



## General English: Strategies that Worked Practically in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skill to the Students of Diploma

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of reading strategies of reading comprehension of the Diploma students who enrolled to study General English-1 and General English-2 and ESP (English for Specific purposes) at the College of Science and Arts, Alnamas, University of Bisha. Today's class scenario is quite pathetic in the sense that the language instructors stressed more on assessing students' reading comprehension rather than teaching them how to comprehend better.

The craze as well as trend for learning English has been growing day by day due to many reasons. English as a foreign language learning plays an important role in the global era since it is a lingua franca as well as an essential tool for communication. It is required for further studies, seeking for knowledge, career, understanding the culture and worldwide vision. Moreover, it is related to the job opportunities. In general everyone perceives it as an essential foreign language to learn. It is now sine qua non in our each and every sphere of life. Foreign language study broadens students' vision and enables them to communicate with foreigners appropriately and confidently. It is quite essential in understanding the scientific literature available in the language. The beginner students who have good reading ability will definitely strive for success progress in their careers. For those who study English as a second/foreign language, ability in English reading comprehension is a must. The students in the beginning need reading comprehension to be able to continually increase their knowledge and complete understanding of a given text.

In this fast technological and global era, the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language should be looked upon as its most valuable resource in the national growth. English is now a lingua franca in the entire world and is a connecting language in one way or other way. Reading comprehension skill in general has been a quite challenging task before the language instructors since time immemorial. Consequently in a monolingual country like Saudi Arabia, the teaching of this specific skill has also been a bone contention and debatable among scholars and language instructors. The complexities in teaching reading comprehension skill of English language initiated healthy discussions in the past as well as at present too. The main objective of the present observation based study is to look upon the lacunae in teaching and learning and some of the pre-requisites and to provide accordingly effective reading comprehension skill strategies that can be taken into consideration during the course of teaching. It is hoped that the present study based on the observations in a practical class room situations will guide and assist the foreign language instructors to overcome the drawbacks in teaching as well in learning this particular skill. As a result, it would ensure the good functioning of the ongoing diploma program in our educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Reading comprehension, strategies, reading habits, difficulties in comprehension, factors that affect reading comprehension, instructional strategies.

### 1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language has become a common trend nowadays. In a globalized world, people need to learn a language for many reasons. Traveling to other countries, getting good job opportunities and having a good professional status are among the most common reasons to learn a language. Reading is one of the most important skills in any language class because it is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity but also a means of consolidating

and extending personal knowledge of the language. According to Johnson (2008), reading is a constant process that needs to be improved through practice. By continuously practicing, readers are expected to comprehend the content of a text and the textual meaning by using strategies to identify main ideas and specific information, comprehend grammar structures, and learn new vocabulary. Furthermore, students need to understand what a passage is about and the extent of the information that is given by the teacher.



The scholars and language instructors have worked extensively in this area. There is no dearth of literature. The last 3 decades have yielded most of what researchers and language instructors know about reading comprehension. Most of the results are based on studies of how good readers interact with text.

Researchers have found that good readers are active or strategic readers who use plethora of comprehension strategies before, during, and after

reading a text. Needless to say, the good students have their own strategies to comprehend a text and they succeed to a great extent. The good and sincere students in the class use their own comprehension strategies to facilitate the construction of meaning. These strategies include various strategies including previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating. Researchers believe that using such strategies help students become metacognitive readers (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002). The students in the Diploma program in General English at the branches of the University of Bisha at every semester level need to practice being active and sincere students as they encounter increasingly difficult reading materials on each grade level viz; Headway Plus by OXFORD, The author of the paper noticed two kinds of students while teaching viz; strategic learners and non- strategic learners. The performance of the strategic learners is comparatively better than the other students in the class and consequently understand more while reading a text. “Proficient learners build on and activate their background knowledge before reading, writing, speaking, or listening; poor learners begin without thinking.” —Irvin et al., 1996. The good and proficient readers can predict the sense and meanings of a particular text in advance. “As they read, good readers frequently make predictions about what is to come.” —Duke & Pearson, 2002.

