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**The Effect of Reading Strategies on EFL  
Learners' Exam Performance**

The case of 4.A.M Pupils of Hadjres Slimane Middle School,  
Bejaia

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Master's Degree in Didactics**

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## **Dedication**

To my mother,

You are the best mother a daughter could ever ask for!

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the effect of reading strategy training on the pupil's reading exam performance. We have used a mixed research method; both quantitative and qualitative. The use of a classroom observation, reading tests and pupils' questionnaires paved the way to the presentation of results. The analysis of the findings revealed a positive correlation between the reading strategy training conducted throughout the experimental work; and the pupils' reading exam scores.

*Key words:* reading strategy training, pupils' exam performance.

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## List of Abbreviations

**BEM:** Brevet de l'Enseignement Moyen

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FL:** Foreign Language

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

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## General Introduction

### 1. Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension skills are not easy abilities for EFL learners to develop. Subsequently, every single project that was done on the complex nature of the reading comprehension skills reported how reading is central and vital for L2/FL learning and demonstrated that only the effective use of reading strategies can lead not only develop fluent readers, but also make of language learners better EFL students (Brown, 2009). However, less theory about reading research was put into practice, for instance, the absence of reading strategies instruction within the Algerian middle schools can be a source of frustration for 4.A.M Pupils of Slimane Hadjres public middle school. Accordingly, they struggle constantly to decode textual information and understand their schoolbook activities and teachers' questions from print which contain both the content of lessons and exam subjects respectively. Those same pupils read actually for different purposes such as completing assignments, undertaking projects, writing and handling essays etc, and for success in their final high school entrance examination. Interestingly, throughout this study, we seek how the use of reading strategies can affect learners' exam performance in reading comprehension tests, thereby; 4.A.M candidates success in the BEM exam of the English subject.

### 2. Background and Significance of the Study

Numerous studies have researched the factors hiding behind poor L2 readers, reading disabilities, L1 interference while reading in L2; and most of them came into the conclusion that only “ the activation of the effective global (reading) strategies improve foreign reading proficiency”(Zhang, 2001, p.270). Conversely, other L2 reading researchers concentrated on the students' background, socio-cultural context, and selective use of certain reading strategies rather than others. As Al-Mahrouqui (2012) argued in her research study that the Arab readers of English as have unique backgrounds and a special socio-cultural context which affect their reading ability and habits. Cuenca (2008) found out that poor L2 readers have weak word recognition skills, inadequate knowledge sources, and they employ ineffective reading strategies all of which cause them to be slow and unskilled readers.

Surprisingly, none of the previous studies researching the reading process and reading comprehension as a whole ever mentioned that instructing reading strategies would correlate well with EFL learners' scores, marks and results. This study would have much focus on how the instruction of reading strategies will not only develop the students' reading proficiency, but also, it will highlight the fact that teaching reading would engender the teaching for exams simultaneously. Teaching for exams, i.e. strategic testing can be implemented in the language classroom. Different types of tests are designed by EFL teachers to measure language learners' L2 proficiency. Actually, testing can be adapted as a daily instrument to check EFL learners' comprehension of what has been taught, giving vigorously the opportunity for applying the use of reading strategies. Our research work would also suggest the homogenous teaching approach of the teaching of reading as well as individualizing testing techniques for exam classes to have pupils train themselves in advance for their exams.

### 3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Reading is an essential life skill that is vital for success in most professions, notably in the process of EFL learning. Throughout our research other variables would be brief subjects of investigation interconnected to the teaching of reading and testing such as the benefits of designing story- retell reading activities and classroom participation, reading and pronunciation, training teachers to teach testing and reading strategies, extensive reading and acquiring a wider amount of vocabulary. All of what was mentioned will help our students to become fluent readers and improve their comprehension of how L2 teachers assess their general EFL competence. Consequently, we set the following hypothesis:

- There is a positive correlation between reading strategy instruction and pupils' performance in their academic reading exams.

