

AN INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES WHEN TEACHING THE READING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

Reading is a complex process. The present study used a questionnaire to find out what features and activities a group of EFL instructors used to develop students' reading skill. A snowball sampling was used to distribute the questionnaire. Seventy-four instructors, from different educational contexts, responded. It was found that the most common aspects of reading teachers focused on are: building students' vocabulary 74(100%), exploiting students background knowledge 70(94.6%), using the PDP framework 68(91.9%), teaching their students reading strategies, 66(89.2%), teaching students ways to comprehend 64(86.5%), and providing students opportunities to read extensively 62(83.8%). The three areas which received less attention are: developing students' fluency 54(73%), building students' metacognitive skills 48(64.9%) and raising students' awareness of text structure and discourse organization 42(56.8%). To develop students' reading skill, instructors indicated using a range of activities—some of these activities seemed appropriate, some seemed inappropriate, and some were unclear. In light of these findings, it is recommended that EFL instructors should be offered training courses on a regular basis.

Keywords: Reading, Yemen, practices, activities.

INTRODUCTION

For academic and professional success, “many learners need to develop effective analytical processing skills, problem solving ability, and critical thinking skills through reading, and need to develop technical reading skills, rather than those used for literary reading” (Richards, 2015, p. 443). This, also, stands true in the Yemeni context, where effective reading in English is essential for success in most academic domains such as Medicine, Engineering, Computer Sciences, and Business. In these contexts, learners may need to read different print and online sources to comprehend, summarize, critic, evaluate, analyze, or synthesize information. This important role of English in different academic areas highlights the need for effective approaches to second language reading instruction. The following paper is an attempt in this direction as it sets out to explore 74 Yemeni EFL teachers' classroom practices related to teaching reading. Information obtained from this research would shed light on which aspects of reading these instructors focus more often during their instruction and the types of activities they use do develop different features of reading.

Research Questions

- I. When teaching reading, do EFL teachers...?
 - (1) use the PDP framework,
 - (2) exploit students' background knowledge,
 - (3) teach students reading strategies,
 - (4) teach students how to comprehend a text,
 - (5) raise students' awareness of text structure and discourse organization,

- (6) build students' vocabulary,
 - (7) develop students' fluency,
 - (8) provide students opportunities to read extensively,
 - (9) build students' metacognitive strategies,
- II. If they do, what kind of activities do they use to develop these aspects of reading?

Background to the Study

Day (2013) defines reading as a “number of interactive processes between the reader and the text, in which readers use their knowledge to build, to create, and to construct meaning” (p. 1). With these definitions, it is evident that meaning is created when a reader's background knowledge integrates with a text; therefore, “the text, the reader, fluency, and strategies combined together define the act of reading” (Anderson, 2003, p. 68).

Reading for comprehension is perhaps the most common purpose for reading where meaning is reached when readers “integrate personal background knowledge, purpose for reading, reading strategies, and the text to get meaning,” (Anderson, 1999, p. 39). However, comprehension is not a simple ability as it also “requires a reasonable knowledge of basic grammar, an ability to identify main ideas in the text, an awareness of discourse structure, and strategic processing” (Grabe & Stoller, 2014, p. 195). In other words, properly understanding a text is a complex process and requires readers to work through multiple layers of context and meaning. Therefore, to develop learners' essential reading abilities in areas deemed to be necessary for effective reading, an interactive approach appears to be most appropriate (Brown, 2007; Anderson, 2003; Harmer, 2007). According to Anderson (1999), “An interactive model supports the idea that good readers use both processes, top-down and bottom-up, when they encounter a text in order to comprehend (p. 39).

Bottom-up approach consists of “lower level reading process during which students start with letter and sound recognition, which in turn allows for morpheme recognition followed by word recognition, building up to the identification of grammatical structures, sentences, and longer texts” (Anderson, 2003, p. 70). Furthermore, this model advocates intensive reading in the classroom during which learners are provided with short texts to practice specific reading strategies such as skimming for general understanding, scanning for specific information, reading for detailed comprehension or reading for inferring meaning from context, and attitude. Enhancing these strategies can help learners become fluent readers and comprehend a “text successfully and rapidly, with minimum hesitation” (Ur, 2012, p. 143).

