

Exploring High School Students' Reading Comprehension Strategies and Reading Difficulties: First Year Baccalaureate As A Case Study

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Abstract: Education reform initiatives of the last two decades have improved students' performance very little. The main reason is that too little attention has been paid to what actually goes on in the classroom. This paper refocuses attention on the classroom, specifically on the importance of teacher professional development in changing learners' classroom behaviors in ways that lead to improvement in students' performance. In this regard, the purpose of this paper is to explore the problems and difficulties that Moroccan EFL learners (High School learners) encounter during the reading process. By so doing, the findings of this small case study will be of great importance in refining the teaching practices and improving students' performances. Using a highly designed framework for conducting this research, the paper describes the **context**, **content**, and **process** of high-quality teaching learning process development.

Key words: reading strategies, reading difficulties, students' performance improvement

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I. INTRODUCTION

Whenever conducting research as a process is discussed, the necessity for improving teaching and learning process is highly likely the objective. Therefore, preparing today's learners to become proficient users of English as an international language had become preeminent in an increasingly global society. Thus, the mastery of English language skills are essential in achieving language proficiency. The focus of this paper is on reading as one of the basic language skills. In effect, exploring high school students' reading comprehension strategies and difficulties: first year baccalaureate as a case study really emerges from various reasons, which mainly are classroom observation, teaching experience, correcting students' reading comprehension tests, and students' low level in reading. In this sense, many researchers share a strong belief that the quality of educational experiences provided to students will highly depend on the ability of the teacher to introduce students to different communicative skills through the use of effective learning strategies (here reading strategies) in order for them to achieve complete language proficiency. Conducting a research on the effects of reading difficulties in EFL classrooms within the framework of action research would be a kind of enquiry that is undertaken in the present study with rigor and understanding to constantly refine practice; and the emerging evidence-based outcomes will then contribute to the researching practitioner's continuing professional development.

Students' learning strategies and the techniques they utilize can be identified as an essential parameter to achieve language proficiency and the hindrances they encounter are of paramount importance. In this respect, many researches have been carried out on learning strategies to explore the nature of language learning and how learners develop language proficiency. In other words, these studies were conducted to explore the cognitive, affective and social operations applied by the learner for promoting language proficiency. According to David (1995), reading, as a main component of the four language skills, has an essential role since it is to be considered a rich source in which language learners (readers) receive comprehensible input to develop accuracy and fluency. Therefore, it would be of crucial importance to claim that reading feeds other language skills including writing, listening and speaking. However, this cannot be achieved unless learners use relevant reading strategies in the right place at the right time. In this respect, this paper investigates the prospective reading comprehension strategies employed by high school learners to read English texts before, during and after reading. Further, it explores the obstacles that hinder their understanding of a given text. Consequently, this small research will probably help readers to reflect upon their reading behaviors. It also pinpoints the techniques that could yield better outcomes.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Defining and conceptualizing the importance of reading

As any other language, the English language has four main skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are either receptive or productive skills. Accordingly, Chastain (1988) suggested that these skills are divided into two categories, which are receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills involve reading and listening while productive skills consist of writing and speaking. Learners acquire receptive skills by receiving the language from oral or written material. In this case, learners decode the meaning to comprehend the receptive material. The importance of reading as a language skill can never be underestimated. It is one of the essential means through which information can be obtained especially for educational purposes. Reading serves as one of the most commonly utilized language proficiency skills across the globe. In reading, however, the reader is receiving a message from a writer that he /she needs to decipher (Chastain, 1988). The received input from either listening or reading is stored in the learners' minds and can be retrieved and used by learners during the production stage. The second category includes productive skills which are speaking and writing. In this stage, the learner produces his /her own knowledge based on what he/she has in his/her mind. That is to say, the learner employs his/her background knowledge received from listening or reading to generate an output that can be translated either in a spoken or written form. Logically speaking, without a previous knowledge (schemata) the learner will not be able to produce any kind of knowledge. Along the same line of reasoning, behaviorists claimed that learners' mind is like a tabula rasa. Simply put, learners' mind is like a blank sheet or an empty vessel that requires to be filled with certain kind of inputs to help learners produce some output.

