to face problems later on. Teachers are responsible in the class. They have to decide what to present, and when to teach decoding, and which way to follow in their teaching.

A teacher may make students decode easily and faster by giving them the platform used in decoding; importantly they are tow patterns, or ways: the onset and the rime (Tankersly, 2003).

- Onset: the initial part of the word that precedes the vowel. For example, in the word “top”, the “t” would be the onset, in another one “snake” for instance, “sn” is the onset.

- Rime: the vowel and the letters that follow in a word. For example in the word “batch”, the “atch” would be the rime.

When students learn the rime patterns, they will release the pronunciation of many more words that contain the same rime.

Conclusion

To conclude, phonics is an important approach to reading that should be taught in the early hours of students' school life because it offers them the safety platform to be
good readers. Therefore, the way those instructions taught to students should be systematic, direct, and organized in a helpful manner. That is why teachers should play an integral role when teaching the primary steps of reading. The difficulties in reading at the level of phonics make us wonder whether students have been taught phonics enough or not, and whether the way they have been taught with is appropriate for their knowledge, level, situation since they are learning to read in English, a language which is totally different from their own in form and content, or not.
Section Three

Reading

Introduction

Reading is a crucial building block, of success not only at school, but also at work, and in society (Lloyd, Op cit.). Moreover, the aim behind reading is getting information or for pleasure or others.

Reading is one of the important skills that are taught in schools. In the Algerian context, English as a foreign language is taught at the middle school for four years and then, at the secondary school for three years. However, students cannot read well, because they face many problems that may take place in two essential areas: decoding, and comprehension. The origin of most reading problems, in the view of many experts, is at the level of literacy and phonics, why? Simply, because English is one of the subtle languages to learn. It is made up of 43 phonemes, and uses only 26 letters. This complexity in the English language, with all the rules and exceptional cases of reading and spelling make a challenge for a non-English speaker especially if he is an Arab; since the Arabic language differs totally from English in so many aspects beginning with the alphabet. In the light of these points, it seems that the reading difficulty is found at the basis; i.e. they need to master the writing system (orthography, morphology, syntax…) and learn the letter-sound association. Without these two primary elements, it will be difficult to decode words; it is even impossible to understand what they are reading.

This section is going to be about reading and the focus will be on the two basic skills decoding and comprehension. Reading process in this research is not going to be tackled as being silent or sounded out as it is seen by Kelly (Op cit.) who sees silent
reading as a "see and comprehend" rather than a "see, say, and comprehend process". The focus in this study is on reading itself.

1.1 What is reading?

Reading is a combination of two mental processes; decoding and comprehension, without one of them reading can never be called so as seen by Pollatseek and Rayner (1989: 23). Reading is decoding and understanding a text for particular purposes. Readers decode written words and get the meaning of those words. Clearly, reading is to obtain meaning from printed words.

When it is said someone can read, it is assumed that he has the ability to recognize the letters and words (literacy and phonics) and understanding these words either in a context or in isolation.

Many researchers raised the issue of reading as being a process and a comprehension skill. Broughton (1977:89-99) argues that reading as a process composed of three sub –skills:

Reading is a complex skill that is to say that it involves a whole series of lesser skills. First of these is the ability to recognize stylized shapes ...moreover it is not only a matter of recognizing the shape as such but recognizing them as same or different...The second the skills involved in the complex is the ability of correlate the marks … the patterned shapes, with language. It is impossible to learn to read without at least the capacity to acquire language. A third skill which is involved in the total skill of reading is essentially an intellectual skill; this is the ability to correlate the black marks on the paper by way of the formal elements of language, let us say the words as sounds, with the meanings which those words symbolize.

This definition of reading based on the primary steps, that learners of a foreign language need. It involves the ability to recognize the letters, the English alphabet, and the ability to
make the difference between the characters like in the case of small and capital letters: A/a, B/b, C/c. Hence, beginners of English need to build this knowledge as a basis for the other stages. The second sub skill as Broughton (Op. cit.) mentions is related to the first one; it is to make the connection between the letters and the sounds to form words, sentences.

Broughton (Ibid) added that the mastery of phonics only is not enough to master reading, i.e., learners should not look to the letters and sound them out without correlate them with the language elements and they have to be aware of the goal of reading. He called this period “look and say” (Ibid: 89). Then, one can be at the third skill where he affirms that the two previous skills should be connected to form the fundamental skill which understands those letters and shapes and what are the elements of language that they stand for.

Those three important sub-skills are correlated to each other and meaning cannot driven from print only(letters) or sounds only(phonics); to understand a reading passage needs basically a couple of doing those things. Reading is a set of skills that requires obtaining meaning from printed words. If anyone wants to read, he should be able to decode written words and also understand what he reads.

What is important for second language readers is that: they must understand what each symbol represents in order to be able to decode letters. This is coming from the learner’s background knowledge. Also, they have to know about the linguistic knowledge. For example, they have to use those symbols to represent spoken words. Moreover, learners should use strategies and techniques to tackle the text by developing their literacy skills and transferring them from their native language to the second one (Peregoy and Boyle, 2004). So, when learners read a word, or a sentence, they do not make sense of
letters and sounds, then decode only, but they try to transfer their mother tongue’
background, skills and strategies knowledge to read a second language.