On the other hand, the top-down model draws on the reader's “experience and intelligence to understand the text” (Brown, 2007, p. 358). In this model, the teacher focuses on activities that generate meaning such as activities that activate students' schema, ask them to predict, and then search the text to confirm or reject the prediction (Anderson, 2003). Furthermore, a top-down approach promotes extensive reading which is defined as “silent reading by individual students of long, interesting texts (such as stories or books). It is sometimes known as ‘reading for pleasure’ or ‘sustained silent reading’ (SSR)” (Ur, 2012, p. 146). Scrivener (2011) states that many research studies have indicated the benefit of extensive reading in improving language learning as it helps them unconsciously pick up items of vocabulary and grammar from the texts. In addition, extensive reading helps learners practice the reading strategies introduced during intensive reading as well as it develops their three fluency areas: overall fluency, rate, and word recognition.

Fluency in reading is often a neglected area in second language reading instruction despite evidence that indicates the importance of fluency in developing effective reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Day, 2013; Grabe & Stoller, 2001). Fluency is defined as “rapid and automatic word recognition, the ability to recognize basic grammatical information, and the rapid combination of word meanings and structural information to create larger meaning units” (Grabe & Stoller, 2001, p. 196). Fluent readers should be able to read materials rapidly and efficiently at about 250-300 wpm (Grabe, 2009, p. 14) and this requires learners to have a large ‘sight’ vocabulary—words that students identify automatically, without thinking (Ur, 2012; Day 2013) as this boosts students’ reading rate. Reading fluency can be developed by designing fluency activities that develop learners’ overall fluency, rate, and word recognition. These activities better be timed so that over the duration of the course students improve their speed (Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Day, 2013).

It should be noted that fluency is not just about speed in reading but rather it is about making meaning and comprehending what was read, not how fast it was read. As reading for comprehension underlines all reading tasks, comprehension can be checked by means of comprehension questions such as Yes/No Questions, Alternative Questions, True/False Statements, Wh-Questions, Multiple Choice Questions. Furthermore, to facilitate students’ reading comprehension, teachers can encourage them to monitor the process of their reading comprehension by developing students’ metacognitive reading strategies, defined as thinking about their own thinking and giving them opportunities to discuss how they arrived at comprehending the text.

Within an EFL context, learners already have reading skills in their first language, so they do not learn to read again in English but rather they learn to transfer strategies that they already have learned in their first language to their new language, as Brown (2007) points out, “for most second language learners already literate in a language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies” (p.366). Hence, what teachers need to do is to “enhance the learners’ reading skills by teaching them to read in their second language” (Anderson, 2003, p. 69) so that they become more effective and fluent readers in English.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine teachers’ practices regarding how they teach reading in their different instructional contexts. It is expected that results from this study will yield information that will help teacher trainers and teachers become aware of any reading features that are neglected and work toward integrating them in their trainings or teaching, respectively.

METHOD

Context of the Study and Participants

The participants in this study were instructors who taught English in different instructional contexts: Aden University colleges, private colleges, public schools, private schools and language institutes. The chart below provides information of the number of instructors and the context of their teaching.

74 responses

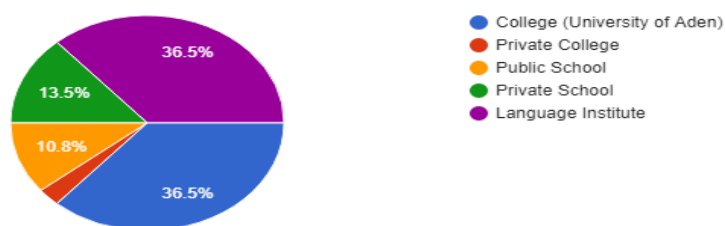


Figure 1

The total number of English language instructors who responded to the questionnaire was 74. 27(36.5%) of the instructors taught in English language institutes and an equal number 27(36.5%) taught in colleges. About 10(13.5%) of the respondents taught in private schools, 8(10.8%) taught in public schools, and a very small number of the respondents 2(2.7%) taught in private colleges.

