

READING PROFICIENCY LEVEL: A CASE OF ARAB STUDENTS IN THE TERTIARY EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Concern over below standards in reading is evident even in the college level. This concern has become a problem among the Arabic learners of English in the tertiary EFL classrooms as observed by the English teachers and the researchers. Poor English reading comprehension is evident in classrooms where English is used as a medium of instruction. Thus, this descriptive research was conducted with the primary objective of determining the reading comprehension skill and the proficiency level of Arab students. This has been a progressive initiative to elevate students' reading performance – and this is to find out their level of reading competency in terms of literal comprehension, interpretative comprehension and vocabulary skill. The researcher noted that most Arab students are experiencing difficulty in reading comprehension (particularly interpretative comprehension) and word meaning in language classes that require intensive reading comprehension and other communication activities like speaking, writing, listening and analyzing. This also prompted the researchers to explore possible means to improve the reading ability of the Arab students through an effective remedial program or a strategy intervention program in reading skill development to effect on the academic performance of the Arab students and other non-Arab learners.

Keywords: Reading, Proficiency Level, Reading Skill Development, EFL Classroom.

INTRODUCTION

The current interest of researches in English as a foreign language has focused on reading ability or reading proficiency and the reading techniques or strategies that greatly influence the development of student academic performance (Singhal 2001). Reading proficiency and reading techniques are of interest for what they reveal about the way the readers interact, as well as how they relate, with the written text. Knowledge of the students' reading proficiency and competence helps language teachers to determine what teaching and learning tools to select to optimize learning. As reading is a complex or a multifaceted process, educators from various disciplines have attempted to define reading in different ways. (Leipzig 2008; Foertch 1998). Despite the plurality of definitions, they may not really have diverged much; each may have simply focused on a particular component of the reading process, and that however, varied the definitions may be, commonalities remain among them. Reading involves the use of the code that is interpreted for the meaning. Harste (2006) revealed, so crucial is the ability to receive swiftly and accurately the message of any printed materials. There are a considerable number of writings in reading deficiencies. According to Shehadeh (2002), such deficient in any of the four language areas: listening, speaking, reading and

writing – it is reading with understanding that is always considered accountable for the rest. Poor reading proficiency was a problem for many students due to many reasons. Hellekjaer (2009) revealed that the main problems encountered by students were unfamiliar vocabulary and slow reading, while extracurricular readers and respondents who were able to guess word meaning from context had higher reading scores. He emphasized, as per assessment, there was poor language problem for many of the respondents, to the extent that they fell below the linguistic threshold level. Reading and vocabulary to Fengning (2002) are strongly connected. As the person improves his skills in one, he improves his skills in the other. An individual with the richest and most vocabulary however, can read more complicated and varied sources of information easily). He elaborated that enlarging the learner's vocabulary has been one of the objectives of English reading class. Incidentally, Pallock and Brown (2000) said, that the teacher is the key to a successful reading program. She is a critical factor in the variability of performance among readers.

The program to become successful should have efficient reading teachers who have received specialized training in this particular field of teaching. It is the interpretative reading ability of the teacher that gives meaning to the essence of the reader's task. She should have the creative talent to stimulate interest by producing good learning environments that are pleasant and relaxing. She should be perceptive in diagnosing reading difficulties and in choosing appropriate materials for effective instruction. The researcher believes that reading is a very important discipline as students will profit most from the reading materials. The reading proficiency level of selected Arab students should be known so that proper measures may be taken by the researcher who conducted this action research.

Statement of the problem

This research aimed to determine the reading proficiency level of selected Arab students who were officially enrolled in the English classes. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the profile of the selected Arab college students in terms of college enrolled in and high school attended/graduated from?; (2) What is the reading proficiency level of the selected Arab college students with regards to literal comprehension, interpretative comprehension and vocabulary skills? (3) Is there a significant difference in the reading proficiency of the selected Arab students as classified according to college enrolled in and high school graduated from? (4) What intervention reading program could be proposed to improve the reading competency of the students? Based on the aforementioned problems, the following hypothesis was advanced: There is no significant difference in the reading ability of the Arab students in terms of college enrolled in and the secondary schools attended or graduated from.