The language skills, whether they are receptive or productive, are undoubtedly important and essential in language learning. In fact, there is a general assumption that reading has got a great importance in language learning and teaching. Dating back in time, if we look back on how reading is dealt with by the teaching methods and approaches prevailing at the time, we would discover that reading is one of the basic principles in all the methods. However, it has been taught differently from one method to another. For example, in Grammar Translation Method (GTM), teachers prepare reading texts that contain vocabulary and examples of grammatical structures to be studied in the given text. The difficulties that learners used to encounter are related to the way they were taught to read. Concerning the Audio-lingual Method (ALM), reading has been dealt with as just a reinforcement of the language habits; students also read passages that contain the practices of structures to internalize them. However, reading in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been specifically linked to the use of authentic texts.

In effect, reading has been extensively given much attention on the part of many researchers (Grellet, 1981; Nuttal, 1982; Chastain, 1988; Davies, 1995). It is undoubtedly easy to find plenty of definitions related to reading. For instance, Davies (1995) defined reading as a "mental process which involves a reader in trying to follow and respond to a message from a writer who is distant in space and time" (p.3). Similarly, Henry (2008) suggested another definition which is not different from that of Davis's. In this respect, he went on saying that "reading is an active process during which you draw information from the text to create meaning" (p. 7). Moreover, Bell and McCallum (2008) stated that reading is "getting meaning from print" (p. 12).

From the aforementioned definitions, one can notice that reading is an active process, and it is not as passive as one might think. At this point, the question that brings itself into the scene is whether reading is an active or a passive process. This question leads to a debating issue in reading which is the passiveness and activeness of the reader. It was believed that reading is a passive skill as Nuttal (1989) mentioned. This simply means that the reader can be seen just as a passive and a consumer learner because he/she does not make any effort. He/she just consumes what has been written by the writer. However, this view has been rejected by many writers such as Nuttal (1982). Nuttal further added that reading is not an easy task as most of learners mistakenly think, but it is a complex process which requires a variety of skills on the part of the readers. According to Nuttal (1982) readers, must first, recognize the script. For example, if we ask an English student who does not speak and read Spanish to read a text that is written in Spanish, he /she will find that the text is difficult because he/she is not familiar with the language in which it has been expressed. Additionally, Nuttal (1982) believed that one of the conditions that guarantee successful communication between the writer and the reader is that both of them should share the same code. Another skill, in Nuttal's (1982) list, is that "the writer and reader should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works" (p.7). Phrased differently, the reader should have prior knowledge (schemata) about what is being written by the writer, which means that without the sharing assumptions between the reader and the writer, the reader will not be able to understand or comprehend the text, and without comprehension, there is no reading. On his part, Chastain (1988) declared that "reading involves comprehension when readers are not comprehending they are not reading" (p. 217). Consequently, the belief that considers the reader as a passive learner is definitely wrong, because the reader is actively involved in the reading process. The reader has to make a mental effort to understand what is explicitly cited in the text. For this reason, to achieve and understand the writer's message is not an easy task; the reader should ask questions

and think critically to understand the text. The reader simply, as Chastain (1988) stated, recreates and reconstructs the writer's meaning. Consequently, for the reader to comprehend the different meanings expressed by the writer and to achieve the writer's intended purpose and meaning, he/she should go beyond what is written.

While it is within the framework of this research to review the literature of reading types, it is also necessary, for the ultimate goal, to establish a basic terminology. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that extensive reading and intensive reading are the most essential reading types. The former was defined by Nuttal (1982) "as a process which involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher" (p. 23). This simply means that intensive reading has to do with the text given as a task in the classroom, and that the students should do it in a specific time. For that reason, students are supposed to elicit, from the text, the maximum of information that shows whether they have understood the text or not. Therefore, the main goal of intensive reading is to "train students in reading strategies" (p. 23). Whereas extensive reading's aims to "train students how to deal with full length texts" (p. 23). If intensive reading is given as a task in the classroom, extensive reading is given as a task outside the school. Mostly, the purpose behind extensive reading is to read for pleasure, which means that the students are not forced to read it as intensive reading. Yet, the two reading types are crucial because they can help students improve their second or foreign language.