Training in Teaching Reading

Out of the 74 participants in this study, 29(39.2%) indicated they had taken part in teacher training courses or attended workshops that focused on 'teaching reading', whereas the majority 45(60.8%) stated that they did not.

Data Collection and Analysis

A written questionnaire was used for data collection because it can provide a large amount of information in a short time and at the same time yield significant information on the participants' practices. Items on the questionnaire were designed based on available literature on reading and created using Google Forms.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section 1 requested general information about the participants' work place and any trainings they had in teaching reading. Section 2 consisted of a total 20 close and open ended items which first, asked the teachers to identify the reading features they focused on and then, asked them to indicate the activities they used to develop those features. However, as it is not possible to cover all the activities that instructors can use to develop these aspects, an option 'other' was added to the questionnaire so as to provide the teachers a chance to add any activities they used, other than the ones mentioned.

To ensure credibility, the questionnaire was piloted to six English language teachers. Discrepancies and ambiguities in the questionnaire were fixed before sending it out to the participants. Snowball sampling, which is a non-probability sampling techniques, was used for the purpose of data collection in this study. The survey was sent to different teachers who work in different contexts: colleges, schools, and language institutes and, they in turn, were asked to forward the survey to other English language instructors they knew.

Results obtained from the questionnaire were automatically analyzed by Google Forms and presented in pie graphs in both number and percentage and are presented below. Teachers' responses to the activities they used are presented in tables and organized in ascending order. Activities that some teachers stated using have also been included in the table.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

(1) Using the PDP framework when teaching reading:

The chart below indicated that the majority 61(91.9%) of the participants used the PDP framework when teaching reading; only a small number of instructors 6(8.1%) stated that they did not use the PDP framework.

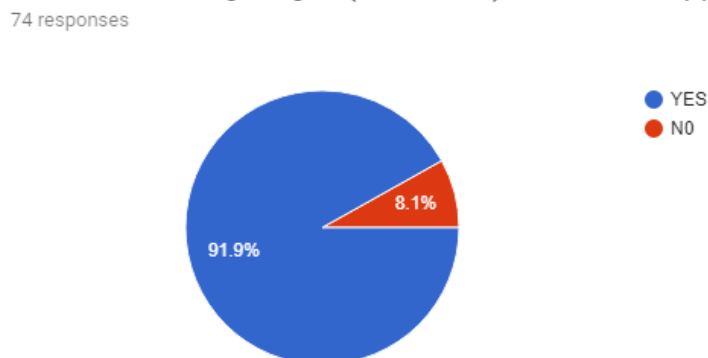


Figure 2

Many ELT teacher training materials recommend dividing the reading lesson into three distinct stages: pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading (PDP). In the pre-reading stage, students are given a chance to think of the text they will read, in the during-stage, students are provided tasks to help them get a general understanding of the text, and finally, in the post-reading stage students expand the topic of the text. As this framework is widely recommended and used when teaching reading, it was not surprising that the majority of the teachers stated that they used PDP.

(2) Exploiting students' background knowledge:

In terms of exploiting students' background knowledge, 70(94.6%) of the instructors indicated that they did so and only a small number 4(5.4%) said they did not.

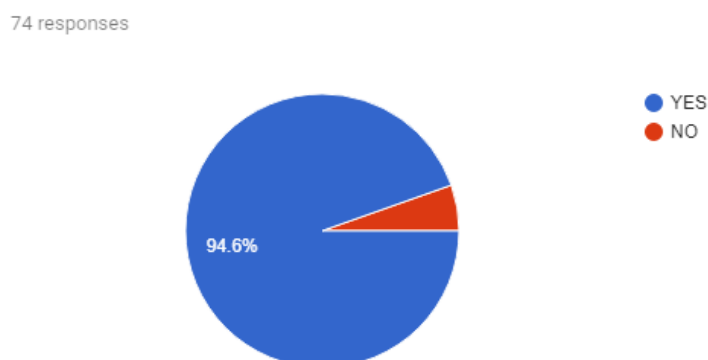


Figure 3

Exploiting students' background knowledge occurs at the pre-reading stage. Research indicates that giving students a chance to think about the topic prepares their brains for the information they will encounter in the text (Harmer, 2012), and hence comprehending the text becomes easier. As the majority of the teachers stated using the PDP, this was an expected response. Table 1 below shows the activities teachers used to stimulate their students' schema.