“As they read, good readers frequently make predictions about what is to come.”

—Duke & Pearson, 2002. Predicting is also a previewing strategy. Good readers hypothesize about what a text may be about based on textual clues or their own experiences. The students in the class room use the following strategies to accomplish the target.

1. Self-Questioning, 2. Using mobile app using translation app from English to Arabic and vice versa, 3. Translation of vocabulary in their mother tongue using Google search, 4. Making Connections, Monitoring etc. “Strategic learning during reading is all about monitoring reading and making sense. Skilled readers know how to monitor and keep track of whether the author is making sense by asking questions...” —Vacca, 2002.

To summarize, reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through engagement with written language (Snow, 2002).

## 2. Reading Comprehension in a Theoretical Framework

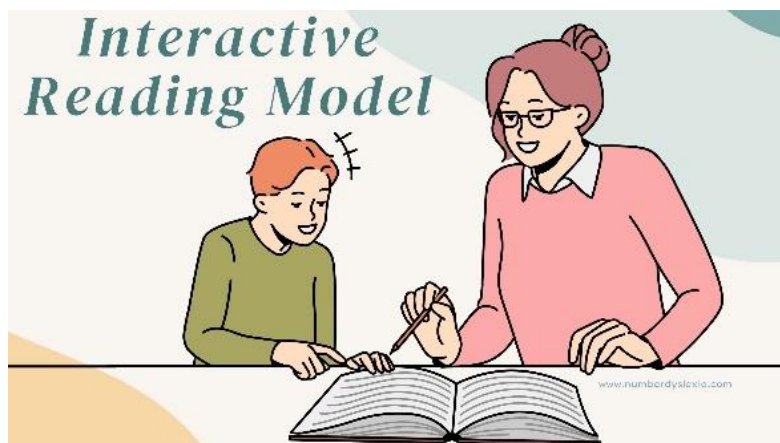


Comprehension strategies can be defined as conscious and completely set plans — sets of steps that the class use to make sense of text. The use of comprehension strategies in the class helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension.

Comprehension is the essence of reading and the active process of constructing meaning from text (Durkin, 1993). Reading is one of the important skills of target language learning. It is by reading that a student learns about different courses and subjects from the primary level up to the higher level. Moreover, reading is also an excellent way to improve and excel in the target language. Here, it is imperative to know what makes the texts difficult and how a student can improve in comprehending them. Needless to say, the knowledge of limited vocabularies prevents students from comprehending a text. Reading comprehension refers to the ability of an individual to read a text conventionally, process it and comprehend its actual contextual meaning. It is true that the ability of a student to understand a text is influenced by his traits and skills, one of which is the ability to make inferences. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. The understanding of the students cannot be appreciated, unless and until they draw some inferences, conclusions out of reading a text. Thus, comprehension involves combining reading with thinking and reasoning. Furthermore, if the students are asked to explain a text in brief, they must be in position to explain. It will demonstrate their actual understanding of the text.

Comprehension instruction promotes the ability to learn from text. More broadly, comprehension instruction gives students access to culturally important domains of knowledge and provides a means of pursuing affective and intellectual goals. Proper instruction by the language instructor in the class is the most powerful means of developing proficient learners and preventing reading comprehension problems.

Defining Reading Comprehension was one of our first steps, and we define it as: the way students get the required information from a passage which has to be done as efficiently as possible (Grellet, 1981). The biggest problem is that when students read a text they are so worried about understanding every single word that they do not get the general idea from the passage. That is one of the reasons that led us to want to help our students improve their reading comprehension skills. Reading must be done for two main reasons (Grellet, 1981):



**Reading comprehension** is perhaps one of the most critical skills a student can master. Without a firm grasp on the comprehension process, students will struggle in every course they encounter, whether it's science, math, or social studies etc. However, a multi-faceted process, comprehension involves constructing meaning from the written word. Reading comprehension is an intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular text. When a student reads a text, he engages in a complex array of cognitive processes. He is simultaneously using his awareness and understanding of phonemes (individual sound