Reading models

Since the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, the reader is supposed to activate some mental and cognitive behaviors in order to arrive at the intended meaning of the text being read. Since its complexity is obvious, many linguists and psycholinguists have attempted to describe the process of reading through the realization of many models that visualize how both L1 and L2 readers process reading materials, starting from the first contact with the print until constructing meaning (Davis, 1995). Therefore, according to Davis (1995), it is essential to pinpoint that "reading models have evolved due to the subsequent developments in the procedures used to observe, record and analyze reading behaviors of the individuals whether in formal or non-formal settings" (p.57). In fact, there are multiple reading techniques, which include think aloud, talk aloud, introspective/retrospective approach, miscue analysis (Clay, 1968, 1969; Goodman, 1969; & Weber, 1970). Questionnaires and interviews were behind the invention of variety of reading models that are characterized by many distinctive features (Davis, 1995). That is to say, each model approaches reading from a different point of view. In essence, there are three main reading models that can be found in the literature. These models are the bottom-up mode, the top-down model and the interactive model.

2.1 Bottom-up Reading Model

The bottom-up model was devised by Gough (1972). Gough presented this model in the form of sequential or serial processing in which the reader relies heavily on the lower-levels-lower-sources- to construct the desired meaning the writer wants to accomplish (as cited in Davis, 1995. p.60). In other terms, this model implies that the reader must pay maximum attention to letter by letter progression through print until message-center –meaning- is accessed. To prove the validity of his model, Gough (1972), as reported in Davis (1995), relied chiefly on the laboratory studies in which L1 fluent readers were observed in problem-solving of letter-sounds correspondences. Even though bottom-up approach has influenced the teaching methodology, it does not reveal all the truth about the process of reading. One weakness of this model is that it does not consider that there are about 166 various graph-phonetic rules that the reader must pay attention to for deciphering letter-sound correspondences of English words and that these rules of letter combinations are difficult to instruct. Another weakness of the sequencing processing is that it imposes an extensive responsibility on short-term or the working memory. Thus, Davis (1995) suggested that "this heavy burden can be counter-productive, that is, the reader is not required to rely on other sources, such as prediction, anticipation and world knowledge, to have access to meaning" (p.60).

It therefore seems clear that this approach does not encourage the productivity (prediction and anticipation) that is necessary for successful reading. Recognizing this inference, psycholinguists have devised other reading models, which promote other levels of information instead of fixing eyes on print for decoding letters and thus having access to meaning (Davis, 1995).

2.2 Top-down Reading Model

In contrast to Gough's bottom-up model, the top-down models that belong to psycholinguistics [the interaction between language and thought] place deep emphasis on higher-order sources of information, paying less attention to lower-levels of information. Goodman's (1969) top-down approach has been widely studied and has occupied a large area of literature. This model was developed on the basis of the study of beginning L1 readers. Goodman (1969) stated that predictions are the driving forces for reaching meaning. The reader first makes guessing which precedes confirmation, which precedes correction. In this language-thought model, the

reading process is represented on the form of four cycles: *optical, perceptual, syntactic and meaning*. According to Goodman, these cycles are closely interrelated, that is, each one feeds the other (as cited in Davis, 1995.p.61).

2.3 Interactive Reading Model

Since promoting the reading process and overcoming the drawbacks of the previous two models is the ultimate objective, many other models have been developed by psycholinguistic scholars in order to provide a plausible account of what is happening during the reading process. Among these models, Rumelhart's(1977) Interactive model, which seeks to integrate both bottom-up and top-down processing in one unique model. Furthermore, this alternative processing accounts for parallel processing in which the reader uses more than one source to manufacture the concrete meaning the writer wants to transmit through a given text. That is to say, the reader makes use of both lower-levels of information (text-based information) and higher-levels of information, or so called inside the head information, to interpret the messages. Thus, in this sort of reading approach, thinking and prediction take place at an early stage which is not the case in the bottom-up model in which thinking comes at the end of the process. To apply this kind of processing in reading, readers need to acquire extensive knowledge about many different disciplines. For this reason, Rumelhart(1977) relied namely on the laboratory study on fluent skilled readers. This empirical research showed the interaction between several sources of information (David, 1995, p.64). This includes letter identification, word semantic identification and activating schematic framework within which the text being read is presented. On the basis of the statement above, it is important to claim that the interactive model does not predict any presupposed direction for processing. But what is obvious in it is that the reader has to exploit all available sources of information: visual, orthographic, lexical, semantic, syntactic and schematic.