**- Research questions:** in order to investigate the correlation between reading strategies and the strategic and psychological preparation for tests, we present three research questions:

- 1) Why are reading strategies important for pupils to perform their reading exams?

- 2) Is there any positive relationship between learners' classroom participation in reading activities and their scoring?
- 3) How can we make of reading an active process for learning EFL?

#### **4. Population**

The participants in this research work are sixty (60) of 4.A.M pupils of Slimane Hadjras middle school at Bejaia in the academic year 2012/2013. Those students are schoolboys and schoolgirls and the majority of them speak Berber as their mother tongue; and they also use French and Arabic as a second language. Our research participants are, actually, divided into two pedagogical classes who are taught by the same teacher. The participants will be profiled as English language learners and as readers.

#### **5. Method and Data Collection Procedure**

The selected method to treat the research problem is the experimental method. One class of the 4.A.M pupils population would form the experimental group, on which reading instruction and testing strategies will be applied. Three of research instruments will be used to gather data; reading comprehension tests are to be assigned to the subjects of this class so as to provide them with the opportunity to practice reading strategies and to measure their progress in terms of building exam skills. Moreover, a classroom observation must be held with its appropriate checklist to see whether reading activities play a role in increasing classroom participation. Finally, a pupils' questionnaire should be administered to collect evidence about their system of beliefs about reading instruction and the improvement of testing taking techniques.

#### **6. Aims of the Study**

This research aims at verifying the hypothesis we set right from the beginning; and mainly answering the three research questions. In the case of the affirmation of our hypothesis, we hope that the findings would benefit all 4 A.M. pupils who continuously prepare for the B.E.M exam which is considered as the ultimate goal of middle school education. Our suggested pedagogical implications would be of a valuable help for the exam classes; they may solve many problems about revision for exams and compensate the limited linguistic competence among middle school

pupils. To equip those beginner EFL pupils from their early stage of learning with effective reading strategies would make of them strategic exam takers or well-prepared Baccalaureate candidates since the Baccalaureate exam of English is based on reading comprehension as well.

## **7. Description of the Study**

This dissertation comprises two main chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Literature Review” which is divided into three sections; the first one “Reading Strategies” involves some definitions of reading comprehension. Besides, it tackles the crucial factors affecting learner’s reading low proficiency; the second section which is labeled “Exam Performance” discusses some issues about teaching for exams as well as its importance for both teachers and learners. A third section entitled “Correlating Reading Strategies and Exam Performance” deals with the relationship between reading strategy use and how well pupils demonstrate progress when performing a particular reading test. The second chapter will come under the title “Research Design and Analysis” comprises three interwoven sections. The first section presents the methodology that is used throughout our study including the research procedures of collecting data, etc. “Data Analysis and Interpretations” constitutes the second section where data of the experimental work are discussed and analyzed. Before the general conclusion, a last section presents some implications and suggestions for further research.

## Section One

### Reading Strategies

#### Introduction

Reading is an essential skill for EFL leaning; it offers a wide range of interesting information as well as a variety of language expressions and structures which are of great usefulness for developing other language skills. This reflects the fact that the study of reading is both theoretically interesting and practically important. Surprisingly, in spite of the large number of the different definitions of reading; no one has won general acceptance.

#### 1. Definition of Reading

Reading is a completely individual activity. It is generally said to be a complex activity. According to Bader (2007, p. 40): “reading is an interactive process between the reader, interacting dynamically, and the text.” Mebarki (2008) defined reading as an unobservable mental activity and a multi-faceted skill which involves lower and higher skills. Moreover, Urquhart and Weir (1998) said that:

*So it is with some reluctance that we begin this part with an attempt to define reading, to say what we mean by the term. Our excuse is that people do use the term in different ways, and that while this may be permissible when everybody is conscious of the differences, on occasions it can cause real confusion and difficulty.*

However, Alderson (2000) defined reading both as a process and a product. As a process, it is the numerous operations which happen during the process of reading; they include looking at print, recognizing words, deciding what they mean and how they relate to each other. And as a product, reading is comprehension or the understanding constructed by the reader. “Although readers may engage in different reading processes, the understanding they end up with is the same... What matters, then, is not how you reach that understanding, but the fact that you reach it” (Alderson, 2000: 04).