Gough and Hoover (1996: 3) define "reading" as a twofold process: decoding and
comprehension. For Gough and Hoover (Ibid.) :

Decoding and comprehension [...] are the two
halves of reading [...] for neither decoding in
the absence of comprehension, nor comprehension
in the absence of decoding, leads to any amount
of reading. [...] Literacy -reading ability- can be
found only in the presence of both decoding and
comprehension.

From this, reading is composed of two important elements that can never be detached from
each other.

1.1 Reading as a process

Some researchers consider reading as a process; that is to say that reading is the
interaction between the reader and what he is reading. Reading as a process is the cognitive
task that consists of a set of operations such as looking at letters marks, recognizing words,
and joining words together to get meaning (Alderson, 2000). Reading is the result of many
operations carried out in the brain, beginning from the visual activity which is observing
print on the text to the mental one that is relating that print to each other to understand
what is written in the text. The concept of the process of reading therefore is what reading
is in reality; reading is composed of sub-skills, these sub-skills are usually key operations
that build reading as a major skill.

1.1.2 Reading as a product

After reading a text, the reader constructed an understanding. This understanding is the
product of reading. Comprehension, then, is the main product of reading regardless to the way it is
reached i.e. what is important is to comprehend the text, and not the method or the process used to comprehend it 'the what rather than the how'(Alderson, Ibid., 4). The essential task of reading is comprehension; after his reading, the reader ends up with something in mind "comprehension", and this is all what matters him.

1.2 Reading skills

1.2.1 Decoding

Reading as a process involves two main stages; decoding and comprehension as White (1985:22) affirms:"There are two separate stages involved in reading. There is the initial stage of decoding […] the second stage is that of comprehension".

In the initial stage, which is decoding, the reader here is asked to recognize words starting with connecting letters and sounds.

1.2.1.1 Definition of decoding

Decoding is teaching the correspondences between the letters and the phonemes. It is the ability to recognize words through connecting the grapheme to the morpheme.

Hay and Spencer (1998: 222) put:

Word recognition is an essential component in the mastery of reading..and considerable evidence suggests that the major difficulty confronting the beginning reader is the development of rapid, automatic word recognition skills… Efficient readers use a variety of orthographic data to recognize word units, such as individual letters, letter clusters, morphemes, word stems, and word patterns.

To master reading, it is better first to know how to recognize words. It is the basic step upon which readers focus on to be quick and automatic as possible as they can when reading, good readers use different strategies to recognize words. Word recognition is talented by making the graphic representation of the word from one letter, to a couple of letters, root, and then a word.

Decoding is viewed differently, from one researcher to another. Some researchers use decoding as a synonym for phonics (Chall, 1967). Others use the term to describe the
changing of letter sequences into phonetic codes (Perfetti, 1985). And for others, decoding is the recognition of words that is done through phonological coding (Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

'Decoding' is "the word recognition process that transforms print to words" (Kamhi & Catts, 2002: 45).

Decoding is a comprehensive term for the process of reading. It is simply to sound out a word. Decoding is the process by which a word is broken into individual phonemes and the recognition based on those phonemes. In order to read any print, it is important to recognize the symbols that form words. It is better to teach decoding by the use of a phonetic alphabet (Moats, 2001). In other words, a chart or a table represents written symbols correspond to specific phonemes, hence readers will learn faster and better the sound-letter correspondence.

1.2.1.2 Decoding difficulties

Some readers face difficulties with decoding in the sense that they are not able to differentiate sounds. For example, the word "far" should be separated to "fuh", "aah", and "ruh", if someone has difficulty with decoding, he is not going to decode the word "far", or he will see it meaningless to break the word by this way. Usually, it would be easy to know whether a learner has decoding difficulty through some signs he makes. For instance, learners may confuse between the grapheme (letter) and the phoneme (sound), they may also ignoring punctuation while reading, reading word by word and slowly…etc
1.2.2 Comprehension

1.2.2.1 Definition of Comprehension

Comprehension is involved in the process of reading (White, Ibid.) as being the second stage after decoding. It is to make meaning from words either written or spoken, and being able to connect words together to comprehend what is being read. Anderson (2003) asserts that comprehension is the aim of reading.

As mentioned before in the first sections, literacy and phonics should be taught at early stages of students' learning of a foreign language; researchers, and educators argue that comprehension also should be taught in the earliest stages, not to be emphasized after learners have learned decoding (Teale & Yokota 2000). Even in the beginning stages of reading acquisition, the teacher should raise discussion, ask questions for reflection and open for them the door to criticize answers and other points in order to understand texts.

'Comprehension' means "understanding the message that the print conveys" (Nation, 2005: 41). In other words, any written word, sentence, paragraph, text conveys an interpretation.

An important point concerning comprehension is that while reading a piece of writing, readers make connections between their own knowledge and the new one that is going to get from the text (Pearson, Dole, Duffy, & Roehler, 1992; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). Good readers are always monitoring when a text is not understood. They use strategies during and after reading. Readers engage in reflection about what they have read. They usually connect it to other texts, events, and experiences in their own life. They reflect on the author’s point of view and compare it with other experiences they have had. They summarize, reflect, and extend what they have read (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008).
1.2.2.2 Reading comprehension

Said simply, reading comprehension is the act of understanding what someone is reading. There are two important elements that make up the process of reading comprehension; the background and the vocabulary in order to use them as keys for understanding the meaning of a piece of writing.