“pieces” in language), phonics (connection between letters and sounds and the relationship between sounds, letters and words and ability to comprehend or construct meaning out of the text. There are two elements that make up the process of reading comprehension viz; Vocabulary knowledge and Text comprehension. In order to understand a text, the student must be able to comprehend the contextual meaning of the vocabulary used in a text. The best vocabulary instruction occurs at the point of need. The students must be familiar with the basic and common words used in day today life. Text comprehension is much more complex and varied that vocabulary knowledge. The students of the target language themselves use innumerable different text comprehension strategies to develop reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is crucial in the teaching and learning process; it is aptly correlated with the learner's academic performance (Sircey, 2017). However, it is a complex process (Woolley, 2011) and is affected by several factors (e.g., the reader's prior knowledge and experiences) (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Gill, 2008; Hermosa, 2006; Tracy & Morrow, 2006).

### 3. Strategic Research Questions:

The area of focus in this study is to improve reading comprehension of the students of General English at the college of Science of Arts, Alnamas, (University of Bisha) through the use of effective and innovative reading strategies. The available literature reveals the fact that there are different opinions on this issue. One of the opinions is that without a

solid foundation of reading strategies the students will be disappointed in the course of foreign language educational programme. The author hopes to provide reading awareness to these General English students as well as to the language instructors in the light of his years of his teaching experiences. It is hoped that by applying these effective and innovative strategies in this way, they will develop a more meaningful reading experience as it has been found while teaching in the class.

#### **4. Review of Literature:**

Reading comprehension requires the construction of a mental representation of the information in a text (Kintsch, 1988). Reading is said to be one of the most important and complex cognitive skill and such importance has resulted into extensive studies over years (Baddeley, Logie, & Nimmo-Smith, 1985).

The literature review revealed that the best and proper time to lay a strong foundation is to teach reading comprehension strategies to the students at the outset. The students for granted in the present study are not aware about the various strategies that can be applied to comprehend a text/passage. Reading strategies are assumed to be important for students reading comprehension and the reading strategies equip the students with the skills of how to handle their reading and understanding effectively. Researches in the past revealed the fact that good readers are actively involved with the text and they are aware of processes they use to understand while they read their books. Undoubtedly the teachers can help students improve their reading comprehension through reading strategies. Reading strategies are purposeful means of comprehending the writer's message in the text.

The scholars are of different opinions about the concept of "reading strategies" in the literature. Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 278) stated that reading strategies means, plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning. According to Brantmeier (2002) reading strategies are "the comprehension processes that readers use in order to make sense of what they read." In the same way, reading strategies are defined by Afferbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) as: deliberate, goal directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand word, and construct meanings out of text.

Goodman defines reading as an active process in which readers use effective strategies to extract meaning from a text. In the process of reading, readers need to use reading strategies to understand the meaning from the text. Reading strategies are key elements in developing students' reading comprehension. Reading is a highly strategic process during which readers are constantly constructing meaning using a variety of strategies. Several research studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between learners' reading strategies and their reading comprehension skills.

Woolley (2011) claimed that comprehension is a very complex process which involves cognitive activities like summarizing, predicting, evaluating, synthesizing, etc. Hermosa (2006) emphasized that "comprehension involves thinking" and "as there are various levels in the hierarchy of thinking, so are their various levels of comprehension" (p. 41). It is also important to note that the higher the level of comprehension, the higher the level of thinking. Critical Reading, Integration or Application to Self/Life, and Creative Reading. Distinctively, each dimension "is cumulative in that each build on the others" (Hermosa, 2006, p. 56)

Reading is a complex process (Woolley, 2011) and is affected by several factors (e.g., the reader's prior knowledge and experiences) (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Gill, 2008; Hermosa, 2006; Tracy & Morrow, 2006). It demands sincerity and motivation and interest in reading various kinds of texts.

Indeed, one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students' vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension (e.g., Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Becker, 1977; Davis, 1942).

The instructional strategies used in the class may not be static it can change time to time as the need arises. These all needs have to be decided by the teacher in specific context and situations.