Table 1

Activities used to exploit students background information

a) I ask various questions related to a particular text in order to prepare students to read the text or to make the students curious about it.	56 (78.9%)
b) I ask students to relate the information in the text to their person experience or knowledge	46(64.8%)
c) I explain the background of the text before I start the reading lesson	41 (57.7%)
d) Before a reading lesson, I ask students to go to the Internet and search some information related to the text they will read.	9(12.7%)

Other activities teachers added

e) Discuss the meaning of new words that occur in the reading text	1(1.4%)
f) Show a show short video related to a particular reading when possible and briefly discuss with students.	1(1.4%)
g) *I ask students to pre-read what they have comprehended and sometimes ask them to support their statements with examples.	1(1.4%)
h) *Sometimes I get the students to act as an introduction for the reading text.	1(1.4%)
i) Discuss what they already know, what they knew, and what they want to know	1(1.4%)
j) *Ask students to give a small presentation about the topic.	1(1.4%)
k) *I warm up students before getting into the topic	1(1.4%)
l) *I would choose some situation o some story so as to go through the lesson with that	1(1.4%)
m) *I would have to suspend the students' curiosity and get it slowly satisfied trough the course of the class.	1(1.4%)

Teachers used different activities to stimulate students' prior knowledge. Activities (a), (b), and (d) seemed more engaging than activity (c) where the teacher simply informed the students about the background of the text. Rather than being recipients of information, students need to be engaged for better learning. Some teachers mentioned pre-teaching key vocabulary (e), using appropriate short videos (f), and using the KWL charts (i) as means of stimulating students' schema--such activities can be used to draw students into the reading process. Other activities (g, h, j, k, l m,) marked by an asterisk (*) were difficult to understand.

(3) Teaching Students' Reading Strategies

The majority of the teachers 66(89.2%) taught their students reading strategies, whereas only a small number 8(10.8%) stated they did not.

74 responses

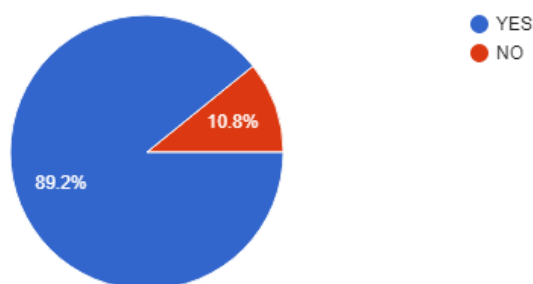


Figure 4

Reading strategies namely scanning, skimming, reading for details, predicting and inferring a text are normally applied when reading a text. It has been found that good readers tend to unconsciously apply all these strategies when reading; therefore, training students to effectively use these strategies can help improve their comprehension of a text and make them better readers. To develop students' reading strategies, teachers used the following activities:

Table 2

Activities used to develop students' reading strategies

a) I teach students to scan a text (i.e. read a text quickly, though not carefully, to find out a piece of information or name of a particular thing etc).	56(84.8%)
b) I teach students to skim a text (i.e. read a text in a shortest possible time to get an overall idea about it).	54(81.8%)
c) I teach students to read a text for details, (i.e. read to get the meaning out of every word as well as out of the relationships between words and between sentences).	49(74.2%)
d) I teach students the skill of predicting the content of a text (i.e. guess what a text may be about by helping them notice clues before they begin reading).	47(71.2%)
e) I teach students the skill of inferring, which refers to figuring out a writer's opinion or feelings about a topic by drawing their attention to what words, register, grammar, or style the writer has used in the text.	32(48.5%)

Other activities teachers added

f) *Activate their schematic abilities to know that meaning is reached to through many cognitive aspects	1(1.5%)
g) Depending on the text, I teach the students how to understand the opposite meanings and the negative and positive meaning and how they affect the text	1(1.5%)
h) I get students to read for pleasure and entertainment by referring to some enjoyable simple English stories	1(1.5%)

Scanning and skimming seemed to be the most widely practiced strategies, followed by reading for details and predicting the text content. In comparison, inferring was not taught that often. On the other hand, certain responses provided by the teachers lacked clarity. For example, (f) was vague and difficult to understand, (g) probably meant that the instructor encouraged students to understand how the text is put together, which is more like analyzing the discourse of a text, and finally (h) did not seem to be a relevant response.