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what you are reading. Reading comprehension is an intended, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a text. The reader uses his awareness and understanding of phonemes (individual sound), phonics (connection between letters and sounds 'blending') and the ability to comprehend meaning from a text. This is reading comprehension. It cannot be detached from the other elements of the process.

The reading process consists of word recognition and linguistic comprehension; each of these components is necessary for reading as noted by Gough & Tunmer (Op cit.:7):

\[ R = D \times C, \]

'Reading' equals the product of 'decoding' and 'comprehension', by comprehension we mean reading comprehension that is, the process of interpreting words, sentences, discourse into meaning.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand information from texts and interpret this information appropriately (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). For many students, good reading comprehension comes easily, and for others, it is a difficult process.
Teaching students to become better comprehenders is also difficult and challenging task because reading is such a complex process.

1.2.2.3 Comprehension difficulties

Learners, with decoding difficulties, will face problems of comprehension because comprehension relies basically on the mastery of decoding. Readers with comprehension difficulties show lack of concentration during reading, confuse about words meaning, and one is unable to connect ideas in a sentence or paragraph.

It is possible to read a text, but reading without understanding would be meaningless. In this case, it is only a decoding process no more no less. But Comprehending a text, for example, implies recognizing the significance and the meaning of what is read including the intentions of writers. Reading comprehension is thus the ability to find out the unseen implications of those printed shapes and letters (Gough & Hoover, 1990).

1.2.2.4 Levels of comprehension

Reading comprehension takes place at four levels of complexity. These levels are often referred to as literal level, inferential level, critical level and creative level (Smith, 1969).

1.2.2.4.1 Literal level

At the literal level the basic facts are understood. For example, knowing the name of the person or something the text is speaking about, where he is living, or where it is happening, then when all that happens. This information is contained explicitly within the text.

1.2.2.4.2 Inferential level

At the inferential level the reader is able to go beyond what is written on the page and add meaning or draw conclusions. For example, explaining what is happening in
the text; who's the hero what are the events that occur. The reader gathers those information and expect some events to happen.

1.2.2.4.3 Critical level

At the critical level, the reader evaluates, assesses what he is reading, its clarity, accuracy and any apparent exaggeration or bias.

1.2.2.4.4 Creative level

At the creative level, the reader takes information or ideas from what has been read and develop new ideas from them. The creative level arouses the reader's thinking to new and original ones.

Conclusion

All in all, decoding and comprehension are two important cognitive skills that can never be separated from each other to succeed in the process of reading. as literacy and phonics, decoding and comprehension should be taught from the beginning by implementing systematic, interested, and clear methods and techniques to raise learners' awareness of reading.
Chapter Two

Field of Investigation

Introduction

The current study is motivated by some general consideration and personal enquiries that are aroused around reading in general in middle schools. In short, students have considerable deficiency in reading to the extent that these matters affect all aspects they are studying. This deficiency in reading is characterized by mispronunciation, hesitations and pauses, ignorance of spelling, incapacity of decoding, and incomprehension of the reading passage. These and other factors, called our mind to start an investigation so as to determine the reasons or causes that are behind such a deficiency. Interestingly, these reasons are found at the literacy and phonics teaching level. For this aim, a descriptive study has been conducted to collect the required data using a questionnaire for teachers.

In the beginning, a description of the research means has been provided along with the target population and the sampling procedure. After that, the data and the results are described, analyzed and discussed so as to draw the necessary conclusions. In the end, some pedagogical implications are subsequently drown.

2.1 Population and sampling

The target population of this research belongs to middle school teachers consists of 25 teachers of English located all in Ain Kercha, Oum El Bouaghi. It wasn’t able to distribute this questionnaire to other middle schools outside Ain Kercha because of time constraints. This population has been targeted among the middle school educational institutions because English is taught first at middle schools. It is, however, true that the middle school’ students are familiar with the French language but are not with English. The issue raised here is concerned with the reading in English. The two linguistic
systems are quite different in terms of reading English, for instance, is written one way and read another way, i.e., its spelling differs from its reading (pronunciation).

2.1 Research tools

A descriptive study is used to investigate teachers' attitudes toward teaching literacy and phonics in developing EFL middle school students' reading. A questionnaire is distributed to teachers. According to Brown (2001, cited in Makey & Gass, 2005), questionnaires are “any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (p.92).

Our choice about the adaptation of the questionnaire to collect data has two reasons. First, to get data from practitioners, i.e., teachers. Second, to gain time; since the study was excessively constrained by the very short period of time we have been allotted.

2.2 Teachers' questionnaire

2.2.1 Description

The questionnaire starts with an introduction where teachers are informed about the research of the study and its main aim. It consists of 23 questions. Sixteen questions (16) are closed-ended that involve making choice from different suggested alternatives, whereas, 3 questions require a YES or NO answer. Two (02) open-ended questions are proposed to the informants to explain their choice or to add any further information. These questions are designed under five sections: Background Information (Q1-Q2), Literacy (Q3-Q10), Phonics (Q11-Q16), Reading (Q17-Q22), Further Suggestions (Q23).