## **2. Reading Skills**

Debate has gone over the years on whether reading is made up of a set of distinct skills that are separately identified or whether these skills relate to common underlying abilities, and thus they are indivisible.

### **2.1 Reading as a Single Skill**

A reading skill is defined by Urquhart and Weir (1998: 88) as a “cognitive ability which a person is able to use when interacting with a text.” This definition takes a broad view about the term skill and does not say anything about what is exactly involved under this cognitive ability. Experts who adhere to this view argue that if reading is a skill, then it must be possible to break it down into underlying components for the purpose of teaching and testing. Therefore, teachers and testers should reject the several activities and tasks used in reading comprehension tests such as guessing the meaning of unknown words, identifying the main ideas in a text and so on.

### **2.2 Reading as Components**

A considerable amount of research on reading was devoted to the testing of reading and whether reading comprehension tests assess reading skills using different test items or the assignments are developed for the purpose of measuring the understanding of the text as a whole. Furthermore, several searches revealed that researchers themselves could not agree on a specific test item testing a particular reading skill.

## **3 Models of Reading**

Many researchers and scholars are active in research on reading, however; there are still different points of view on what reading is. These views are often grouped into three reading models namely the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive ones.

### 3.1 Bottom-up Model

In this view, the reader begins with the written text (the bottom) and constructs meaning from letters, words, phrases and sentences found within, and then processes the text in a linear fashion. Here, the reading process can be represented as:

1. Eye looks.
2. Words recognized.
3. Words allocated to grammatical class and sentence structure.
4. Sentences give meaning.
5. Meaning leads to thinking. (Davies, 1995: 58)

Clearly, in this model, various readers are expected to come up with identical interpretations of a given text. They seem to play a relatively passive role because the text as input i.e. the linguistic knowledge is prioritized. Hence, the reader's feedback is neglected thus his/her comprehension is influenced.

### 3.2 Top-down models

In this model of reading, reading is seen as the process in which readers move from the top, the higher level of mental stages down to the text itself. This approach emphasizes the reconstruction of meaning rather than the decoding of form, the interaction between the reader and the text rather than the graphic forms of the printed pages. "Reading is not a passive process but an active fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning." (Anderson, 1996: 1)

The top-down model is illustrated as:

- Eyes look.
- Thinking-prediction about meaning
- Sample sentence as a whole to check meaning
- To check further, look at words
- If still uncertain, study letters
- Back to meaning prediction (Davies, 1995: 58)

Obviously, the reader proves his active role in the reading process by bringing to the interaction his available knowledge of the subject, expectations about how language works, interest and attitudes towards the content of the text. Meaning of the reading materials does not reside only on the printed page, nor it is only in the head of the reader. In this model, reading is seen as the combination of the words on

the printed page with the reader's background knowledge. Due to the limitation that the amount of time required for the generation of predictions is greater than the amount of time required to simply recognize the words; the interactive models of reading emerged.

### **3.3 Interactive models**

Interactive theorists conceive the reading process as cyclical rather than linear in nature. They theorized an interaction between the reader's mental processes, background knowledge and text processing. Like in top-down models, the reader relies on previous understanding and his/ her expectations in order to generate guesses about the text, and like in bottom-up models, the reader depends on what is in the text; in interactive models, he uses his/her prior knowledge and predictions; and processes the words of the text simultaneously.

## **4. Types of Reading**

Throughout the long history of researching reading, only two types of it were distinguished by scholars.