(4) Teaching Students how to Comprehend

The chart shows that 64(86.5%) of the instructors taught students comprehension skills, and a small number 10(13.5%) did not.

74 responses

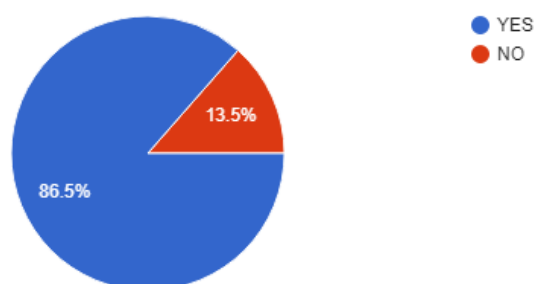


Figure 5

Comprehension is the key to reading and as students read a text, they construct meaning. The process of comprehension, however, requires learners to use a combination of strategies such as connecting the information from the text with their own background information as well as applying different reading strategies namely predicting, skimming, scanning, reading for details, and inferring. By setting up appropriate comprehension check activities, teachers can ensure that students are actively engaged with the text. Almost any activities can be designed to check students' general comprehension at first (Harmer, 2012), and the table below summarizes the activities used by teachers.

Table 3

Activities used to teach students how to comprehend a text

a) Ask students comprehension check questions such as wh-questions, true/false statements, and yes/no questions after each reading.	50(75.8%)
b) When eliciting answers for comprehension check questions, I don't just accept my students' answers. I normally discuss the answers that they give.	50(75.8%)
c) I teach students how to summarize a text.	44(66.7%)
d) Depending on the text, I teach students how to distinguish between facts and opinions.	27(40.9%)
e) Depending on the text, I teach students to focus on understanding attitude, mood, tone, etc. in a text	26(39.4%)
f) Depending on the text, I ask students to organize information or ideas using graphic organizers such as KWL, Timelines, Venn Diagrams, Cause-Effect Charts, Story Maps.	26(39.4%)
g) Depending on the text, I teach students how to interpret graphics, charts, maps, and tables.	23(34.8%)
h) Depending on the text, I teach students how to evaluate a text critically.	16(24.2%)

Other activities teachers added

i) Relate the text to a personal experience	1(1.5%)
j) Ask students to explain each paragraph, its content	1(1.5%)

Activities (a-b) seemed to be the most common types of comprehension check tasks. Probably, the reason why activities (c-h) were not used as frequently could be due to the fact that such activities work better with advanced level students. Only two additional activities (i & j) were mentioned by teachers.

(5) Raising Student Awareness of Text Structure and Discourse Organization,

As apparent in the chart, 42(56.8%) of the instructors raised students' awareness of how a reading text is structured and/or organized; on the other hand, 32(43.2%) of the teachers did not.

74 responses

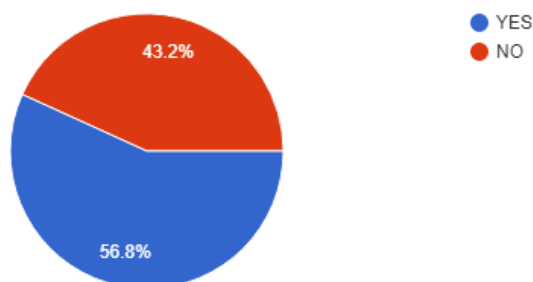


Figure 6

This was a lesser common feature of the reading skill practiced in class. It has been found that good readers recognize the organizational patterns of a text and use such information to comprehend a text better (Grabe & Stoller, 2014); therefore, developing this feature can enhance students' reading ability. The 42(56.8%) teachers who stated that they did raise their students' awareness indicated using the following activities:

Table 4

Activities used to raise students' awareness of text structure and discourse organization

a) I help students realize signal words in a text that refer back to other ideas in the text for its meaning such as a pronoun, a demonstrative (this, that), a repeated full noun, a synonym, a hyponym (umbrella term or superordinate form), or a paraphrase	34(81%)
b) I draw students' attention to transitional words/phrases, i.e. words or phrases that signal patterns of text organization such as adding information, contrast, result.	26(61.9%)
c) I draw students' attention to how certain types of texts generally develop. For example, if they are going to read a problem-solution essay, then it is expected that the text will first discuss the problem, then suggest a solution, and then draw a conclusion.	26(61.9%)
d) I draw students' attention to the flow of information structure to help them differentiate more important from less important information, and realize new information from previously given or readily inferable information	21(50%)

Other activities teachers added

e) I have the students feel responsible for tackling some issues of the text and find some flaw that might have made the text look absurd or in conflict with their thoughts. I usually help my students to have their own thoughts in terms of considering the text. I give plenty of space and time to give their opinions on the topic before any initiative	1(2.4%)
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Grabe and Stoller (2014) explain that raising students' awareness of structure and discourse organization can happen at all three stages of reading: pre-, during-, and post-. When students become familiar with how information in a text is put together, this can enhance their comprehension ability of the text. Hence, as this was one area that a significant number of teachers paid little or no attention to, then it is recommended that teachers create such tasks, even if they are not provided in the textbook, so as to draw students' attention to the text organization features.

(6) Developing Students' Vocabulary,

Regarding developing students' vocabulary, all the teachers developed their students' vocabulary.

74 responses

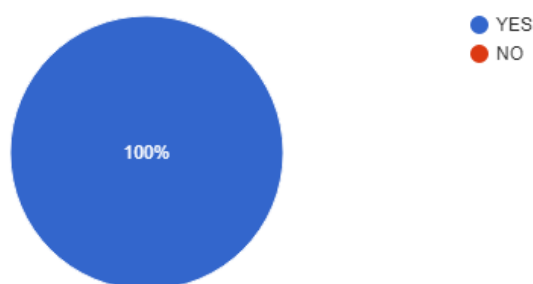


Figure 7

When reading, students may encounter new words which may impede their reading speed and comprehension. Therefore, to achieve effectiveness in reading, it is important to build students' vocabulary and/or ability to deal with words they are not familiar with. All the instructors stated that they developed their students' vocabulary and pointed using the following activities:

Table 5

Activities used to develop students' vocabulary

a) I encourage students to skip words they do not know the meaning of or try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by using contextualized clues	59(79.7%)
b) I encourage students to learn words on their own	47(63.5%)
c) I draw students' attention to analyze vocabulary words for example by looking at the prefixes and/or suffixes and/or roots that are familiar	45(60.8%)
d) I provide students explicit instruction of new words	37(50%)

Other activities teachers added

e) If they do not know a new word I do not answer them directly, or translate it to them, I put the new word in a simple sentence, or rather more than one, if the word are polysemous one in order to make them distinguish the different meaning of that words, and after that if they still not getting it, I give them synonyms and the last step is translating the word into Arabic, but this step can be used once upon a time.	1(1.4%)
f) Cross words game	1(1.4%)
g) Check the context to understand the meaning	1(1.4%)
h) I encourage students to look up vocabulary	1(1.4%)

i) I write the difficult words on the board and let them try to guess their meanings and put them in their own sentences.	1(1.4%)
j) I encourage students to discuss the meaning of the new words together starting by guessing then checking from me or from the dictionary	1(1.4%)
k) I ask students to underline the new words to enhance their vocabulary level by using them in sentences or try to define them in English	1(1.4%)
l) Write the new words and ask students to read them and translate them	1(1.4%)
m) Usually, I take 10-20 new words from the novel/text and explain them first using visual aids and worksheets	1(1.4%)

Apparently, different activities were used by the teachers to help students build their vocabulary. Among the additional ways of enhancing their students' vocabulary, most of the activities seemed to be appropriate; however, the aim of some remained unclear. For example, in (i) and (k), the teacher asks students to figure out the meaning of the words, but it is not clear why s/he asked the students to use those words in sentences. In (m), explaining 10-20 words seemed to be quite long. Teachers should carefully choose a limited number of words so as not to overwhelm students. Lastly, explaining words through translation should be done sparingly, as (e) stated, so learners do not get into the habit of depending on their mother tongue when learning English. Nevertheless, in (m) the teacher seemed to continuously rely on translation as a means of presenting new words in the reading,

(7) Developing Students' Fluency,

About 54(73%) of the instructors stated developing their students' reading fluency; 20(27%) did not develop students' fluency.