The Research Paradigm

The conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1 below

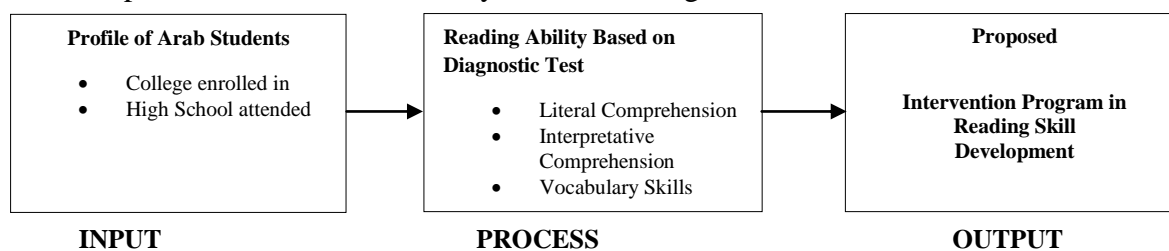


Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study using the Input-Process-Output Approach

LITERATURE REVIEW

Today, more than ever, the reading teacher is confronted with the need to teach reading in English with greater skill. As Harste (2006) revealed, so crucial are the ability to receive swiftly and accurately the message of any printed materials. In case of Arab graduates, this need is even greater as evidences show that the quality of the graduates has deteriorated both in private and public schools. Therefore, the training of these students to become proficient and skillful readers has become a high priority concern among people involved in the educational system. The researcher considers reading as one of the most important basic skills, along with others skills like listening, speaking, writing and thinking, which the learners need to learn intensely, to develop competently and to realize its importance in the accomplishment of their life's goal. Since reading is a complex process, it requires learner's ability to recognize words, comprehend details and enhance his fluency and motivation.

Dr. Rita Dunn (2002) emphasized that students are not failing because of the curriculum. Students could learn any subject when they are taught with methods and approaches to develop their reading skill. With this contention, the researcher observed that one of the contributing factors to low academic performances or high academic failures is the teaching style and the method used by the teacher to impart knowledge. There are other factors why students may not learn: 1. Level of preparedness for the lesson; 2. Degree of their interest or motivation; 3. Personal worries or problems (whether physical, mental, emotional or financial); 4. Bias against the teachers; 5. Lack of appreciation for the opportunity to get an education; and 6. Teacher's skills and command of the lessons.

The Nature and Psychology of Reading

Reading as a receptive skill brings the reader into a psychological experience that involves creative and productive processes of meaning construction. In this activity, the reader does not simply look at the structural elements that make up the reading passage because they are not merely strings of sentences that can be studied through purely linguistic methods, but they could also have semantic, lexical and visual aspects. According to Leipzig, reading is a multifaceted process that involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. She said these four processes are complex, and each is important in learning. For James Russell Lowell (2003), reading is the key which admits humankind to the world of thought, fancy and imagination; enabling them to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all times. Reading means many things to many people, expanding their horizons and making it possible for them to partake of the human beings' accumulated experiences and achievement through the ages. Bloomfield and Fries (2001) viewed reading as essentially a decoding process, where the learner has to master the printed code of a spoken language. Essentially, they see it as an association of speech sounds with appropriate reading symbols. They also believed that it is important that in the teaching of reading, materials are confined to what the learner has already learned orally, as speaking and listening are also important aspects in developing reading.

Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension

The relationship of vocabulary to comprehension seems to be undisputable. Students, who cannot understand the words, cannot possibly understand text. However, because vocabulary and comprehension are highly correlated does not necessarily mean that improving vocabulary increase comprehension. Bloomfield and Fries (2001) provided two reasons for

this predicament: most instruction fails to provide the in-depth knowledge necessary for improved comprehension; and, readers need not know every word to understand a passage. Many readers become quite skilled at making educative guesses. Therefore, the challenge is to determine what kind of vocabulary instruction will improve reading comprehension. As a result, as explained by De Boor (2002), reading has become the focus because it is a tool of learning. It is a series of mental processes involving a variety of activities that differ in significant aspects. It is not only literal but also inferential interpretation and critical reaction. Reading and vocabulary to Fengning (2002) are strongly connected. As the person improves his skills in one, he improves his skills in the other. An individual with the richest and most vocabulary however, can read more complicated and varied sources of information easily).

He elaborated that enlarging the learner's vocabulary has been one of the objectives of English reading class. Incidentally, Pallock and Brown (2000) said, that the teacher is the key to a successful reading program. She is a critical factor in the variability of performance among readers. However, according to McNeil (2005), comprehension processes were much more common when teachers asked, "What did you learn, that is so important that you want to remember it always? Rather than, 'What did you read that you should remember for a test?'" McNeil remarked that students spontaneously use comprehension strategies to develop deep meanings from text. On the other hand, Burns, Roe and Ross said, "What the reading students do should be purposeful, because those who read with a purpose tend to comprehend what they read better than those who have no purpose".

Some Observations on Reading Skills

English (2004), in his research on strategy and reading proficiency, discussed that based on various models of reading processes and factors affecting L2 literacy, "skilled readers possess metacognitive awareness of how, when and with what frequency to use a combination of strategies, while at the same time exhibiting fluent, automatic processing skills." He also pointed out that "less successful readers in contrast, tend to be those who are unaware of strategy use and use predominantly bottom-up process." Significantly, he said that "many L2 readers at tertiary level are currently at risk of not being able to achieve attainable goals due in part to the lack of awareness of their own language proficiency skills and low self-esteem." Poor language proficiency was a problem for many students due to many reasons. Hellekjaer (2009), from the University of Oslo, Norway, in his study titled *Academic English Reading Proficiency at the University Level: A Norwegian Case Study*, revealed that out of 578 university students, about 30% of the respondents had serious difficulties in reading English, while an additional 44% found it more difficult that reading in their first language. According to her, the main problems encountered by students were unfamiliar vocabulary and slow reading, while extracurricular readers and respondents who were able to guess word meaning from context had higher reading scores. He emphasized, as per assessment, there was poor language problem for many of the respondents, to the extent that they fell below the linguistic threshold level.

Extent of Reading Ranges

The extent of reading range refers to the degree or limit to which one's effort in reading is extended. This includes intensive reading, in which one requires greater effort and concentration in the reading process that ultimately calls for the applications of vocabulary and comprehension skills. This also involves creative study, demands earnest disposition and practical intent as in reading an editorial, a reaction paper, a book review, a case or an

experimental study. Another is extensive reading that covers the process of recreatory reading in which a reader enjoys in leisure reading of stories and entertaining information casually from newspapers, magazines, short stories or novels. It is extensive in the sense that the reading act is done in a quick or fast process as much as quantifiably possible at a given time with the desired pep and pleasure. Wiener (2001) emphasized that a student's success in reading is evaluated by the ability and extent of understanding the content that is being read. He asserted, too that comprehension and learning area are one of the same processes, and that this process is one in which new experiences are associated with what student already knows or believes. In his investigation, two findings support beliefs about the need for directed teaching of reading in the early years: those adults who value reading had the reading habit established in early childhood and their initial stimulus to reading came through the efforts of another person rather than as a self-initiated activity. Douglas (2000) maintained that the emphasis of reading skills, together with the realization, is a factor towards success in all subjects. It further emphasized the responsibility of teachers to all subjects for them to start to read the materials of their own areas and increase comprehension through the development of specific vocabularies.