The questionnaire was distributed to 25 teachers as the total number of the population. Different types of questions are used so as to investigate facts such as gender,
age…, whereas attitudinal questions are used to collect data about the respondents' attitudes, interests.

**Section 1: Background information**

This section seeks to obtain general information about the teachers who are the respondents of the questionnaire, namely their gender (Q1), how long they have been teaching English (Q2). These are factual questions.

**Section 2: Literacy**

This section aims at investigating teachers' knowledge of literacy; how and when literacy is taught and which aspects are given importance when teaching it. The types of difficulties students confront when reading is another issue that is raised in this section.

**Section 3: Phonics**

This section seeks to shed light on phonics teaching, its importance in teaching a foreign language as well as questions on teachers' attitudes, opinions, and teaching methodology.

**Section 4: Reading**

This section aims at providing as much as possible about the issue reading which is closely related to literacy and phonics. The fact that pupils of middle schools confront serious problems of reading, basically related to literacy and phonics led us to investigate this issue along with sub questions.

**Section 5: Further suggestion**

This section is about different comments, suggestions and further information.
2.3 Data collection and analysis

Section 1: General Information.

Q1: Gender.

a. Female

b. Male.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Teachers' gender.

![Figure 1 Teachers' gender](image)

The results show that the number of females (20) is bigger than that of males (5). Women are much more interested by the teaching profession, and this explains the big 'rush' of the 'feminine gentry' to this profession. Men, on the contrary, are not only attracted by other jobs and professions particularly the liberal ones (commerce, law, medicine, etc.), but numerically are few to succeed to get a teaching position.
**Q2:** How long have you been working as a teacher?

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Teachers' experience in teaching.*

![Pie chart showing percentage distribution of teaching experience](chart.png)

**Figure 2 Teachers' experience in teaching.**

One can notice from the results shown above that sixteen (16) teachers are found between those who had a long teaching experience (more than 10 years), and those who have two to four teaching years. Six teachers have from five to ten years teaching experience. However, only three teachers have a short experience in teaching. Being an important factor, the teaching experience of the informants gives more reliability to the study.
Section two: literacy.

Q3: what 'literacy' mean for you?

a. The ability to write letters either in isolation or correlate them to have a word, a sentence, or a paragraph.

b. Recognizing the alphabet of a language by breaking a word up into phonemes, then associating those phonemes with their own letters.

c. Recognizing the letters, then words, and knowing the rules that govern sentences, hence, mastering the writing system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Teachers' definition of literacy.

Only 11 teachers, as shown on Table3 and Figure3 chose the option 'c' i.e. they know what literacy is; whereas, 11 teachers chose the options 'a' and 3 of them chose 'b',

Figure 3 Teachers' definition of literacy.
which are not the appropriate definitions of literacy, this means that teachers are neither aware of what literacy is, nor they know what it is. This fact makes it clear that the teachers' ignorance of the term is a serious deficiency at this level.

**Q4: When do you provide literacy knowledge for teaching reading?**

a- At early stages of the reading program.

b- In an independent session.

c- In case of finding difficulties, you provide it within the session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The provision of literacy knowledge.

![Figure 4 The provision of literacy knowledge.](image)

As Table 4 and Figure 4 illustrate it, only 10 teachers know when to provide literacy knowledge, they have selected the appropriate answer which is the option a.
However, 15 of the chose the options: ‘b’ and ‘c’ do not know when they ought to provide literacy for their pupils.

**Q5:** How do you teach the letters (the alphabet) to your pupils?

a- By teaching letter/sound association, then blending sounds.

b- By teaching the whole word, then breaking it out.

c- By teaching them to memorize sentences, or small paragraphs, then deriving the letters (as in teaching letters in Arabic primary schools).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 5. The way letters are taught

**Figure 5** The way letters are taught.
Both figure 4 and table 4 show that 12 teachers teach letter/sound association and blending, which is the right way that would help beginners to start building their basic learning. 8 of them chose to work with the traditional way of teaching the whole word then breaking it up into phonemes, and only 5 teachers follow methods that are inappropriate for their pupils like the ones used for primary pupils to memorize sentences and paragraphs in their mother tongue, before knowing the alphabet.

**Q6: Which of the following point you focus on when you teach literacy in your class?**

a- Oral language.

b- Written language.

c- Both of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Table 6. Teachers' focus on literacy teaching.'
This question is designed to obtain results about on what teachers focus when teaching literacy. Accordingly, the majority of teachers (19) focus on both oral and written language, and this result reflects that they are aware of the importance of both aspects, a fact which may be beneficial for learners. 5 of teachers focus on the written language, while only 1 teacher would give more importance to the oral language. Informants here seem not making a balance between the skills, which means that he is focusing only on the oral performance, and to focus on one aspect and to neglect the others is not appropriate.