#### **5. Objective of the Study:**

The main purpose of the study to highlight the strategies that were applied and worked well practically in the class for teaching students of Diploma Courses in General English-1, General English-2 and ESP (English for Specific purposes). The outcome of the study may draw the attention of those language instructors who are teaching these English courses in the educational institutions.

#### **6. Strategies that worked practically in Teaching Reading Skill of a Text:**

Reading strategies are part and parcel of reading comprehension. Several experimental studies have shown a positive relationship between reading strategies used in classes and reading comprehension (Sattar and Salehi, 2014).



Comprehension strategies are conscious or intentional plans that people use in order to achieve a goal (Roit, 2005) and are used deliberately to make sense of text (Afflerbach et al. 2008). Readers use strategies consciously to make sense of the text, remember critical ideas and integrate new learning into existing schema or prior knowledge. Students need to learn how to use strategies independently, to recognize and solve problems, and to delve deeper into text to make connections and inferences. Strategies are situational and are used intentionally by readers. (McEwan, 2004).

These strategies are elaborated to make the point clear. The language instructor should follow and let their students use the following strategies. These strategies are the outcomes of the researcher's decades of teaching English as a second/foreign language to the Arabic speaking students. The language

instructor should follow and let their students use these following strategies.

Strategy instruction is most effective when strategies are explicitly taught (National Reading Panel, 2000; Duffy, (2002) in the context of actual reading. Reading comprehension involves the reader interacting with the text to construct meaning (Snow, 2002). Proficient readers use a variety of strategies resulting in active, intentional and self-regulated reading (Trabasso and Bouchard, 2002) as they prepare to read, as they read and after they read.

1. Home work for a text should be given one day before teaching a text so that the students read at home and are well prepared before entering in the class.
2. The teachers should instruct the students to read the text carefully and underline the difficult words and thereafter write the meaning along with the usage in the context.
3. Reading a text with the intention to understand the correct usage of the words' meanings in the appropriate contexts.
4. Using a good digital/no-digital dictionary to comprehending the meanings actual meanings.
5. Focusing on the reading a text in the book frequently in the class and at home.
6. Comprehending the contextual usage and meanings of the words/phrases/proverbs/idioms etc.
7. Instructing the students and focusing on the extensive reading of the text in the class as a class work before the teacher reads the text in front of the class. The students are to be given enough time to finish the reading with proper understanding.
8. Focusing on the getting the sense of a text before the actual reading starts.
9. The teacher should read a text loudly so that the entire class listen it clearly and at the same time all the students must read the same text in the class. This will create a sense of sincerity and responsibility towards their duties. No student should be left out so far as reading the text is concerned. Every student is to be given an equal weightage in the class if possible. Reading loudly a text by the language instructor in the class and amid must assure as well as monitor that the class in general are not only listening but also comprehending the passage.
10. Reading a text by all the students must be compulsory in the class to check their proper pronunciation of the words. No student should be left out in this on-going process.
11. The weak students should be given more weightage and their performance are to be fully monitored by the teacher.
12. Checking by the teacher required flow of the reading. The teacher should assure that all the students are reading the text as per the conventional norms. The errors made by the students while reading a text must be immediately corrected. This will draw the attention of the entire class towards the correct pronunciation.
13. The instructor must check as well as correct mistakes when a word has not been uttered properly in reading the text by a student.
14. Today's learning is quite digital based so that the whole class is to be instructed to download the WILLIAM WEBSTER DICTIONARY or any other digital dictionary in their mobiles through play store. It was realized that the students of diploma in general are not aware about how to know the correct pronunciation of a word. In digital dictionary the audio of the correct pronunciation is given and can be listened the correct pronunciation just by clicking the audio.
15. The teacher can repeat a text if he is not satisfied with the performance of the students' reading. Repetition and revision of a text are quite effective comprehension strategies. When the students listen again a text they acquire comparatively more. The teachers' loud reading of a particular text in the class will give the students a sense how to read it. The students generally follow the teacher when they listen carefully. At the same time the teacher is to assure that the students' minds are not distorted when the process of reading is going on. Sometimes the students' do not know the exact line and paragraph. He must show the book in front of the class where he is reading and also instruct the class to always put the finger in order to avoid any distortion and detachment.
16. The teacher as well as the students should interact during the reading process. Interactive session is sine qua non for the better understanding.