He further pointed out that reading is a skill without which a student could not take advantage of information carried by books, magazines and newspapers. Being able to read allows a person to have vicarious experiences. Among the reading skills, Heitman (2001) mentioned pre-requisites to critical reading, as follows: the ability to see the relationship between one part of reading materials, and another, and of all parts of the whole; and, the ability to adjust to the author's organizational pattern. Another well-known writer of how-to-read better books, Lewis (2004), devoted practically one fourth of the book or 7 out of 32 chapters showing how a reader could train himself to recognize an author's pattern of thinking. The captions of these seven chapters include: discovering an author's pattern of thinking, practice in discovering pattern, how analysis brings pattern into bold relief, further practice in synthesizing as you read, quick exercises in analyzing and synthesizing, and comprehension clues.

Effective Strategy and Tailored Reading Program

Sullivan (2003) emphasized that a reading program should be tailored for the individual students, and for practical purposes, the program should be adaptable – it should meet the reading needs of the individual as well as of the group of students in a class. He added too, that in the average classroom, the students could belong to different reading levels. In a college freshmen class for instance, some may have the reading level of third or fourth year high school while others may have a reading level of junior or senior college students, or even of professionals with a college degree. Yet all the students use the same textbooks and work on the same activities. How does the teacher here meet the needs of her individual students? This is now the concern of the present study. The researchers were showered by a little vision on how to explore with the issue. Along this line, Frank (2000) suggested that teachers should be strategist in reading instruction and do the following to teach their students to become strategic readers: provide assistance during reading, instead of suggesting a reading procedure or assessing the students' progress to help the student to know how he knows; make conscious connections from previous to future learning; emphasize the context in which new skills will be applied; make invisible cognitive skills tangible, and respond to student's confusion with advice about how to think strategically. In this regard, Sheng (2000) together with Sullivan (2003), shared similar views on how to come up with an effective reading program. They recognized the advantages of a cognitive model for teaching reading

comprehension, such as: he stated that the model is applicable at various skill levels and meets different needs; that the model can be used in teaching literal meaning and concrete facts or deep structure meaning and literature appreciation; the model can also be used by the students to comprehend the text from different perspectives and to understand the implication of the content. More likely, the model enables the students to analyze and summarize the text as well as to distinguish arguments from supporting details. This even enhances students' memorization and reading speed. He, too remarked on this quotation that says, "To read well, you need a strong vocabulary. To build a strong vocabulary, you need to read well." For him, these sentences are a paradox – that is, they seem to express opposite points, but, nevertheless, are both true. Together, the sentences state the challenge facing anyone, trying to improve reading skills. To read confidently, a reader should have known many words, one must have known on how to figure out the meanings for new words that he discovers as he reads. The best way to expand one's knowledge of words is to read often with varied content areas.

Reading Proficiency and Academic Achievement

The effects of language reading in the academic achievement have also been emphasized in some researches that were conducted in the Arab world and other parts of the world. These published and unpublished papers support the principles that proficiency in reading is significant in the academic achievement of the learners. On the research titled A Survey on the Relational Between English Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement of Iranian EFL Students, published in Asian EFL Journal, which aimed to examine the strength of the relationship between English language proficiency and the academic achievement of the Iranian EFL students, Maleki and Zangani (2007) had found that there was a significant connection between English language proficiency and achievement in English reading, speaking and writing subjects. Using a good number of students as sample respondents of the study, the researchers had discovered, based on the result of the correlation between English proficiency and academic achievements using the students GPA, that as English proficiency increases, so does the academic success. However, the researchers of this research also indicated that there was a logical note that English proficiency influences scores on academic achievement; they said that the findings revealed that goals of educating language learners to be proficient have not been fulfilled.