Q7: Do pupils/students get more skilled (literate) when:

a- Visualizing.

b- Listening.

c- Synthesizing (to combine information of what pupils learned in different texts, to come up with new ones).
Table 7. Literacy' skills students relay on.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Options</th>
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<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results shown in table 7, 12 respondents answered, that students learn to read letters, words... by synthesizing. While 8 of them selected option 'a', which means that they agree with the fact that pupils/ students rely essentially on visualizing since everything is written, either on the board, books, or computer screens, etc. And 5 of teachers say that their pupils learn best when listening.
Q8: How often do you teach pupils principles of writing (pen hold, handwriting, capitalization...)?

a- Always.
b- Sometimes.
c- Never.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Teaching writing principles.

Figure 8 Teaching writing principles

More than half of the respondents (13) would 'sometimes' teach those basic principles of writing. 11 of them would 'always' do it. Only one (1) respondent is 'never'
inclined to teach these principles probably because he thinks that this stage comes at the very early period of learning.

**Q9:** Do your pupils face difficulties with the acquisition of letters?

a. Yes

b. No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table9. Pupils' difficulties of letters' acquisition

![Pupils' difficulties of letters' acquisition](image)

**Figure9** Pupils' difficulties of letters' acquisition.

As it is represented in both table 9 and figure 9, the majority of teachers (22) argue that pupils face difficulties with the acquisition of letters. The remaining
ones (3) argue that they do not. From the results shown above it is observed that students do face problems with the acquisition of letters.

**Q10:** If yes, what are those problems?

a- They cannot name (read) them accurately.
b- They cannot distinguish between capital/small letters.
c- They cannot write them accurately.
d- They cannot combine them together, even to write or to read.
e- Any other? Please state it…………………………………………….

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<td>B</td>
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<td>13,04</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>39,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8,69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 10. Problems of letters’ acquisition*
One can notice from the results that (9) teachers indicate that students have problems in the acquisition of letters because they cannot combine them together, even to write or to read. (6) of them say it is because they cannot name (read) them accurately. we notice that (3) of teachers argue that students cannot distinguish between capital and small letters, and the same number of other teachers (3) of them say that they cannot write the letters accurately. Only two teachers (2) state other problems, they say that they cannot distinguish between vowels, and they cannot spell the word correctly.

Section three: phonics

Q11: There are many teaching methods to teach reading. Which one of the following methods you apply in your class?

a- Phonics. (Teaching word recognition, and emphasizing letter/sound association).

b- 'Look and say'.

c- 'Listen then say'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>phonics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Look and Say&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen then say</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Methods of teaching reading.

According to the results shown in table 11 and figure 11, (13) of teachers chose the option 'b' and (8) of them chose the option 'b', and only (4) teachers chose the option 'a' which seems to be more appropriate than the others. Since teachers follow the traditional methods they rely on the 'look and say' method because it seems to be easier to apply and understand.

Q12: If your answer is "a", how do you teach it in class?

a- Directly.

b- Indirectly.
From the results shown in the table and figure 12, we notice that all teachers that select 'phonics' in Q11 have chosen the option 'a'. They admit that phonics should be taught directly. Whereas, the two other options, (b and c), have not been selected.

**Q13:** Do you ask pupils to call out sounds after you?

  a. Yes
The table and the figure 13 show that the majority of teachers (21) ask their students to call out sounds after them. Whereas (4) of them do not do so.

Q14: If yes, why?
Options | Subject | Percentage %
--- | --- | ---
Teachers who give reasons. | 15 | 71.43 %
Teachers who did not give reasons. | 6 | 28.57 %
Total | 21 | 100 %

Table 14. The reason behind calling out sounds.

Figure 14 The reason behind calling out sounds

Those who say 'yes' (21 teachers), 6 teachers do not give any reasons. The others (15) give answers. They say that they make their pupils call out sounds because each time pupils repeat, they will be familiar with the correct pronunciation, the written form of different letters and words. Others state that repetition would be the best way to acquire the second language pronunciation and vocabulary and make them in a way participate during the lesson. They say that this way will help them get familiar with the new language. Also it has a great importance in strengthening their memorization of different sounds, letters
and words. Another reason is to establish enough knowledge (sounds) in order to be able to communicate in English fluently and accurately.

**Q15:** How often do you teach students strategies for decoding sounds and words? (Decoding: or word identification, means to sound out words and blend the sounds represented by symbols).

- a. Frequently
- b. Often.
- c. Sometimes.
- d. Never.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Teaching students strategies for decoding.

![Figure 15 Teaching students strategies for decoding.](chart.png)
The results in the table above show that the majority of teachers (15) do 'sometimes' teach their students strategies for decoding. Some others (5) 'frequently' teach those strategies. And the same number of informants (5) state that they often teach students strategies for decoding sounds and words. No one chose the option 'd' which is 'never'. From those results we may deduce that teachers 'sometimes teach students strategies for word decoding, a fact which is possible anyway.

Q16: What is very difficult for pupils to sound out?

   a- Vowel sounds.
   b- Consonant sounds.
   c- Blending sounds.
   d- All of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Pupils’ difficulties of sounds.
The results in the table above demonstrate that (10) of teachers argue that students/pupils have difficulties with vowel sounds. Only little number of teachers (3) refers to the difficulty of sounding out to consonant sounds. And a small number of teachers (5) chose 'blending' as a reason for pupil difficulties of sounds. (7) of them say that students face difficulties with all sounds mentioned before: vowels, consonants, blends sounds. This result implies that students have difficulties with all the sounds they pronounce, especially with vowel sounds because in English there are only five vowel letters making twenty sounds.