### **4.1 Extensive Reading**

In considering extensive reading, it is generally defined by researchers as reading for fluency. It is based on having students select their own reading texts. Hedge (2003) assumes that extensive reading varies according to learners' motivation and school resources. He also states that it enables them to achieve their independency by reading either in class or at home.

### **4.2 Intensive Reading**

Also known as reflected reading, during this type of reading; the learners read print to explore meaning and gain comprehension in order to be able to perform the tasks which are based on the reading material. Unlike extensive reading, when reading intensively; students deal with relatively short texts and focus on the available details and analysis of the expressed relationships between the ideas. In a word, in both types, the goal of reading is to seek meaning from written text i.e. comprehension.

## 5. Definition of Reading Comprehension

As we stated earlier, the purpose of reading is comprehension, or getting meaning. That is, Bader (2007: 50) declared that “without comprehension, reading is a frustrating, pointless activity.” Moreover, Snow (2002: 11) defined the process of reading comprehension as the formation of an internally consistent mental representation of text through the process that combines information from text with the reader’s prior knowledge. In considering reading comprehension, he emphasizes three elements:

1. the reader who is doing the comprehending, including all the capacities, abilities, knowledge and experiences he brings to the act of reading,
2. the text that it is to be comprehended and which is broadly constructed to include any printed text, and
3. the activity in which comprehension is a part; and purposes, processes, and consequences associated with the act of reading are included.

### 5.1 Components of Reading Comprehension

According to many experts who are active in research on reading comprehension, this process includes three main components, background knowledge, inferencing, and strategies.

#### 5.1.1 Background Knowledge

It is all the world knowledge that the reader brings to the act of reading. When processing a text, readers use their pre-existing concepts such as life experiences and cultural bases which were previously stored in his/her long term memory.

#### 5.1.2 Inferencing

It is the logical process of combining information within sentences in text, between sentences in text, or between prior knowledge and text (Baumann et al., 2003). For example, in order to understand who the word “he” is referring to in text, the reader must combine information in that sentence with information in a previous sentence that referred to a male.

### **5.1.3 Strategies**

Proficient readers use cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies such as setting goals before they begin to read, asking themselves questions and answering them while reading; and reflecting on what they read. Readers are not necessarily aware of using these strategies; they can even inaccurately self-report their strategy use (Baker & Cerro, 2000).

#### **5.1.3.1 Relationship between Strategies and Reading Comprehension**

Strategies can be taught to readers who struggle with comprehension because they improve their understanding of texts. Contrastively, Carrell (1998) argues that using certain strategies does not always guarantee successful reading comprehension. Kern (1997) brings further support to this by suggesting that there are good and bad users of the same strategy and that the difference between a good and a bad use of the same strategy is in the context in which they are used, how they are used and how they interact with other strategies. If readers fail to identify the strategies they use while reading, this also means that their metacognitive abilities are weak.

The term metacognition is the notion of thinking about thinking, Thinking about what a person knows and what a person is currently doing. It is knowledge about ourselves, the task we face, and the strategies we employ.

### **5.2 Reading Comprehension Strategies**

Studies on good readers identify a number of strategies to be highly useful. The following strategies are examined by researchers to help learners understand what they read.

#### **5.2.1 Pre-reading Strategies**

Students use some reading strategies before they begin reading like activation of background knowledge and predicting. Researchers in general say that Pre-reading strategies depend on the readers' knowledge.

### **5.2.1.1 Activation of Background knowledge**

This strategy requires readers to use their background knowledge that help them understand what they read. As people learn about the world through experience, they develop a large amount of information which they constantly relate to the new knowledge they encounter in a text.

### **5.2.1.2 Predicting**

This strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making predictions. Before reading they may use what they know about an author to predict what a text will be about. The title of a text may stimulate memories of texts with similar content, helping them to predict the content of the new text.

## **5.2.2 While- reading Strategies**

### **5.2.2.1 Checking Predictions**

During reading, readers may form predictions about what is going to happen next, or what ideas the author will present, and they might continuously check these predictions afterwards.