III. READING COMPREHENSION TEACHING STRATEGIES

Reading comprehension teaching strategies are methods that are used to help students overcome reading difficulties and become more proficient readers with the ability to apply a set of effective and research-proven reading strategies to increase their understanding and thinking and to monitor and repair their own comprehension . In comprehension strategies instructions, teachers, explicitly teach comprehension strategies and reading skills through mental modeling, scaffolding, thinking aloud, and application. By learning comprehension strategies most readers know how to use certain skills and approaches to make a text more comprehensible, meaningful and memorable. In the historical context, comprehension strategy instruction is referred to as reading comprehension strategies. According to Elder and Finkbainer (as cited in Cohen &Macnamara, 2007), reading comprehension strategies are defined as consciously chosen actions by readers in relation to levels of reading process that facilitate effective processing. Various taxonomies for reading strategies have been defined. For instance, Block (1986) divided this term into general and local reading strategies. In this taxonomy, general strategies referred to strategies that are used to monitor the process of reading comprehension, e.g.: using background knowledge, focusing on main ideas and recognizing text structure. Whereas local strategies deal with linguistic units of reading such as word level, meaning, sentences, structure and textual units. Reading comprehension strategies are divided into three types: pre-reading strategies, while- reading, and post-reading strategies. All these strategies are used at once before and after reading any text. The aim of these strategies is to make the text comprehensible for the learner.

3.1 Pre-reading teaching stage

In this stage, the teacher is required to brainstorm learners' ideas about a given reading topic the reading to activate the reader's schemata regarding the background knowledge they already have. The main aim of this presentational stage is to motivate and prepare learners for the reading activity. Correspondingly, Ringler and Weber (1984) labelled "reading activities as 'enabling activities' because they provide a reader with the necessary background to organize activity and to comprehend the material" (p. 70). These experiences involve understanding the purpose of reading. In these activities, the reader uses some strategies like prediction and anticipation to make him anticipate what the text is about and predict the main idea of it.

3.2 While-reading teaching stage

This stage is similar stage but the reading rubrics at this stage are used while reading. The purpose of these rubrics and techniques is to encourage the reader to compare what he/she predicts at the beginning and make sure if the guessing is correct or not by using some strategies such skimming and scanning. She/he skims to get general ideas, and then he/she scans to find the correct answers. Also, he/she may use the dictionary or the glossary whenever he comes across difficult words. The aim of these strategies is to make the learner move from the general to the specific, and constructs his own knowledge. Postav(1984) recommended that the teacher asks students to underline the main ideas and supporting facts. He suggests that the teacher implements this idea first by giving them the reading that has been already underlined. Students may use the story map techniques through

which they learn to show important relationship in the reading process by putting main the ideas, events and characters in adjoining circles as Retz (1985) suggested.

3.3 Post-readingteaching stage

In this stage,learners are encouragedto apply a set of strategies or techniques after they finish reading to draw conclusions of what they have learned. The first step in this process is to clarify the meaning of any unclear passage and their relationship to the author's overall message. Here some questions are required so that students can express their ideas freely. During post reading stage, students have a chance to have some fun participating in communication while increasing their facility to use the reading to communicate.

Comprehension is the main purpose of reading, so some strategies are needed to obtain the intended meaning. Being aware of reading comprehension strategies will make students become effective readers thanks to cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective processes.

3.4 Challenges in Reading Comprehension

Many researchers have conducted a large number of studies about reading comprehension difficulties among students. For instance, Chawwang (2008) carried out a research about English reading among Thai EFL learners. The findings of the study revealed that most of the students face difficulties in reading English texts. More importantly, inadequate vocabulary knowledge was identified as one of the main issues (Gunning, 2002). In essence, having enough vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in understanding complex reading materials such as textbooks, particularly those containing technical expressions (Carlisle, 2000; Qian, 2002). This is because students with poor vocabulary knowledge face difficulties in understanding technical words such as superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, or words with multiple connotations (Nuttall, 2000; Carlisle, 2000; Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2008).