**Section four: reading.**

**Q17:** How often do you have reading comprehension/activities session with your students?

a- Every day.

b- Three or four times a week

c- Less than three times a week.
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Percentage%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17. Reading comprehension/activities' sessions.

The results in the table above indicate that (25) teachers in the questionnaire said that reading instruction, activities or comprehension is taught less than three times a week, and this is practiced according to the curriculum.

**Q18:** Do you set up goals before teaching reading?

a. Yes

b. No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Setting up goals.

Figure 18 Setting up goals.

The information, in the table above, show that all teachers (25) set up goals before they teach reading. This result indicates that whenever instructors teach reading in the class they begin by setting up goals to be achieved by the end of the reading session.

Q19: If yes, please select one of the following:

By the end of the session, pupils will be able to:

a- Read without difficulties.

b- Develop students' awareness of reading skills.

c- Develop reading comprehension.

d- Develop decoding strategies.


<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Percentage%</th>
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</thead>
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<td>18,75%</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>18,75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15,62%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 19. Reading goals.

The data in the table above show that (15) of teachers set goals concerning developing students' reading comprehension before teaching reading. Others (6) tend to focus on developing students' awareness of reading skills as a goal for teaching reading. (6) of teachers aim at making their students able to read in English without having difficulties. Only a few number of teachers (5) set up goals on developing students' decoding strategies. The results indicate that most teachers are setting up goals before teaching reading on comprehension, decoding and accuracy of reading (read without difficulties).
Q20: Which of these three best describes how you teach reading in class?

a) I usually do reading activities or instruction as part of instruction in different curriculum areas.

b) I usually do reading activities or instruction as a separate subject.

c) I do both of the above equally.

d) Any other? Please state it…………………………………………..

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20. Teaching reading in class.

Figure 20 Teaching reading in class.
The information in table and figure 20 show that (11) of teachers do usually reading activities or instruction as a part of the program. (6) of them do usually reading activities or instruction as a separate subject. And (5) teachers do both instructions/activities equally. Two teachers (2) did not respond to that question. Only one teacher (1) state another reading instruction, which consists of teaching reading as a context for teaching grammar. It should be noted that most teachers follow what suits better their students.

Q21: How often do you teach the following reading instructions or activities?

a. I teach reading as a whole class activity.

b. I create some-ability groups.

c. I create mixed-ability groups.

d. I create groups based on other criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
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<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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</table>

| Total          | 25  | 100 | 25  | 100 | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |
|                |     |     |     |     | 25    | 100 |

Table 21. Reading instruction teaching.
From the table above 21, we notice that (46%) of teachers do 'sometimes' the activities (a, b; c, d) which refer to teaching reading as a whole class activity, creating some-ability groups, the creation of mixed-ability groups, and the creation of group based on other criteria in the classroom. On the other hand, (14%) of teachers 'always' the activities (a, c, d) which are about teaching reading as a whole class activity and creating mixed-ability groups and other groups based on other criteria. (36%) of teachers 'never' teach these activities in class. On the whole (4%) do not answer this question at all. The results indicate that teachers are not always implementing the group work techniques in their class.

Q22: do you think that the difficulties of your pupils' reading are because of?

a) The selection of texts and passages.
b) Teacher methodology.
c) School environment.
d) Curriculum.
e) Others? Please state them……………………..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a + b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a + b + d</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a + c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b + c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b + d</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b + c + d</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c + d</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22. Difficulties of pupils’ reading.

From the results shown in table 22 and figure 22, (11%) of teachers say that the difficulties of students reading are related to the selection of texts and passages. And the same number also (11%) say that it is because of the teacher methodology, and (4%) join the two options a and b (texts and passages selection, and the teacher methodology). Few teachers (4%) state that the school environment influences students' reading. Others (29%) select the option 'd' which refers to the curriculum, and (4%) of teachers join the answers 'c' and 'd' to refer to both options: school environment and the curriculum as the causes of students' reading difficulties. (7%) also join the options (a, b and d). (4%) of them say that these difficulties are found because of the selection of texts and passages, as well as the school environment. (11%) chose the options (b and d) as reasons behind the students' difficulties when reading. A minority of teachers (4%) relate the difficulties of pupils' reading to teacher methodology, school environment, and curriculum. (11%) of teachers state other reasons for pupils' reading problems, stating that students do not read outside the class since they are not accustomed to the reading skills themselves.
Section four: further suggestions

Q23: Other comments and suggestions.