17. He should explain the text in the class in a simple language in the target language to enhance their comprehension.
18. The class is to be given freedom in understanding by whatever means the students adopt.
19. If the teacher is not satisfied with the performance of the students then he is to adopt the other strategies to enhance the comprehension of the students.
20. Undoubtedly skimming helps the students to quickly gather the most important information out of a written text. This should be used as one of the comprehension strategies in the class.
21. Today's world is the world of social media. The students are more attached with their mobiles in the class. It has been found that when the teacher reads a text in the class, some students keep themselves in reading messages on the WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In such a situation the students must be instructed to use their fingers while reading as well as listening the teacher. It would help them to their concentration intact.
22. The teachers should encourage the students to reread texts. Researches in the past suggest that rereading leads to greater fluency and improved comprehension.
23. The students should underline all the difficult words and write their meanings if possible in their note books. The efforts to write will pave the way for better performance.
24. The class should follow scanning a text because it helps them to find a particular piece of information.
25. The teacher is free to use the mother tongue of the students in the class in order to facilitate the effective teaching and learning.
26. Extensive reading helps us to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure.
27. In case of a paragraph not understood by the students the teacher should instruct them to read again and again with contextual meanings in the minds. This will give them a sense of understanding.
28. The comprehension of contextual meanings in a text should be very clear in the minds of the students. If they know the meanings they can get clear cut idea about the text. The students generally feel difficulty in understanding the meaning of the vocabulary. More difficult vocabulary in the text create more problem to them.
29. Intensive reading helps us on shorter texts in order to extract specific information.
30. Both Intensive reading and extensive reading are to be used as strategies and should be promoted in the class.
31. The teacher should diagnose the intermittently the really difficulties encountered by the students and consequently provide remedial measures in the class.
32. The teacher may change the strategies time to time in the light of their performance.
33. The students must use prediction as one of the strategies to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in text.
34. The teacher should identify the problematic areas in the text where there is a possibility that the students may make mistakes or feel difficulty in understanding it. These problematic areas are to be given taken into consideration and strike those points on a regular basis.
35. The teacher should also focus those problematic areas and apply some strategies to overcome it.
36. Creating a sense of reading habits in the class. The class must be motivated in reading more and more either in the class or at home.
37. The class must read a text passionately and move slowly with proper understanding.
38. Reading must be presented in an easy way to overcome the fear of students about the target language. The students encounter a new language with new structures they feel psychological barriers in understanding the target language.
39. Reading a text boldly without fear of mistakes.
40. Positive Reinforcement as one of the strategies is to be used in the class to over any kind psychological barriers. The students need encouragement by the teacher.
41. Errors are gift to the students. This idea should be promoted in the class. The students always need encouragement because they are already the victims of a new language. It would minimize the psychological barriers.
42. Trial and error are the best tool for learning a language. Making a mistake is not the drawback of the student. He will learn out of his own mistake.
43. The class is to be motivated to reading headlines in a newspaper and magazine daily at pleasure time if possible.
44. Watching Target language channels viz; BBC English, Al Jazeera, CNN etc. are also assets for the students. Reading and understanding of the target language is a long process. The students who are more attached to the target language will perform better comparatively.
45. The class is also to be instructed to listen YouTube video available with the title "English for kids", 'English for adults'. Listening these videos will familiarize them with the basic structures of the target language and consequently broaden their knowledge.
46. Creating habits in reading posters, ads etc; in the target language.