### **5.2.2.2 Self-questioning**

This strategy involves readers asking themselves questions throughout the reading of a text. This ability allows them to integrate information, identify main ideas, and summarize information. As argued by Willoughby et al. (1995), asking the right questions enables readers to focus on the most important information in a text.

### **5.2.2.3 Making inferences**

Inferring is another strategy which requires readers to draw conclusions from a passage. Since authors do not always provide explicit information about a topic, setting, character, or event; they often provide clues that readers can use to “read between the lines”. In deed, many current researchers indicate that the ability to make inferences can be learnt through practice.

### 5.2.3 Post-reading Strategies

Post-reading strategies may involve the repeated use of pre-reading and while-reading strategies, however; there are some strategies which can be applied only after reading the whole text such as summarizing.

#### 5.2.3.1 Summarizing

It is the capacity of readers to explain in their own words what is important in a text and how ideas are related to each other. Diamond et al. (2000) consider summarizing as an important strategy because it enables readers to recall quickly what the text is about.

Depending on the type of text being read, for instance in a story line, summarizing may involve connecting events or identifying the factors that motivate a character's actions and behaviour.

## 6. Classification of Reading Strategies

While a number of taxonomies of reading strategies is available, we propose to classify them into general and local strategies.

Table 1.

### *General and Local Strategies*

General Strategies	Local Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipate content.</li> <li>• Recognize structure.</li> <li>• Integrate information</li> <li>• Question information in the text.</li> <li>• Interpret the text</li> <li>• Use general knowledge and associations</li> <li>• Comment on behaviour and processes.</li> <li>• Monitor comprehension.</li> <li>• Correct behaviour.</li> <li>• React to the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paraphrase</li> <li>• Reread</li> <li>• Question meaning of clause or sentence.</li> <li>• Question meaning of word</li> <li>• Solve vocabulary problem</li> </ul>

## **7. Reading Strategy Training**

Strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing which strategies to use, but, in addition, the reader must know how to apply strategies successfully to achieve and improve comprehension. Research results demonstrated that strategy training contribute largely in improving reading comprehension as long as studies conducted on skilled readers reported that they showed greater consistency in keeping in mind the purpose of the task, rereading when necessary, relating ideas, and reviewing content (Dhieb-henia, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

Reading is complex in nature and its models, types, and skills and strategies used to perform it are so. In this section, we have defined what the term “reading” is, which leads us to explore reading comprehension and the strategies involved during the activity.

## Section Two

### Exam Performance

#### Introduction

Exams around the world are used to measure the students' knowledge and learning over a given period of time. Similarly, reading comprehension exams assess reading abilities. Throughout this section, the testing of reading needs to be reviewed.

#### 1. Evaluation and Testing

##### 1.1 Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation is the process to judge or measure the value of a finished or ongoing programme, plan, or even a policy (Gasper, 1995). It is also seen as the meaningful interpretations of information about learning and teaching, in which one has to decide what actions, decisions and changes to be made. The following figure displays the different stages of evaluation:

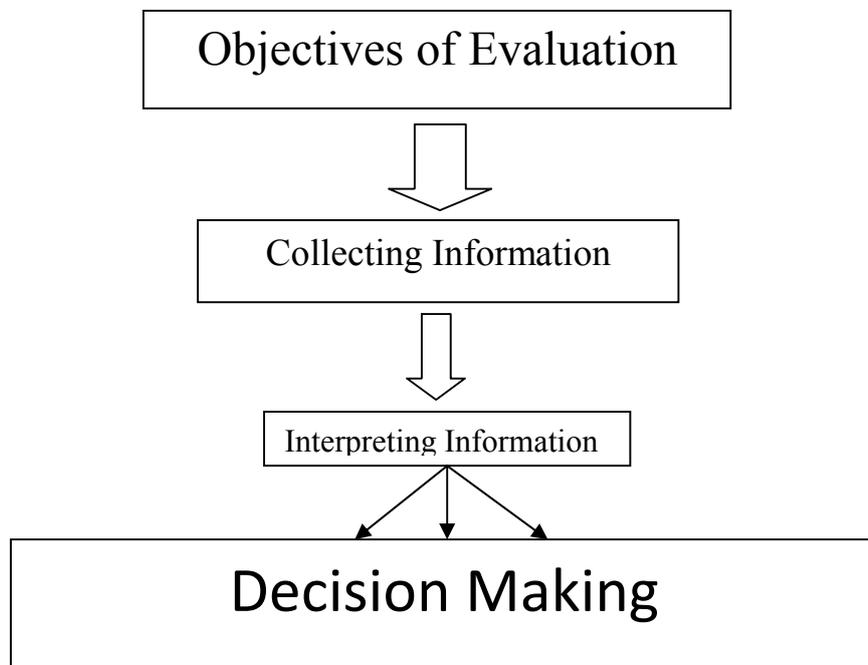


Figure 1. The Different Stages of Evaluation (Zidat, 2005)

## **1.2 Terminology of Evaluation**

Terms such as examination, test and quiz are generally used by teachers interchangeably, whereas; experts define them in a different way.

### **1.2.1 Examinations**

An exam may last one, two, or more hours; while the time allowed for a test is less than these. Examinations are always given once at the end of the semester unlike tests, which are administered two times during the term. For example, a university professor examines his students whereas a primary school teacher tests his pupils.

### **1.2.2 Tests**

Tests are considered as one component in the evaluation process. The test is a method including techniques, procedures and activities that involve the participants in the testing operation. Hence, if evaluation is considered with informing and decision making, testing is the method used to measure in order to formulate a judgment that has to be interpreted.

#### **1.2.2.1 Types of Tests**

Traditionally, there are three main kinds of tests: proficiency, diagnostic and achievement tests. A proficiency test measures the level of a skill in language considered as necessary for entry in a particular class or level. A diagnosis test aims at measuring the learners' strengths and weaknesses which will inform the teacher as to whether remedial lessons are needed or not. As for an achievement test, it aims at assessing a specific body of knowledge which is assumed to have been learnt. (Bachman & Palmer, 1996)

### **1.2.3 Quizzes**

A quiz is another component of evaluation. It is different from a test or an examination. That is, it can be administered in fifteen minutes or less, given at the beginning of a lesson to serve as a means for reviewing what was taught on the previous lesson. Quizzes are short and easier to score.

## 1.3 Assessing Reading

Although, research into reading assessment suggested that due to the complex nature of reading which is basically mental and individual a number of multiple techniques should characterize the testing methods of assessing reading. A common remark about reading tests is that the measurement of the reader's ability is achieved through using a limited set of testing techniques. In addition to tests, a range of methods such as interviewing readers, using self-report techniques, think-alouds and questionnaires filling will only provide accurate data on their reading habits, problems and performance.

### 1.3.1 Reading Test Design

Test developers should ensure that candidates are familiar with the task type before taking a test. Urquhart and weir (1998: 152) developed useful guidelines for setting questions.

- Questions should not contain harder vocabulary than the text.
- If the candidates understand the text, they should be able to answer the question.
- Rejection of alternatives on grammatical grounds should not be allowed.
- Skills not related to reading, e.g. mathematics should not be tested.
- Incidental insignificant information should not be tested.
- Questions that require stylistic or other ambiguous judgments should be avoided.

### 1.3.2 Types of Reading tests

Reading exams include texts of different types, lengths and purposes. The texts are generally taken from real life and are not written specifically for testing. This is why to test reading comprehension; reading exams are usually constructed of a text which is accompanied by a variety of reading tasks. The following are the most common reading tests.