Only seven teachers (28%) managed to answer this part of the questionnaire. Three teachers share the same point of view holding that students have difficulties with reading because of the curriculum; they say that the English curriculum is not well designed. This can be attributed to the small amount of reading instructions and activities presented in books. In fact reading is neither given due time in the curriculum nor taught properly as other aspects. They suggest having some changes in the curriculum. Another teacher suggests that it would be better if learners would be given opportunities to read more because reading helps the enrichment of pupils; vocabulary and the acquisition of the accurate pronunciation. Another suggestion is to teach reading earlier i.e. why not in the primary school?! . Other two teachers suggest the use of materials like pictures, data show, to raise the students' motivation to read.
2.5 Pedagogical implications

The results obtained from the questionnaire have confirmed the hypothesis; that is to say, that literacy and phonics teaching would help EFL middle school students to better their reading (decoding and comprehension). If they have been taught these two elements, earlier, systematically, and directly, their reading could be better achieved. According to the theoretical part and the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire, some suggestions have been made in order to show the importance of teaching literacy and phonics, when and how they should be taught.

1. Reading is not given the same importance as the other linguistic aspect such as writing, speaking, listening, grammar...; that is why students do not seem to be motivated to read. If instructors are able to get students read, students will be

2. The Algerian middle school curriculum of English does not give an equal focus on all language aspects. Reading should be given due importance so that students would not only be exposed to reading, but would find it enjoyable and easier as well.

3. Literacy and phonics are of great importance in developing students' reading if instructors are teaching these elements at early stages, students would read words, sentences, or paragraphs without great difficulties.

4. Some strategies are basic, like 'decoding'. Teachers should consider such elements and teach them properly as any other basic linguistic aspect.

5. Students need the basic learning of several aspects so that they get knowledgeable, for instance, of graphemes and phonemes are, and how, actually, to practice them. They should also be taught strategies for blending and decoding so as to achieve reading properly (the accurate pronunciation of letters, words/ reading without hesitation) and comprehension.
2.6 Limitation of the study

The current study is characterized by some limitations which can be grouped as the following:

- It would be better if we dealt with an experiment but because of time constraints we have used a questionnaire.
- Normally, questionnaires are given back immediately, unfortunately most of them (teachers) spent more than three days, and others a week.
- As far as the population is concerned, it would be better if literacy and phonics are taught earlier and systematically.

Conclusion

The current chapter is devoted to shed light on the results and analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire have, indeed, asserted the studies' hypothesis clearly, the results have come to confirm that reading difficulties are principally related to literacy and phonics. Teaching literacy and phonics at early stages, in a systematic and direct way is an important factor to improve ultimately students' reading.
General conclusion

This study highlights one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning to read a foreign language which is the effectiveness of teaching literacy and phonics in enhancing EFL middle school students' reading. At the beginning of this study, we have hypothesized that reading difficulties are related principally to literacy and phonics. Students of middle schools confront a number of difficulties while reading; they mispronounce letters and words, hesitate in their reading, and do not comprehend what is being read. In other words, students are not 'fed' enough with basic knowledge of graphemes and phonemes that is why they face problems of decoding and comprehension.

The current research contains mainly two chapters. The first chapter represents the theoretical part; where it has been dealt with literacy, phonics and reading; whereas, the second chapter is about the work field which consists of the administration of a questionnaire for teachers, and through which the essential data have been collected and analyzed.

The results obtained, in fact, have come to meet the hypothesis, a fact which makes it clear that the absence of teaching of phonics and literacy at earlier stages might be considered as the deficient factors when students come to read. The need to read intensively and extensively is another indirect reason for the same deficiency. Therefore, instructors are urged to adopt strategies for teaching phonics (phonemes, sounds, words, etc) and literacy (graphemes, spelling, blending, etc) to bring some improvements in students' reading.

All in all, this study is an attempt to attest the importance of teaching literacy and phonics at earlier stages to develop reading especially in the Algerian schools. This current study also aims to reviewing the issue that has been raised by other researchers, and to emphasize the teaching of literacy and phonics for further researches.
References


Appendix

Teachers’ Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is designed as a part of an investigation carried out for a master degree in TEFL. It aims at investigating teachers’ attitudes toward the effectiveness of teaching literacy and phonics in developing EFL middle school students’ reading.

We would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us gain the relevant information for the completion of our study. You may answer by putting either crosses or ticks, filling the gaps. Your contribution is so important.

Miss. Halima. MERABET
Department of English
University of Larbi Ben M'hidi O.E.B
Section One: Background information.

1. Gender:
   a. Female
   b. male

2. How long have you been working as a teacher?
   One year  2-4 years  5-10 years  more than 10 years

Section two: literacy.

3. What 'literacy' mean for you?
   d. The ability to write letters either in isolation or correlate them to have a word, a sentence, or a paragraph.
   e. Recognizing the alphabet of a language by breaking a word up into phonemes, then associating those phonemes with their own letters.
   f. Recognizing the letters, then words, and knowing the rules that govern sentences, hence, mastering the writing system.

4. When do you provide literacy knowledge for teaching reading?
   d- At early stages of the reading program.
   e- In an independent session.
   f- In case of finding difficulties, you provide it within the session.

5. How do you teach the letters (the alphabet) to your pupils?
   d- By teaching letter/sound association, then blending sounds.
   e- By teaching the whole word, then breaking it out.
   f- By teaching them to memorize sentences, or small paragraphs, then deriving the letters (as in teaching letters in Arabic primary schools).
6. Which of the following points you focus on when you teach literacy in your class?
   b. Written language.
   c. Both of them.