74 responses

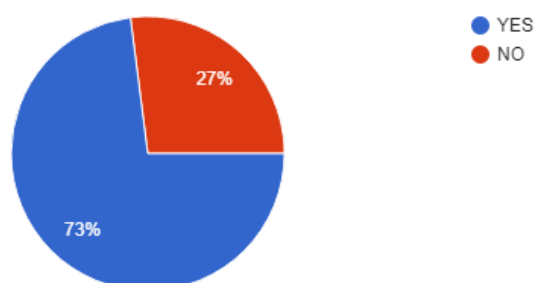


Figure 8

This aspect of reading was ranked as the third lowest aspect of reading implemented in classroom teaching. Fluency involves speed and automatic word recognition and is a key to become proficient readers. Therefore, in addition to building students' comprehension of texts, developing their reading fluency is also critical. About 54(73%) of the teachers stated that they developed students' fluency and mentioned using the following activities:

Table 6
Activities used to develop students' fluency

a) I set TIMED reading activities in my class to give my students practice in increasing their reading speed.	45(83.3%)
b) I give students tasks that build their ability to rapidly recognize words and phrases.	27(50%)
c) I encourage students not to 'pronounce' each word to themselves but rather to read the text in chunks (preferably phrases).	24(44.4%)
d) I include 'paced reading' activities in my class with a focus on increasing my students' ability to read words per minute (wpm), for example around 250-300 wpm.	18(33.3%)

Activity (a) seemed to be frequently used by teachers. However, reading is not just about how fast one can read but rather it is about making meaning of a text. Activities (b) and (c) which are word recognition and reading in chunks also need to be implemented more often to help students' read fluently. The more students learn to recognize words, the faster they will be able to read (Ur, 2012; Day, 2013). Similarly, when students learn to read in phrases, this habit can speed up their reading ability. Activity (d), paced reading, was not practiced quite often and thereby it needs some more attention from teachers for such an activity can develop learners' ability to read rapidly and efficiently (Grabe, 2009). It is to be noted that no additional activities were added for this point.

(8) Providing Students Opportunities to Read Extensively,

About 62(83.8%) of the teachers encouraged their students to read extensively, whereas 12(16.2%) of the teachers did not.

74 responses

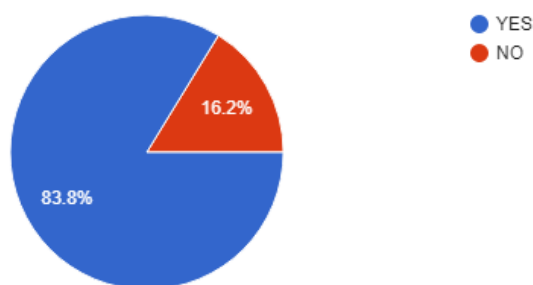


Figure 9

Extensive reading is about reading for pleasure or for information that interests the students. When students read extensively, they improve their vocabulary, increase fluency, and become better readers. Furthermore, studies have shown that extensive reading provides learners with comprehensible input that enhances the readers' English language as students can "keep learning and acquiring language even when there is no lesson and no teacher to help them" (Harmer, 2012, p. 122). The table below shows the types of activities teachers use to encourage their students to read extensively:

Table 7
Activities used for extensive reading

a) I tell students to read easy materials--materials that are within their comfort zone	42(67.7%)
b) I give students the freedom to choose whatever they read; I simply guide them for example by providing them with appropriate website of online reading materials or book titles available in the college/school/institute library.	39(62.9%)
c) I provide students materials to read and insist that they read those.	28(45.2%)
d) I advocate reading materials that is especially written for language learners such as the graded readers which are written for specific grades or levels.	25(40.3%)
e) I tell students to stop reading any materials that they find boring or difficult.	16(25.8%)

Other activities teachers added

f) I sometimes recommend some names of stories	1(1.6%)
g) I encourage my students to read that which they are passionate of. I would suggest that they should go for a simple English text.	1(1.6%)

Activities (a, b, d, e, f, g) seemed to correspond with how an extensive reading should be encouraged—students should read materials they like and those that are appropriate for their level. Activity (c), however, did not seem to be an effective approach to promote extensive reading as this can frustrate and demotivate the students and make them lose interest in reading.

