Investigating Problems of Reading Comprehension among Sudanese Private Secondary Schools.

(A case Study of Al-Geneina Administrative Unit Private Secondary Schools)

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Abstract.

The problem of reading comprehension is encountered the learners of private schools because they are not accustomed to read skillfully, instead, they try to pick up the meaning depending just on surface form (denotation) of words. The study was conducted to shed the light on the problems of reading comprehension that encountered private secondary students in Al-Geneina Administrative Unit in Western Darfur State- Sudan. There are twenty- one private secondary schools in Al-Geneina ,the second-class students were selected asa population of the study, and (46) forty sixparticipants were chosen randomly as a sample of the study.The descriptive analytical method was used. A comprehension test used as a tool for data collection. The study found that; learners neglected the two important skills in reading English comprehension which are skimming and scanning, and that's happened because of their vocabulary weakness.Teachers should have to teach and show their studentsthe differences between skimming and scanning so as to find out the general and specific meaning of the text.

Key words: Investigating, comprehension, Sudanese, private, secondary, students

الملخص.

تمثل القراءة الصامتة مشكلة حقيقية تواجه طلاب المدارس الخاصة وذلك لعدم تعويدهم على القراءة بمهارة عالية'بل يعتمدون على أخذ معاني الكلمات بصورة سطحية على حسب شكل الكلمات. أجريت الدراسة بهدف إلقاء الضوء على مشاكل القراءة الصامتة التي تواجه طلاب المدارس الثانوية الخاصة بوحدة الجنينة الإدارية ولاية غرب دارفور – السودان. هنالك واحد وعشرون مدرسة ثانوية خاصة بمحلية الجنينة. تم اختيار مجتمع الدراسة من طلاب الفصل الدراسي الثاني واختار الباحث عدد (٤٦) ستة وأربعون منهم بصورة عشوائية يمثلون نموذج الدراسة. استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. وتم تصميم اختبار في القراءة الصامتة كأداة لجمع المعلومات. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الطلاب يتجاهلون مهارتين أساسيتين في عملية القراءة الصامتة وهما القراءة بصورة سطحية وعميقة أي(تفصيلية) وذلك بسبب ضعفهم وعدم معرفتهم بمفردات اللغة الكافية. يوصي الباحث بالآتي: على الأساتذة أن يدرسوا ويبينوا لتلاميذهم الفرق بين القراءة السطحية والعميقة حتى يتعرفوا على معاني القطعة بشكليه السطحي والعميق.

Introduction .

Reading considered as essential as other skills of language, that is, through it learners explore more about the language and subsequently they develop the other skills. Linsay and Knight (2006- 93) state that "reading is important way for learners to access new language and practice the language that they have already met" if the learners understand the written text well, they will be able to raise their standard by the new language which they read in the text. According to Could and et al (1990) reading is a creative act just like writing and painting because it makes meaning of everything around us. Ib id (1990- 3) state that Reading is lively art because we are involved in a process of making potential meanings read for ourselves, our style and for others. Indeed reading is lively art, it is common to think comprehension and it is possible to discover the meaning which already existed. The researcher considers that reading lifts the readers or learners to find out novel ideas that increase their opinions and understanding the language rapidly. Through reading learners do not face difficulties and problems that non-native speakers suffer from like use of functional words. Learners read for many reasons according to their need of language skills. Thus, they can build their competence. According to Lindsay and knight (2006) people read for several reasons, may some of us read for getting information to find out how to do something (instructions). Also, people read in purpose of communicating with someone and entertaining, like reading magazine, newspaper, novel, article…etc. People read for their study or their job (position in work).

1. Literature Review

2.1 Reading comprehension

Comprehension is deep understanding. The researcher agrees that reading comprehension for learners of English as a foreign language is based on the idea that there is appropriate course is required for learners who need to be lifted to new information.In U.S.A article number 131 (2006) Reading comprehension skills increased pleasure and effectiveness, strong reading comprehension skills helps in all other subjects and in the personal and professional lives. Indeed reading comprehension has an effect on personal manner socially and psychologically, that is, through reading the reader or learner reads several stories and articles concerning psychological behavior.

2.2 Aspects of reading comprehension

a. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is essential in reading comprehension; it helps for understanding the text well.

b. Literal comprehension

 It means the reader reads for getting information. Gordon (1941 -1) states about literal comprehension "to read and recognize information" this means information presented in a systematic way of straight forward reason.

c. Inferential

The reader reads the text and understands it well then he has to reply the questions which come after the reading text.