They quoted Stern (1992) as saying, "the proficiency goals include general competence, mastery of the four skills, or mastery of specific language behaviors." They concluded that English language proficiency is a good indicator and predictor of academic achievement for those students who are majoring English. They recommended that the deficiency of the learners is due to non-standardized university entrance screening tests that need to be corrected. They also said that general English should be given special attention at university level not only for EFL students, but also for students majoring in other fields. To Shehadeh (2002), reading proficiency is closely related to scholastic success. The author said that when students do not comprehend in reading, they will usually do one of three things: continue to pass their eyes over the page while thinking of other things; give up or find something else to do; or, search for ways to understand the text. Shehadeh also emphasized that some students will instinctively reread, ask someone for help, or turn to resource, such as dictionary or clarification. Others need help to stay on tract; they need someone nudging them into making connections to other information into using context and clues or other strategies. Sometimes this is because they haven't had enough exposure to the process of reading. This concept is true because students will have adequate time to fully ingest new learning and ideas without

being weighed down by the fast learners. Students who could not easily “catch up” to the things taught in a single sitting could have more time to understand and learn the lesson at hand. Countless studies and researches have been conducted along the importance of reading program, including the print-out obstacles, problems and difficulties of both the teacher of reading and the student as a learner. Although studies continue to be undertaken by concerned individuals, there still a need to improve instructions in the country. Rafenut’s (2001) study was significantly related to the present investigation because comprehension skills are a part of word attack skills which is one of the basic reading concerns to be tested here. This proves that reading is an individual process because students differ in their capacities to learn including their learning rates. These factors constitute a person’s input in reading and determine the amount and quality of information he gets from the printed page. Studies proved that comprehension is the most important consideration in reading that was exactly in consonance with the present study of developing an integrated and remedial program to enhance the comprehension level that the researcher believes of being so important.

On the other hand, Quilala’s (2001) and Capito’s (2003) studies have direct bearing in the present study? They both proposed solutions to the reading maladies of the first year college students for them to maximize their learning potentials as they move through the higher curriculum years. All the studies presented emphasized that continuous evaluation of progress is important part of learning to read. Evaluation encompasses the content as well as the method used by a student or a group. Studies proved that it is not enough to be a skillful reader, if one never reads; it is just like a thrash. The studies reviewed teach every learned individual to spare time to go to the library and settle down with a good book. If so, they are building reading habits and interest in books that could last for a lifetime. The related literature and studies, both published and unpublished, gave the researcher insights on the richness of the subject under study. The functional approaches in the classroom, and the problems encountered by the researchers, teachers, students and even the educational institutions regarding the upliftment of its quality education helped the investigator to pursue a study of proposing a strategy intervention or tutorial program for the students to respond to its mission, that is, to provide innovative, relevant and quality education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive method of research to determine the pattern of characteristics of variables in particular instances of events. This study also was a combination of quantitative and qualitative design since it measured and described the proficiency level of the respondents. The respondents of the study were the 155 students selected from English language classes. The purposive sampling was used. The researcher used the Developmental Tests in Reading by Bernardez (2007) and Villamin (2000) as cited in their Developmental Reading books and utilized in the unpublished research by Ilagan & Perez (2009). The researcher modified some of the contents of the test materials in light of the study’s research locale or environment. The modified test aimed to determine the reading proficiency level of the selected college Arab students. Part I of the instrument centered on the Profile of the Respondents which includes the college they were enrolled in and the secondary schools where they graduated from. Part II dealt with reading proficiency level based on the Literal Comprehension while Part III dealt with proficiency level measured through the respondents’ Interpretative Comprehension. Part IV of the questionnaire focused on Vocabulary. Validated copies of the questionnaire were personally distributed to all respondents. Guidelines were provided. Retrieval of the questionnaire was done personally by the researcher and the

subject teachers. Students were instructed to answer the questionnaire under a time limit. The following were used to interpret the results of the reading proficiency of the students of Arab students: For indicators with ten scores: 1-3 (Not Proficient); 4-6 (Fairly Proficient); 7-8 (Proficient); 9-10 (Very Proficient). For indicators with five scores: 1-2 (Not Proficient); 3 (Fairly Proficient); 4 (Proficient); 5 (Very Proficient). The coding and tabulating of the data were done by the researcher. The final data were then again dragged into the computer using the program tools; they were received, analyzed and interpreted with the support of competent statistician. To determine the profile of the respondents and the reading proficiency in different aspects, Percentage Distribution/Ranking was used. To assess the significant difference in the reading deficiencies when classified according to college /department enrolled in, Independent Sample T-Test was utilized. To determine the difference in the reading deficiencies when grouped according to high school where the respondents graduated, ANOVA and Lavene's Test was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On Literal Comprehension