### **1.3.2.1 Multiple choice tests**

They consist of a text accompanied by a series of statement, a question plus answers, or an incomplete statement with a choice of phrases or words with which to complete. In multiple choice items, candidates are generally presented by three or four options; they have to choose among these alternatives only one of which is correct. These items may test comprehension of the text as a whole or test specific sections of it.

### **1.3.2.2 Short-Answer Questions Tests**

Unlike the multiple choice tests where the correct answer is proposed to the candidate, in short-answer questions tests, it is the candidate who seeks the answer. This type of reading test increases the measurement of comprehension rather than simply depending on the result of test-taking strategies such as guessing and matching because it provides the pupil with the opportunity to make use of many reading strategies like extracting important details from a text, reading for gist or making inferences. One disadvantage of this reading task is that some questions accept a wide range of possible acceptable answers.

### **1.3.2.3 True/False Tests**

That is the reading task which is the most familiar to pupils. Once again, there is a text or a group of texts followed by a series of statements. Test-takers determine whether these statements are correct (true) or incorrect (false), according to the text. A third option is sometimes included 'not mentioned', for cases where the text does not provide readers enough information to decide whether a statement is true or false. This reading task can be replaced by asking 'yes' or 'no' questions about the subject dealt with in the text.

### **1.3.2.4 Matching tests**

Matching tasks ask candidates to match words or phrases to their meanings or match each paragraph of the text to its appropriate description. Additionally, pupils can be presented with a series of short, related texts such as notices and signs instead of the usual single text where they are supposed to match each section to its corresponding description.

### **1.3.2.5 Gap-Filling Tests**

Gap-filling tests are constructed by removing words from texts usually drawn from fiction, biography, articles or letters. If testers aim at testing the understanding of the overall meaning of the text; they delete content words, but if they aim at testing the grammatical competence they select function words to omit. Gap fills tasks require test-takers in some cases to give the correct word which fill the gap, while in others s/he chooses from a series of alternatives. An item among these alternatives can be an extra word which does not belong to the text.

## **2. Exams**

Exams are considered as an important event in pupils' lives because they have always been an opportunity to demonstrate success. Nevertheless, exam results give access to higher levels of education.

### **2.1 Teaching Exam Classes**

Although an exam class may have a lot of in common with other classes, the fact that pupils are preparing for an exam makes special demands on the teacher. Preparing students for an examination is a special responsibility. In an exam class, the pupils have a shared goal and strong motivation to succeed in their studies, hence; it is very easy to persuade pupils of the importance of homework (Bress & Head, 2005).

#### **2.1.1 Knowledge of the exam**

Preparing learners for an exam requires of the teacher a sound knowledge of the exam. The teacher should adopt disciplined teaching and good time-management skills. Candidates expect from their teachers to be able to answer a wide range of questions about the skills tested in the exam, number of sections and questions, date and time allotted to perform it. As the main point of contact with pupils, the teacher is viewed by his learners as a confident source of information on the exam, as well as the administrative matters.

## 2.2 Building Learners' Exam Skills

Exam-takers usually need immediate information on the date, place and exam fee; as well as the format and content of the exam this is why some sample questions taken from past papers should be presented to the whole class by the teacher. This way, the instructor introduces his pupils into exam conditions progressively as he works simultaneously on building their exam skills.

It is essential for the teacher of exam classes to try to develop good study habits within his learners both in and out the classroom. The following are some examples:

1. Asking pupils to review what they do in class regularly.
2. Requiring them to make a note of anything that was not clear.
3. Demand those exam-takers to keep a diary to record their mistakes and their own progress.
4. Help pupils to cope with exam anxiety and use their stress as a positive motivator.

Research into testing has shown that teachers responsible of teaching exam-takers are generally expected to do a lot of practice subject tests in the classroom. Conclusively, good teachers use tests as a revision for exams hence; he can save valuable classroom time by creating a balance between teaching and testing in a particular exam class.