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d. Analyzing

According to Gordon (1994) the reader can analyze the text how it written, the way of putting punctuations, ideas how they arranged and vocabulary how chosen...etc.

2.3 Reading in classroom

The researcher believes that learning reading in classroom breaks into three stages such as:-

a. Pre-reading stage.
b. Reading stage.
c. Post reading stage

- **Pre reading stage**

   The purpose of this activity is to prepare learners for what they will read and setting the task for the second stage.

- **Reading stage**

This activity for checking, giving, providing; the purpose is to read and enable the instructor to monitor the learners.

- **Post reading stage**

It is an activity for checking, providing, giving feedback and following-up work.

2.4 Reading activities

Reading activities includes three acts; the researcher summarizes them as Knight's explanation (2006)

–Teacher– learner interaction activities; the teacher stops learners while reading and asks them comprehension questions.

–Learner–learner interaction activities; it involves learners interacting with their classmates by asking each other what everyone has already read and what each one understood from this point and so on.

–Text–only activities; the teacher orders his learners how to put a list of event into the right time or in sequential way.

2.5 Reading strategies

The word (strategy) is used in learning when instructors and learners put ways for solving problems or upgrading the level of learners. In reading; there are strategies applied for supporting learners in getting more information and clear comprehension reading. The researcher believes there are several strategies in reading comprehension as follows:–

a. See image

The learner visualizes what the writer is descending the pictures of characters are seen by asking each other.

b. Establish relationship with narrator

 The learner thinks about the narrator (the person who tells you information in the text) identifies who narrator is.

c. Predict what will happen

The learner does predict what will happen by using his previous knowledge or background.

d. Ask questions

The learner asks oneself all the times what, why, where and how, why do characters do what they do? Why this event is happening in this text? Why the writer wrote the text through this way? What is the significance of the details the author included? Do the details mean something?

e. Inference

The learner looks for what is being implicit, he reads between the lines to find out the intended message of the text/ context.

3. Methodology

The descriptive analytical method was used to describe and analyze the data of this study.Thestudy population is second-class learners from twenty- one private secondary schoolsin Al-Geneina Administrative Unit, western Darfur State. The researcher selected (46) forty six participants as a simple random sample of the study and were chosen from seven private schoolsto represent the entire population. A comprehension test was used as instrument to collect the relevant data for the study.

4- The study should answer this question

a.To what extent the standard of reading comprehension in Al-Geneina private secondary schools become weak?

5- Hypothesis of the Study

b. The standard of reading comprehension in Al-Geneina private secondary schools becomes weak

6-Data analysis and discussionsof the participant's responses

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	Nour Al marif	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	2	8	26
Gender	Female	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	12	22	73
Participants Number	Five	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	0	8	26
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	8	18	60
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	8	18	60

Table (1) shows that there are five female participants from Nour Al Marif School have been studied. There are two of them failed to get the (50%) from

the entire marks; while three of them passed the test and have got good

results.

Table (2)

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	**Abu alhasanein**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
Gender	**Male**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	8	18	60
Participants Number	**four**	Q1	Q2	Q3	6	6	12	24	80
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	6	12	40

Table (2) shows that there are four male learners from AbulahasneinSchool

have been studied as study participants, two passed the test and two failed to

pass it.

Table (3)

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	**Ismail**	Q1	Q2	Q3	6	2	4	12	40

Gender	Female	Q1	Q2	Q3	2	4	10	16	53
Participants Number	Five	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
		-	-	-	4	2	4	10	33

Table (3) indicates that there are five female students from Ismail School have

been studied as study participants, as it shown above there is only one

participant passed the test, and the others failed to pass it.

Table (4)

Participants information		Test responses						Tota l	%
School name	Muhieeldeen	Q1	Q2	Q3	6	2	12	20	66
Gender	Female	Q1	Q2	Q3	6	6	14	26	86
Participants Number	Nine	Q1	Q2	Q3	6	6	14	26	86
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	16	26	86
		Q1	Q2	Q3	6	4	6	16	26
		Q1	Q2	Q3	6	4	6	16	26

Q1	Q2	Q3	0	4	4	8	18
Q1	Q2	Q3	0	4	4	8	18
Q1	Q2	Q3	4	6	2	12	20

Table (4) clarifies that there are nine female students from MuheildeenSchool have been studied as study participants and five of them have got more than (80%) marks, while the others have got (60%).