Other comprehension difficulties could be due to deficiencies in language or cognitive processes. Moreover,motivation and concentration are factors that might affect comprehension, since particular group of readers could understand simple words or expressions, but face difficulty in understanding longer sentences (Laing & Kamhi, 2002; Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The subjects are 100 Moroccan high school students of first year baccalaureate. These subjects include males and females. The main reason on which the subjects are selected is their availability, which means that all these subjects have been conveniently selected. The data gathering instrument used in the process of collecting the data is questionnaire. Concerning the form, the questionnaire adopted consists of one type of questions. It is a combination of multiple-choice questions, which give the target sample the possibilities to express their ideas freely. In fact, this type is very valid since it makes the target sample limits the answers to the points that are meant to be analysed in the research.

Research questions

1. Do High School Students employ variety of Reading Comprehension Strategies while reading?
2. How do Moroccan high school learners read?
3. Are they aware of the reading strategies?
4. Do they apply those strategies while reading?
5. How can they become good EFL readers?
7. What are the main difficulties that High School learners encounter?
8. Do these obstacles hinder their understanding of reading texts?

Looking for answers of the aforementioned questions, therefore, can be a considerable contribution to the understanding of the particularities and mechanisms of the teaching and learning enterprise. As the findings may reveal unnoticed patterns of students' reading behavior in EFL classrooms that they are supposed to use in bringing positive change to their way of reading and the outcomes can be helpful in developing improved programs for second language readers and overcoming the obstacles that hinder their reading process.

Analysis and discussion

The purpose of this section was an attempt to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire which was administered to 100 high school students (first year). The obtained results were submitted to an SPSS program to compute each question. The present study also tried to discuss these results. In other words, it attempted to provide some answers to questions that were raised earlier.

Question 1: Before reading any text what do you do?

As indicated in Table 1, the number of students who said that they read the title of any text and they draw inferences from it before reading represents 95%, while 5% represents students who do not use this strategy. This means that this strategy has a crucial importance in making the process of reading easier and effective. Reading the title, for example, enables the readers to list some the predictable information about a given text. On the other hand, skipping the title may cause problems to students and partially hinders their understanding.

Table1: I read the title and I draw inferences from it

I read the title and I draw inferences from it		frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	95	95,0	95,0	95,0
	No	5	5,0	5,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

According to the data presented in the table below, 95% of the informants said that they look for pictures before reading any given text, while 5% do not. The majority of informants realize the significance of looking for pictures in the text. That is to say, pictures and drawings help the reader to illicit information from the text and activate his or her schemata (background knowledge).

Table2: I look for pictures

I look for pictures		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	65	65,0	65,0	65,0
	No	35	35,0	35,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

As suggested in Table 3, predicting what the passages might be about was the answer of 70%, while 30% was the answer of the rest. This leads us to say that this strategy permits the readers to put some hypotheses (I doubt that students have this idea in mind) that will be confirmed or disconfirmed while reading the material. Thus, the usefulness of this strategy is evident since it encourages the reader not to fix eyes on print and to be productive.

Table 3: I predict what the passage might be about

Predict what the passage might be about		Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Yes	70	70,0	70,0	70,0
	No	30	30,0	30,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

As it can be seen from Table 4, 65% of the informants answered positively, whereas 30% responded negatively. Using general background knowledge is efficient and effective strategy because it involves the reader actively in the reading process and it develops his/her critical thinking. Misusing this technique can easily represent an impediment for readers.

Table 4: I ask myself what I already knew about the topic

Ask myself what I already knew about the topic		frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	65	65,0	65,0	65,0
	No	35	35,0	35,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

As suggested in the table below, 55% of first year students do not use all the strategies mentioned earlier before they start reading, while 45% of them do. As we can see, the majority prefer to use only one single strategy because, may be, they think that employing only one strategy is enough to reach understanding

Table5: I use all those strategies

I use all those strategies		frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid	Yes	45	45,0	45,0	45,0
	No	55	55,0	55,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

Question 2: what do you do while reading any text?