## 7. Diploma Students' Difficulties in Understanding a Text/Passage and Factors that affect it:

The diploma students possess little background in the target language and consequently encounter the difficulties during the course of learning. These problematic areas have been observed, noticed and noted at the outset for the purpose of this study. These are:



- Connecting the letters to form a word.
- Reading without understanding and with proper sense.
- Reading very slowly and correctly and also incorrectly.
- Giving unrequired pauses in reading a text.
- Encountering difficulty in understanding a word.
- Poor pronunciation of the words contained in the text.
- Proper understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary.
- Lacking sense of reading.
- Difficulties in contextual understanding of the meanings.
- Constant detachment in reading the text.
- Lack of understanding of the coherence.
- To spell correctly.
- Reading incorrectly the alphabets from A-Z. This needs attention of the teacher from the beginning of the semester.
- Lacking knowledge in correct punctuations.
- Skipping the conventional norms in reading a text.
- Ignoring the full stop (.) and commas (,) while reading a text.
- Difficulties in consulting the digital and non-digital dictionary.
- Lack of motivation in creating reading habits on a daily basis.
- Finding enough time and energy to read their books.
- Maintaining concentration during reading a piece of writing.
- Improving speed while reading a text/passage.
- Managing and getting a sense of a vocabulary as per the need and context in the text.
- Selecting and underlining the relevant points in a text.
- Understanding the central idea of the text.
- Understanding new, theoretical and detailed information.
- Identifying focal points and arguments in the text.
- Fear of a foreign language. The students come across new structures and novel learning situations.
- Evaluating evidence and making judgement after reading a text.
- Encountering structural and grammatical difficulties.
- Identifying similarities and dissimilarities between texts.
- Lack of understanding the coherence in the text.
- Giving more time in thinking about the text how to read it.
- Reading texts that assume background knowledge & experience.
- Taking help of their mother tongue most of the time in understanding the text.
- Learning the text through grammar translation method.
- Translating a text from English to Arabic and vice versa to get the meaning in the text. The understanding of a text through direct method is quite difficult for these students. To overcome these barriers pose a great challenging task for the teacher in the class.
- Classification, description and analysis of something or an event in a given in the text.
- Feeling inferiority in interacting with their class mates.
- Interaction with other students in a created group in the class make them feel shy and inferior.
- Encountering difficulties of the usage of helping verbs as well as auxiliary verbs in a given text.
- Giving an undesired pause before reading the sentence in the text.
- Lack of interest in self-learning. It shows the lack of confidence in acquiring the language.
- Difficulties in acquiring the appropriate meaning of a word.
- Encountering difficulties in dictation as well as in writing skill.

- Making a sentence of simple words etc. These all above listed difficulties are subject to their poor back ground of the students in the target language.
- Lack of motivation and interest in acquiring a foreign language.
- Loyalty towards their mother tongue.
- Lacking a sense of quality based education.
- Cut off from the national main stream. It refers the cut off of these students from the target language.
- Lacking in using technological based tools in teaching and learning etc.

It is to be pointed out here that scholars, linguists and pedagogues are of different opinions so far as the difficulties of the students' comprehension of target language vocabulary is concerned. It has been an area of bone of contention among them since decades. Linguists were mainly concerned with the structures of the native and target language. They stressed that the mother tongue interference is one of the major problems in learning a second/foreign language. The other scholars have their own point of view on this issue.

## 8. Significance of the Study:

The present study is significant in the sense that it can provide notable insights into the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension. It is to be pointed out here that this is an observational based study. The researcher while teaching General English for years has observed quite carefully and sincerely and noted those complexities and difficulties encountered by the Diploma students in reading and understanding a text prescribed in their book. A remarkable progress in their practical performance reflected in the class after applying as well as instructing various comprehension strategies. It is hoped that the insights in this study will provide a roadmap as a guidance to the language instructors and students of the University of Bisha studying General English.

The more reading a student does in and outside the class, the more reading comprehension should improve. It is important during independent reading in the class as a 'class work' that teacher tries to ensure that all the students are actually reading with utmost sincerity and responsibility. The teacher should create reading habits from the beginning of the semester and focus on constant reading. The instructor should encourage students to reread the prescribed texts. The studies in the past suggest that rereading leads to greater fluency and improved comprehension. It is a fact that strategic readers use these skills to find meaning and develop their vocabulary as they read whereas the non-strategic readers encounter difficulties in comprehending the text.