Table (5)

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	**Al Mukhtar**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
Gender	**Female**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	12	18	60
Participants Number	**Eight**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	6	12	40
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	6	12
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	6	12
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	4	12	20
		Q1	Q2	Q3	2	2	2	4	8

Table (5) shows that there are eight female students from Al Mukhtar School have been studied as study participants. There is only one participant had got (60%) but the other seven of them failed to pass the test.

Table (6)

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	**Almustafeen**	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	10	33
Gender	**Male**	Q1	Q2	Q3	2	4	2	8	26
Participants Number	**Seven**	Q1	Q2	Q3	2	0	4	6	20
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	6	14	46
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	10	16
		Q1	Q2	Q3	0	0	0	0	0
		Q1	Q2	Q3	6	6	2	8	16

Table (6) indicates that there are seven participants from AlmustafeenSchoolall of them male students, two of them have got (53%). One of them failed to get any mark in all comprehension questions and the rest failed to pass the test.

Table (7)

Participants information		Test responses						Total	%
School name	Al Taleea	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
Gender	Female	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	12	18	60
Participants Number	Eight	Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	6	12	40
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	2	4	10	33
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	10	33
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	2	10	33
		Q1	Q2	Q3	4	4	4	12	40
		Q1	Q2	Q3	2	2	2	6	20

Table (7) indicates that there are eight female learners from Al Taleea School

have been participated. Three of them have got (80%), one participant got

(86%), one participant got (72%) and two participants have got less than (70%).

Table (8)

Q1 marks	Q2 marks	Q3 marks	Test marks	Failed participant	Passed participants	Whole participants	Success %
6	6	18	30	24	22	46	47

The above table shows the full marks of the test questions analyzed and found that, there are (22) participants got more than (50%) and (24) participants got less than (50%) from the entire number (46) of the participants. Therefore, more than (50%) of the learners failed to pass the test. This indicate that students need more training on reading comprehension passages so as to improve their skills.

7. Discussion

The first question of the test concerning the whole comprehension of the passage, so it comes as (give short answer).

Here most of the participants tried to guess the answer by going back to the passage and looking for the mentioned words in the question, and then they stated the whole sentence which resembles the question as an answer of the question. The participants do not read the passage carefully to obtain its main

idea and further information about the written text. Moreover, participants wrote answers which are not proper answers of a comprehension topic; they do not try to look for details and deep understanding. Even grammatically, the answers ill-formed. Also, the answers written as run-on sentences, that is no punctuation and no indentation at the beginning of the written answers. Therefore, learners lack the skills of understanding the written texts in English as a foreign language. Thus, they do not aware of input skill (reading.

The second question of the test is inferential. It gives participants opportunity to infer the answer. It is a comprehension question indeed. There are thirty-four participants from forty six failed to answer the three parts of the question, this refers to the neglecting of thinking while reading stage. Also, they neglect reading behind the lines and there is no close reading which means reading all the words in the written text.

The third question of the test concerning vocabulary, here more than half of the entire participants failed to answer the question correctly. This leads to the neglecting of vocabulary which stated in the passage. As the researcher sees it learners do not focus on the meaning of the written text. As usual some words

are written in the text and they have synonyms and antonyms. Here the chance of learner matters to fulfill the gaps of the new meanings. Learners can ask their instructor about the new words and the instructor also could review some of vocabulary that giving learners opportunity to know unfamiliar words which are closely related to the title of the passage.

8. Findings:

The Learners in Algeneina administrative private schools do not learn English comprehension skillfully; because the researcher observed that some learners do not care about reading comprehension because of the words difficulty as they think; in addition to the demotivation of learning English among their colleagues. Besides, unavailability of text books at school or market also plays an influential role in learning. Moreover, learners try to guess the meaning of texts depending on their first language which has totally different techniques and ways of reading comprehension. Furthermore; learners do not pay their attention on vocabulary preview reviewed by their teachers and this is lead them to neglect the two important skills in reading English comprehension which are skimming and scanning; therefore, they haven't repertoire.

9. Recommendations

As the study conducted, it should have recommendations that signify learners and instructors in reading comprehension. Learners should have to use the two skills of skimming and Scanning so as to find out the general and specific meaning of the text and this is means that reading comprehension needs trained instructors to instruct learners the proper ways of reading comprehension. In addition to that vocabulary preview should be focused on by instructors and learners.Also some researchers of this field suggested that the comprehension of less skilled learners can be improved by a series of short training sessions that stress making inferences and integrating information in the text. At last, learners lack the skill of reading comprehension reflects on their performance (speaking and writing). Hence, practicing activities is important in learning reading comprehension.

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