According to the data presented in Table 6, nearly all the respondents (95%) insisted on the importance of underlining and highlighting passages that seem relevant, while this strategy was not applied only by 5%. This method enables the readers to organise the reading by classifying and evaluating the information according to their significance.

Table 6: I underline and bracket passages that I find relevant or that seem important

underline and bracket passages that I find relevant or that seem important		frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Valid	Yes	95	95,0	95,0	95,0
	No	5	5,0	5,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

The results shown in Table 7 indicated that 65% of the respondents put question marks in the margins next to unclear passages and 35% did not. When they find difficulties in understanding passages, they put question marks so as to try to grasp them later.

Table 7: I put question marks in the margins next to unclear passages

put question marks in the margins next to unclear passages		frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	65	65,0	65,0	65,0
	No	35	35,0	35,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

It is clear from Table 8 that 60% of the participants did not make associations while reading, however, 40% of the informants make them. The majority of the respondents think that this strategy is not necessary in the reading process because it is not probably helpful in understanding the text being read. Actually, it is.

Table 8: I jot down associations

Jot down associations		frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	40	40,0	40,0	40,0
	No	60	60,0	60,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

The data illustrated in Table 9 indicated that only 30% of the informants use all strategies, whereas 70% do not adopt all the strategies stated above while reading as they believe that using all these strategies is not necessary to gain understanding.

Table 9: I use all of them

I use all of them		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	30	30,0	30,0	30,0
	No	70	70,0	70,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

Question 3: what do you do when you come across a word you do not understand?

It is clear, from Table 10, that looking for clues and trying to figure them out is used by 75% of the respondents, whereas 25% of them do not. The readers rely on using the clues to guess unclear structures and words without resorting to dictionary and glossary every time. Applying this strategy helps the readers to save time and effort.

Table10: I look for clues and I try to figure them out

look for clues and I try to figure them out		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	75	75,0	75,0	75,0
	No	25	25,0	25,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

The results mentioned inTable 11 demonstrated that 60% of the informants skip unfamiliar words and guess their meaning from the remaining words in a sentence or word cognates; in contrast, 40% do not rely on this strategy. This approach enables the readers to develop the ability to recognise and to understand ambiguous words from the context in which they occur.

Table 11: I skip unfamiliar words and I guess their meaning

skip unfamiliar words and I guess their meaning		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	60	60,0	60,0	60,0
	No	40	40,0	40,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

As shown in Table 12, the results revealed that 45% of the informants skip words that do not hinder the meaning of the reading text, whereas 55% of the participants do not skip any word.

Table 12: I skip words that do not hinder the meaning

skip words that do not hinder the meaning		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	45	45,0	45,0	45,0
	No	55	55,0	55,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

It is obvious, Table 13, that most of the informants do not employ all these strategies while reading as the percentage indicates (75%), while 25% of them do. As we can see, the most respondents agreed that using

all these strategies is not necessary because through employing only one strategy, they can manage to achieve their ultimate goal which is the comprehension of that text

Table 13: I use all of them

Use all of them (the above)		frequency	Per cent	Valid percent	Cumulative per cent
Valid	Yes	25	25,0	25,0	25,0
	No	75	75,0	75,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

Question 4: when you come to a part of text you don't understand, what do you do?

The results from Table 14 suggested that all informants' answers were positive. 100% of them read the title when they get difficulties in understanding as part of the text being read. There is no doubt that the subjects find this strategy useful because it helps them comprehend the unclear passages that they have not understand earlier.

Table14: I read it again

Read it again		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	100	100,0	100,0	100,0

The data from Table 14 demonstrated here showed that only 10% of the informants keep reading when they do not understand a passage, while 90% do not rely on this strategy. It was crystal clear that the majority of students believe that this strategy is not useful because in keeping reading the reader will probably not be able to understand the content so the goal of the reading will not be achieved which is presented in comprehending the text

Table 14: I just keep reading

Just keep reading		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	10	10,0	10,0	10,0
	No	90	90,0	90,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

It is obvious that only 5% of the informants use all the strategies while reading, whereas 95% of them do no. The majority of the subjects stick only to one because they believe, probably, that using one specific strategy is enough to guarantee an effective reading process.