Reading comprehension strategies must be given due weightage during the course of teaching and learning. The language instructors intermittently require continuing to help their students develop reading comprehension strategies in the class. As their reading materials become more diverse and challenging, students need to learn new tools for comprehending these texts and passages in the prescribed book. Instructional materials such as textbooks pose different reading comprehension challenges for students in general and thus require different comprehension strategies.

"It is well established that good readers generally have good vocabularies. And beyond that, there is evidence that teaching students' vocabulary, in fact, increases their comprehension abilities" (Pressley 2002, 293). Although vocabulary can be taught, most vocabulary words are learned through reading. The students who read extensively and devote more time and energy in reading any kind of literature acquire more functional vocabulary and understands comparatively more. Prior knowledge affects comprehension. The more one already knows, the more one comprehends, and the more one comprehends, the more one learns new knowledge to enable comprehension of an even broader array of topics and texts (Fielding and Pearson 1994, 62).

Needless to say, reading comprehension play a significant role in the academic life of the students. A strong ability to comprehend the literature helps the students in understanding the other courses too. Many researchers like Ogbodo (2002), Bhan & Gupta (2010), and Singh (2011) have done work on reading, especially how it affects the academic performance of students. Keeping in view the effectiveness of these comprehension strategies the students were reminded to follow above listed strategies from the very beginning of the semester. It was found at the end of the semester that these strategies worked quite well with the whole class in comprehending the texts. The application of these strategies reflected in their class performance. The class was busy in understating the written materials by using these strategies.

Reading is a cognitive activity which is essential for adequate functioning and to gain information in the today's communities. Nowadays, to outburst of researches in SL reading have been focused on readers' strategies. Research in second language reading suggests that learners use a variety of strategies to assist them with the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information (Rigney, 1978). Rivers (1981) believes that reading is the most important activity in any language class (p. 259). Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). Comprehension skills help the learners to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context (Palani, 2012). He believes reading is a process of thinking, evaluating,



judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving. Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading strategies. Once the target group has been taught to read and comprehend and has developed the real interest in reading books, they can acquire the multifaceted and multidimensional literatures too and also explore themselves new world where all kinds of treasures related human kinds are available. This can only be acquired by reading the vast literature available in the target language. It is a fact the reading habits must be inculcated in the students from the outset. The students, who miss the opportunity of getting in touch with books in their early stages of life, find it hard to acquire good reading habits in their later years (Deavers, 2000).

### 9. Proper Diagnosis of the Students' Difficulties in Comprehending a Text:

The foreign language instructors in the class intermittently are required to diagnose the actual difficulties faced by the students in comprehending a text/passage. The following possible problems have been observed, noted during the semester and are listed below:

- There is a possibility that the prescribed book is not in accordance with the level of the students.
- There is a possibility that the text has innumerable unknown vocabulary.
- There is a possibility that the text has long, complex and complicated sentences.
- There is a possibility that the text is concerned about a topic the students know nothing about that.
- There is a possibility that the text is about a topic the students find boring.
- There is a possibility that the text has small print, long paragraphs, no pictures and visual representation. The visualization of a text through pictures enhances the comprehension.
- There is a possibility that a text is more complicated and contains more difficult vocabulary.
- There is a possibility that the students are feeling tired and has no interest in continuing the study in the class.
- There is a possibility that the minds of the students are distracted.
- There is a possibility that the students' level is not up to mark for the course.
- There is a possibility that the students have lost concentration.
- There is a possibility that the students don't know why they have been asked to read a particular text.
- There is a possibility that the students have no reading habits in their day today lives.
- The students in general feel shy in interacting with their class mates in the working group in the class which is not appropriate for the students to accomplish their reading target. Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through cooperative learning, which involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Cooperative learning instruction has been used successfully to teach comprehension strategies. Students work together to understand texts, helping each other learn and apply comprehension strategies. The language instructors help students learn to work in groups. They also provide modeling of the comprehension strategies.
- There is a possibility that the students are encountering a new atmosphere of the target language in the class.
- There is a possibility that the students are feeling inferior and hesitation in having a good rapport with their teacher.