Table 1
Reading Proficiency Level of the Arab Students
With Regards to Literal Comprehension

Literal Comprehension		Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Noting Details	Public	6.34	Fairly Proficient
	Private	7.11	Proficient
Identifying Referent	Public	3.21	Fairly Proficient
	Private	2.72	Fairly Proficient
Sequencing	Public	2.62	Fairly Proficient
	Private	2.26	Not Proficient

As revealed clearly, the data in the table that the Arab students from public are fairly proficient in Noting Details as evidenced by the obtained mean score of 6.34 while those who graduate from private are proficient as indicated by the mean score of 7.11. It only reveals that the students know factual reading comprehension. They could directly remember items within the passage. The result tells that. They knew that after reading, they are supposed to recall important details in the passage. Since the Arab students were proficient in Noting Details, they must be truly aware that in classroom reading, details asked for are usually those related to the central idea of the selection. This implies that in every reading, students are fully cognizant that the purpose of reading is to grasp the central theme. The students were Fairly Proficient in terms of Identifying Referent, as proved by the mean scores of score of 3.21 and 2.72, public and private graduates respectively. These previewed that students had hard times to recall details openly found in the selections. The data also reveal that the Arab students from private school were Not Proficient in Sequencing as indicated by mean score of 2.26 while those who graduated from public was fairly proficient. Here, student's narrative skill in reading comprehension is expected. He must be able to the recall the details of the event so he could sequence the facts. Taking the total average mean, 4.04, the data proved that the Arab students still lack sequencing skill in reading. This ability is so vital since it is a requirement to making inferences, summarizing and outlining. The results of

this present investigation are supported by (Frank, 2006; Bloomfield and Fries, 2001; McNeil 2005; Harste, 2006, Barnes, 2001 and Shehadeh 2002).

On Interpretative Comprehension

Table 2
Reading Proficiency Level of the Arab College Students
With Regards to Interpretative Comprehension

Interpretative Comprehension		Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Inferring	Public	1.75	Not Proficient
	Private	1.55	Not Proficient
Drawing Conclusion	Public	1.93	Not Proficient
	Private	2.11	Not Proficient
Making Comparisons	Public	2.00	Not Proficient
	Private	2.00	Not Proficient
Recognizing Feeling	Public	1.72	Not Proficient
	Private	1.74	Not Proficient
Recognizing Falsity	Public	2.27	Not Proficient
	Private	1.91	Not Proficient
Giving Titles	Public	0.89	Not Proficient
	Private	0.60	Not Proficient
Sensing Character Traits	Public	1.42	Not Proficient
	Private	1.02	Not Proficient

As revealed in Table 2, Arab students were Not Proficient too in Inferring as evidenced by the obtained mean scores of 1.75 and 1.55 for both private and public graduates respectively. The students were not able to manifest a kind of understanding so that they could utilize some clues, link them to their own experiences and arrived at the “new” desired information. As to Drawing Conclusions, Arab students obtained mean scores of 1.75 and 1.55. This means that still, they were considered Not Proficient, as given by the result of data analysis. In this task the respondents were not able to generalize the important elements within a passage, and also considered related to one another for them to be combined into a principle, generalization or conclusion. In the skill of Making Comparison and Relating Cause and Effect, the Arab students obtained mean scores of 2.0, verbally interpreted as Not Proficient also.