Table 15: I do use them all

I do use them all		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	5	5,0	5,0	5,0
	No	95	95,0	95,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

Question 5: After you finish reading, what do you do?

As suggested in Table 16, 75% of the respondents think about what they have read, while 25% do not employ this strategy. Think about what the readers have read help them recognize and check to what extent they understood the material they have read. By doing this they can evaluate the successfulness of the reading process and whether they accomplish the task.

Table 16: I think about what I have read

I think about what I have read		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	75	75,0	75,0	75,0
	No	25	25,0	25,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

As presented in Table 17, the majority of the respondents (85%) insisted on the importance of using pieces of information they have learnt in other language skills, while 15% of them admitted that they do not profit from this obtained knowledge. The readers who responded positively believe that the input they have received from reading is going to help them in other tasks since they can use that knowledge in other language skills. For example, they might use those learnt information in their writings or in their speaking, when the topic of writing or of the conversation correspond to that they have read before.

Table 17: I use this piece of information that I have learnt in other language skills.

use this piece of information that I have learnt in other language skills		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	85	85,0	85,0	85,0
	No	15	15,0	15,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

The data presented in Table 18 indicated that 70% of informants compared what they have just learnt with what they have already known, while 30% do not use this strategy in their reading process. More than half of our subjects rely on this strategy, which makes them good readers because they are able, to some extent, to question and to think critically of the knowledge they have processed from reading.

Table 18: I compare what I have just read with what I have already knew

compare what I have just read with what I have already knew		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	70	70,0	70,0	70,0
	No	30	30,0	30,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

The obtained data, Table 19, showed that 20% of the informants use all these strategies at once, while 80% of them do not use the whole strategies at once. They choose only one strategy to use it in post reading activities and it helps students to achieve a successful reading process. However, the rest of the readers employ all these strategies so as to benefit from them.

Table 19 :I use them all

Use them all		frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	20	20,0	20,0	20,0
	No	80	80,0	80,0	100,0
Total		100	100,0	100,0	

V. CONCLUSION

A discussion and an interpretation of the findings elicited through the SPSS program reveal many interesting points. First, it seems that first year baccalaureate students use a variety of reading strategies, which facilitate the reading process for them. Second, from the results obtained from the questionnaire one can notice that students are aware of _even if there is no clear cut understanding to what extent they are aware and what is there level of awareness_ the importance of the reading strategies that can help them improve their reading skill. However, they sometimes skip or do not give much attention to some strategies that can help them easily grasp the meaning of a given text.

This research is an attempt to identify the reading strategies used by first year baccalaureate students with the aim of rectifying the difficulties that they face in the reading process. Several important findings have been obtained, namely the type of reading strategies that high school students employ in reading that can enable them to make the reading process easier and effective. Moreover, they help readers to understand the text better. Stressing the fact that reading strategies are the tools that make students good readers. This research also gives answers to the questions that have been posed from the very beginning. From the findings we can draw many conclusions such as: learners use a variety of learning strategies; reading strategies are of great importance. Still, there is not a clear-cut answer if the students are really aware of these strategies (of course the question here is relative and does not apply to all students) and if they apply them while reading. Teachers also are encouraged to help learners be systematic readers by imposing them to the most important reading strategies. As for the challenges, it is worth mentioning that lack of enough vocabulary repertoire is identified as essential impediment students encounter while reading. The findings of this study corroborate with other researches such as Nuttall, 2000; Carlisle, 2000; Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2008; and Chwwang, 2008.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

There is no doubt that the results of this study are surely very interesting as far as reading in a second or foreign language is concerned. Reading strategies are of great importance to second language (SLL) learners. They are effective tools for making reading process easier and effective because they help students to have a general idea of what the text is going to be about. That enables them to understand the text better and they can enhance students' critical thinking since they are able to distinguish between what is essential and non-essential in the text. Therefore, SL students should be aware of the importance of reading strategies and the need to develop and to adopt these kinds of strategies to overcome any kind of difficulties that they may encounter during the reading process.

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