Our students have motivation in reading their books. Inculcating reading habits is one of the best strategies to comprehend a text. Scholars in their works revealed the significance of the reading culture. This habit should be created at the out of the academic program. As soon as the students develop reading habits in and outside the class the comprehension of the students will start to increase. The teacher should remind the students time to time about the significance of it. It is the reading habits, which help the learner in obtaining meaningful and desirable knowledge. Good reading habits act as a strong weapon for the students to excel in life (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). According to Palani (2012) is of the opinion that, effective reading is important avenue of effective learning, reading is interrelated with the total educational process, and hence, educational success requires successful reading habit. He believes reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context. The invention and application of the digital based technology in the educational system has badly affected the students at present. The students in general do not find enough time to read the written materials which are sine qua non for the healthy growth of the young minds. Moreover, the social media has also completely destroyed the reading culture and healthy minds of the students. The students have been found using Facebook, Instagram, Google search, Twitter etc. during the ongoing teaching and learning in the class. Before the advent of the television, both the young and the old found enough time to read. It is a fact that the students in general have least motivation in reading their books. They spend most of their precious time in these social Medias which are strong barrier in their future progress and career. This pathetic situation of students' learning demands to sincerely to speculate over the issue and find out the effective ways to draw their attention more and more on the reading their prescribed book. Palani (2012) further added that, nowadays, reading habit has lost its importance as both the young and the old are glued to the television. As far as educational

institutions are concerned, coaching students for the examinations seems to be the be-all and end-all of our educational system.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation:**

The present observational based approach in finding and diagnosing the actual difficulties of the Diploma students in General English-1 and General English-2 with reference to the reading comprehension of the texts in the prescribed books entitled “New Headway Plus-Beginner Student’s Book” by John and Liz Soars published by OXFORD University Press. 2. “New Headway Plus-Elementary Student’s Book” by John and Liz Soars published by OXFORD University Press and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) has been quite challenging task for the author of the paper to present a set of overall complexities and difficulties the students’ encounter in reading a text in their prescribed books. The concluding remarks and recommendations are that the language instructors in teaching students need special care and attention of the teacher because they do not possess an adequate and required background of the target language. Some students are very poor and may need extra hours. The teacher can manage and provide them few extra hours to these poor students during his office hours in the college. This approach will help in bringing such students with parallel with the ongoing standard of the class. A proper guidance and special care and counselling of backbenchers are required to push them towards achieving the ultimate Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)/ Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The listed comprehension strategies in this study have been the outcomes of several years of relentless and constant observations of teaching these diploma students.

The language instructors must monitor students’ understanding and ensure that the students in and outside the class use the strategies correctly. It is clear that reading comprehension teaching needs a strategic teacher who is competent and knowledgeable in diagnosing as well as identifying problematic areas the students may encounter during the course of learning. This way of teaching will bring true and honest learning in the class.

In summary, we know a lot about reading comprehension knowledge, its acquisition, and its significance in the acquisition of the target language. The diploma students in the present study pose a great challenge to the language instructors in the class to achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)/Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The effective and valuable reading accomplishment of these students depends upon our sincerity and honesty in this noble profession.

The concluding remarks in this study is that many students as well as the language instructor will insight out of these observational research study. Our students can become an independent in reading and understating in their future endeavor. Many opportunities to read independently allow students to begin to coordinate the strategies they have learned; to adjust, modify, or change strategies and skills in accordance with their needs until they are able to make sense of text.

The language instructors teaching diploma students must include reading strategies to help them accomplish the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) prescribed in the Course Specification (CS) of the University. They should modify their teaching methods/styles to adjust to the target groups’ varied acquisition styles and accordingly, chalk out/frame and implement necessary reading activities in the class as well as home. The class is required to learn and develop reading strategies in General English. Nonetheless, the instructors teaching this course in any educational institutions must monitor students’ understanding and ensure that they use the strategies correctly during the process of acquisition of the target language.

The paper highlights the importance and significance of comprehension strategies related to reading that works practically in the class. However, more in depth comprehensive investigation is required to ascertain, prove, and verify the finding of this study obtained through observation technique.

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