Recognizing Falsity, the skill necessary for monitoring reading and study activities, obtained a mean scores of 2.27 and 1.91 for both public and private graduates respectively, verbally interpreted as Not Proficient, too. This indicates that the students have weaknesses in interpretative reading comprehension. Hence, there is a need of possible intervention on interpretative comprehension. As explained by Smith (2005) interpretative comprehension is a kind of understanding ideas extracted from implicit information in the text. Understanding as cleared by him is inferential because the facts are not stated; instead, the reader has to “read between the lines”. When a *wh* question cannot be answered by facts directly stated, then the questions measure interpretative comprehension. These findings have been corroborated by other researches and theories that reading does not only for details or facts

but also understanding meaning of the context (Goodman, 1997; Blanton, 2001; English; 2004; and Fengning, 2002).

On Vocabulary Skills

Table 3 : Reading Proficiency Level of the First Year College Students With Regards to Vocabulary Skills

Vocabulary Skills		Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Context Clues	Public	4.11	Fairly Proficient
	Private	3.68	Fairly Proficient
Word Associations	Public	1.74	Not Proficient
	Private	1.13	Not Proficient
Multiple Meaning (Identifying Meaning1)	Public	1.19	Not Proficient
	Private	0.81	Not Proficient
Identifying Meaning2)	Public	1.42	Not Proficient
	Private	1.06	Not Proficient

Presented in the table is the reading proficiency of the Arab students with regards to vocabulary skills. The table shows that one of the vocabulary skills that the students should learn is getting the meaning of words through Context Clues. The students obtained an average mean score of 3.90 and verbally interpreted as Fairly Proficient for both public and private graduates. Word Association is another skill which obtained an average means score of 1.44 verbally interpreted as Not Proficient. In the Multiple Meanings skill, the students obtained an average mean score of 0.94, verbally interpreted as Not Proficient. The result was perhaps due to inability of the students to look at things as other people do. They might also fail to see them in new and different ways. They were not aware that a word has multiple meanings. Wealthy stock of words is an advantage to efficient reading. The more English words one knows the easier for him to understand reading passages. Therefore, one must have a comparatively wide vocabulary. He had to enrich himself with new words and novel expressions. Several authors supported the findings of the present study, (Fengning, 2002; Hellekjaer, 2009; Shehadeh 2002; and Chapman, 2004).

On the difference in the reading proficiency of the selected Arab students as classified according to high school graduated from

**Table 4
Test of Difference on the Level of Reading Proficiency (t-test)**

Indicators		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Literal Comprehension	Between Groups	162.925	2	81.463	5.025	.008*
	Within Groups	2431.911	150	16.213		
	Total	2594.837	152			
Interpretative Comprehension	Between Groups	115.577	2	57.789	1.584	.209
	Within Groups	5472.423	150	36.483		
	Total	5588.000	152			

Vocabulary Skills	Between Groups	34.378	2	17.189	.440	.645
	Within Groups	5863.518	150	39.090		
	Total	5897.895	152			

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Presented in the table is the test of difference on the level of reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their high school education. Indicators of their reading proficiency include literal comprehension, figurative comprehension and vocabulary skills. Levene's test for the equality of variances was used to determine the homogeneity of the scores. Using 0.05 level of significance, it was found out that there is a comparable proficiency level of the reading abilities of the respondents in terms of literal comprehension and vocabulary skills of the respondents: F values of 3.647 and 1.434 and p-values of .058 and .233; however, an incomparable proficiency is observed for the figurative comprehension: F value of 5.305 and a p-value of .023. On the basis of the Levene's test result, a t-test was employed in establishing the degree of difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents in terms of their reading proficiency. Using 0.05 level of significance, it was found out that there is a comparable reading proficiency of the respondents: t-values of .122, .992 and 1.755, and p-values of .903, .323 and .082, respectively. This means that there is no significant difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their high school education. Hence, this leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their high school education.