7. Does pupils/students get more skilled (literate) when:
   a. Visualizing.
   b. Listening.
   c. Synthesizing (to combine information of what pupils learned in different texts, to come up with new ones).

8. How often do you teach pupils principles of writing (pen hold, handwriting, capitalization…)?
   a. Always.
   b. Sometimes.
   c. Never.

9. Do your pupils face difficulties with the acquisition of letters?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

10. If yes, what are those problems?
    a. They cannot name (read) them accurately.
    b. They cannot distinguish between capital/small letters.
    c. They cannot write them accurately.
    d. They cannot combine them together, even to write or to read.
    e. Any other? Please state it…………………………………………….

Section three: phonics.

11. There are many teaching methods to teach reading. Which one of the following methods you apply in your class?
   a. Phonics. (Teaching word recognition, and emphasizing letter/sound association.
   b. 'Look and say'.
   c. 'Listen then say'.

12. If your answer is "a", how do you teach it in class?
   a. Directly.
   b. Indirectly.
   c. Others? Please state them…………………………………………………..

13. Do you ask pupils to call out sounds after you?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

14. If yes, why?....................................................................................................................

15. How often do you teach students strategies for decoding sounds and words?
   (Decoding: or word identification, means to sound out words and blend the sounds represented by symbols)
   e- Frequently
   f- Often.
   g- Sometimes.
   h- Never.
16. What is very difficult for pupils to sound out?
   e- Vowel sounds.
   f- Consonant sounds.
   g- Blending sounds.
   h- All of them.

Section four: Reading.

17. How often do you have reading comprehension/activities session with your students?
   d- Every day.
   e- Three or four times a week.
   f- Less than three times a week.

18. Do you set up goals before teaching reading?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. If yes, please select one of the following:
   By the end of the session, pupils will be able to:
   e- Read without difficulties.
   f- Develop students' awareness of reading skills.
   g- Develop reading comprehension.
   h- Develop decoding strategies.

20. Which of these three best describes how you teach reading in class?
   e) I usually do reading activities or instruction as part of instruction in different curriculum areas.
   f) I usually do reading activities or instruction as a separate subject.
   g) I do both of the above equally.
   h) Any other? Please state it…………………………………………
21. How often do you teach the following reading instructions or activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I teach reading as a whole class activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create some-ability groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create mixed-ability groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create group based on other criteria.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. What do you think are the difficulties of your pupils' reading?

   f) The selection of texts and passages.
   g) Teacher methodology.
   h) School environment.
   i) Curriculum.
   j) Others? Please state them……………………………………………………

Section five: further suggestion.

23. Other comments and suggestions:
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you very much.
Résumé

Les problèmes rencontrés par les apprenants de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère sont de diverses raisons. Ainsi, ces mêmes apprenants rencontrent d'énormes difficultés en matière de lecture. Le fait d'ânonner, d'hésiter, de mal prononcer, de mal écrire, et épelet les mots font de la lecture une tache ardue et pas facile à surmonter. Il est généralement reconnu, que ces problèmes de lecture sont essentiellement du à l'absence de l'enseignement des graphèmes et phonèmes (literacy and phonics) à un stage précoce afin que les apprenants ne commettent pas d'erreur quand ils viennent à lire un texte.Les enseignants, d'après les résultats qui confirment l’hypothèse de cette étude, sont unanimes à reconnaître l'absence de stratégie de l'enseignement de ses deux éléments et parfois leur ignorance de ces concepts. Cette étude a pour objectif de soulever le problème de lecture rencontré par les élèves du cycle moyen et le remédiassions à ce problème pour la programmation de l'enseignement des graphèmes et phonèmes plus comme nous les labels de literacy et phonics.
الملخص

تعتبر المشاكل التي يواجهها التلميذ أثناء القراءة، خاصة في الطور المتوسط، محل اهتمام وبحث.

إذ تطرق إليها الباحثون من مختلف جوانبها، فاكتسب اللغة الأجنبية بدءًا من تعلم الكتابة والقراءة يتميز بجملة من الاختلافات والصعوبات. وتهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى دراسة تأثير تدريس الكتابة والقراءة (الحروف والصوتيات) في مراحل متقدمة من تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية على تطوير وتحسين القراءة.

وقد قمنا بإجراء دراسة وصفية عبر استطلاع عدد من أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية على مستوى عدد من ا لمتوسطات لابدء رأيهم حول الموضوع، وجاءت النتائج المتحصل عليها لهذا الاستطلاع بإن تدريس الكتابة والقراءة في مراحل متقدمة من تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية له دور هام في تحسين القراءة لدى التلاميذ. ومن خلال هذه النتائج نبين أن جهل تدريس هذه العناصر مهمة بالطريقة المناسبة وفي مراحل أولى من تعليم هذه اللغة يشرح لنا ضعف التلميذ في القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية. وهذه النتائج تثبت فرضيات البحث إذ أن التلاميذ ليسوا قادرين على القراءة بشكل صحيح لا بربط الحروف ولا الكلمات وحتى فهم ما يقرؤون لأنهم لم يدرسوا هذه العناصر في المراحل الأولى من تعلم اللغة الأجنبية.