(9) Building Students' Metacognitive Strategies

About 48(64.9%) of the teachers developed their students' metacognitive skills' 26(35.1%) did not.

74 responses

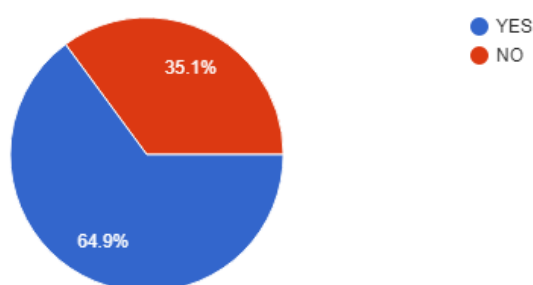


Figure 10

In comparison to other aspects of reading, metacognitive strategies appeared to be the second lowest in terms of their integration in classroom instruction of reading. Metacognition strategy has been an ignored skill in EFL language learning, which is also apparent in the results obtained here. Studies in metacognition have shown that when students becomes aware of their metacognitive reading strategies, they can use these strategies for their own benefit; hence, just knowing about a strategy is not adequate enough; a reader should be able to apply such strategies (Anderson, 2005). The following table shows the activities used by teachers to develop students' metacognition.

Table 8

Activities used to build students' metacognition

a) I ask students questions to help them evaluate what they have read and how well they are doing so that they focus their reading.	36(75%)
b) I explain to students what reading strategy they will use, why they need to learn it, and how to use it.	30(62.5%)
c) I encourage students to set goals for themselves to help improve areas in reading that are important to them	29(60.4%)
d) I encourage students to monitor and talk about their own reading strategies.	27(56.3%)

Other activities teachers added

e) *I give my students the absolute liberty to act like teachers. They would have to come on the stage and feel the sense of individuality outside the disciplines of teaching environment. They will also have to pose questions and get answers in an entirely students-based control.	1(2.1%)
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Anderson (2005) hypothesizes that metacognitive strategies play a key role because when learner become aware about ways of regulating their own learning by using strategies, language acquisition occurs at a faster rate. Since metacognitive strategies appeared lower among the reading features taught, there is a need to focus more on the implementation of these strategies.

CONCLUSION

Reading is an important skill for many EFL learners to master so as to succeed in their different academic domains. However, reading is not simple; it is a complex process (Grabe & Stroller, 2014) and requires instructors to work at different levels in order to develop their learners' proficiency in reading in English. As this research investigated the various aspects of reading that a group of Yemeni EFL teachers focused on, the following results, presented in ascending order, were found.

- build students' vocabulary 74(100%)
- exploit students' background knowledge 70(94.6%)
- use the PDP framework 68(91.9%)
- teach students reading strategies, 66(89.2%)
- teach students ways to comprehend 64(86.5%)
- provide students opportunities to read extensively, 62(83.8%)
- work on developing students' fluency, 54(73%)
- build students' metacognitive skills, 48(64.9%)
- raise students' awareness of text structure and discourse organization, 42(56.8%)

The last three aspects of reading i.e. developing students' fluency, building their metacognitive skills, and raising their awareness appeared to get less attention. Considering the important role these reading features play in building students overall reading proficiently, teachers need to pay more attention toward integrating them in the teaching of reading.

Furthermore, there appears to be some misunderstanding and/or misconceptions about certain activities that the instructors used when teaching reading; hence, some in-service trainings and workshops are strongly recommended in order to shed light on such ineffective practices.

In fact, taking into account that the majority of instructors mentioned that since graduation from college, they had not taken any training courses or attended workshops that focused on reading teaching, for the purpose of professional development, it becomes necessary that their workplaces provide them with some support in the form of trainings.

As teachers grow professionally, they will be in a better position to develop their students' English language skills in general and reading skill in particular.

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