On the difference in the reading proficiency of the selected Arab students as classified according to college enrolled in

Table 5
Test of Difference on the Level of Reading Proficiency (ANOVA)

Indicators		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Literal Comprehension	Equal variances assumed	3.647	.058	.122	98.476	.903	.085	.694
	Equal variances not assumed							
Interpretative Comprehension	Equal variances assumed	5.305	.023*	.992	151	.323	1.054	1.063
	Equal variances not assumed							
Vocabulary Skills	Equal variances assumed	1.434	.233	1.755	104.085	.082	1.781	1.015
	Equal variances not assumed							

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Presented in the table is the test of difference on the level of reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to the colleges of their courses of studies. Indicators of

their reading proficiency include literal comprehension, figurative comprehension and vocabulary skills. One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in the analysis of the data gathered to conclude on the analysis of the hypothesis of the study: There is no significant difference on the level of reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their courses of studies. Using 0.05 level of significance, a comparable reading proficiency was determined in terms of their figurative comprehension and vocabulary skills as reflected by their F-values: 1.584 and .440, and p-values of .209 and .645, respectively. This means that no significant difference is established for the two indicators. This findings lead to the acceptance of the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the level of reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their courses of studies. On the other hand, literal comprehension yielded incomparable results was concluded: F-value of 5.025 and a p-value of .008, at 0.05 levels of significance. This means that a significant difference is established on the level of proficiency of the respondents leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents.

On Reading Intervention Program

In this research, a strategy intervention is proposed here for reading skill development. Plans were based on proven strategies of improving student's reading ability. Some of them were derived researcher's personal teaching experiences and from other previous studies. In this research, a strategy intervention is proposed here for reading skill development. Plans were based on proven strategies of improving student's reading ability. Some of them were derived researcher's personal teaching experiences and from other previous studies (Ilagan & Perez, 2009). Several authors supported the idea of intervention to improve student's reading comprehension skill (Sullivan, 2003; Frank, 2000; Sheng, 2000; and Singhal, 2001). The proposed remedial measure to improve the reading efficiency of the Arab students is as follows: STEP 1 Skill: Basic Sight Words; STEP 2 Skill: Using phonetic analysis: Association of sounds with consonants and vowels; STEP 3 Skill: Using structural analysis: identifying meaning units in words; STEP 4 Skill: Using contextual clues for word recognition and meaning; STEP 5 Skill: Vocabulary Building; STEP 6 Skill: Finding the main; STEP 7 Skill: Finding supporting details to the main idea; STEP 8 Skill: Classifying and organizing facts; STEP 9 Skill: Inferring meanings; STEP 10 Skill: Following directions; STEP 11 Skill: Using Parts of a Book; STEP 12 Skill: Using the dictionary; STEP 13 Skill: Using the Encyclopedia, Atlas, Atlas, Almanac, Book of Facts, and other Reference Books.

CONCLUSIONS

The respondents have been found fairly competent in noting details, identifying referent and sequencing as revealed in the data; hence, they are proficient in the literal comprehension skill. Being capable in reading ensures students to broaden his horizon of learning in terms of vocabulary, novel expression and rich ideas. They would also open the opportunity to polish their skill in interpretation and analysis. The respondents as revealed in the data were not proficient in the skills of interpretative comprehension which includes inferring, drawing conclusion, making comparisons, recognizing feeling, recognizing falsity, giving titles and sensing character traits. Hence, the respondents had failed to generalize important elements within the passage, to note or recall specific instances and details in the selection, to decide whether the data presented are sufficient to warrant significant conclusion, and to give meaning to a written text. It is also concluded that students are not yet empowered with an increased awareness of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Generally, the respondents

had been found not proficient in vocabulary skill. The results manifested some difficulties and deficiencies in among the students. Hence, they would need to have more attention, focus and enhancement to improve their vocabulary. There is no significant difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their high school education and when grouped according to their college enrolled in. Hence, these results lead to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference on the reading proficiency of the respondents when grouped according to their high school education. Thus, this indicates that the teachers have been good factors to establish good and favorable atmosphere for reading among students. Selection of instructional reading materials had also been considered to improve reading competence of the students. Since there are prevailing problems in the reading comprehension and vocabulary among the students, an intervention program for reading skill development is desired.

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