## Conclusion

In this section, we have presented brief guidelines about testing reading. Actually, it is not an easy task to measure reading skills separately from writing, grammar and vocabulary. From all the examined types reading tests there is no one which merely asses reading. And because the aim of our study is to examine the influence of reading strategy use on the 4.A.M pupils reading test performance, readers' characteristics such as interests, attitudes, purposes and background knowledge need to be examined in the next section.

## Section Three

### Correlating Reading Strategies and Exam Performance

#### Introduction

Research into testing has shown that teachers responsible of teaching exam-takers are generally expected to do a lot of practice subject tests in the classroom. Conclusively, good teachers use tests as a revision for exams hence; he can save valuable classroom time by creating a balance between teaching and testing in a particular exam class.

#### 1. Teaching Reading for Exams

Middle school teachers in general, have in charge the preparation of 4.A.M pupils for the final BEM exam. However language teachers in particular, prepare their pupils to a final reading comprehension exam. Teachers do not always devote class time to the practice of reading because they are supposed to teach other language skills such as grammar, vocabulary and writing. Nevertheless, reading tasks can be assigned as homework through which they can develop both reading strategies, reading task awareness and exam skills.

#### 1.2 Developing Pupils' Task Awareness

Candidates usually enjoy exam practice because this familiarises them with the type, content and format of the exam. Teachers of 4.A.M classes should raise their pupils' awareness about their reading exam. The following information should be provided:

1. How long the reading exam lasts.
2. How many parts are there.
3. What tasks can occur in each part.
4. How many words are students have to read.

### 1.3 Developing exam skills and strategies

Pupils are presented with a variety of reading tasks, normally teachers of exam classes should train them on using specific strategies suited to each type of task.

#### 1.3.1 Multiple choice tasks

The followings are some useful techniques to answer multiple choice items.

1. Read the text again carefully.
2. Look at the multiple choice questions without looking at the options, and try to answer them in your own words.
3. Look at the alternatives and see which is closest to your own version.
4. Check that the other alternatives are wrong

#### 1.3.2 Matching Tasks

1. Look at the prompts one at a time and scan the text to find the answer.
2. Underline expressions with similar meanings in the text and the prompts.

#### 1.3.3 Gapped text tasks

1. Read the base text carefully, focusing on the sentences (or words) either side of the gap.
2. Try to fill in the gaps in your own words.
3. Look at full nouns, pronouns, possessive adjectives (her, their ...) and determiners (the, that...) in the base text and try to work out what they refer back or forward.
4. Double check if you find what you want to use the same word twice.

## 2. Gradual introduction of exam conditions

As he progresses in the course, the teacher of 4.A.M pupils should introduce exam-takers to exam conditions under which the reading exam will be done. This means:

- It will be timed
- Pupils work individually
- No guidance will be given about how to approach a task

- Dictionaries cannot be used.

### **3. Variables Affecting Reading Exam Performance**

#### **3.1 Text Variables**

Text aspects such as organization, type and genre and many others might either facilitate the process of reading or on the contrary make it more difficult.

##### **3.1.1 Text Organization**

Text organization refers to the way paragraphs relate to each other and the way relationships between ideas are expressed. Two common aspects of text organization are cohesion and coherence.

##### **3.1.2 Text Readability**

It is the ease or difficulty with which readers understand texts. It is generally measured through word difficulty and complexity of sentence structure. Nevertheless, Davies (1995, 87) suggests that in measuring text difficulty, experts should take into account aspects like interest. He stated: "in their own reading, students frequently deliberately choose texts that are challenging for them to read. This suggests either that the acceptance of challenge is a means of learning". A final word, when choosing texts we need to bear in mind that readability is an essential criterion for the selection of texts.

##### **3.1.3 Text Type**

The way a text is written, its style and features are those which keep a given text distinct from another text. The most common types of texts are the narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository texts. These types of texts appear to be associated with certain topics. For example, descriptions of how things work are more likely to be found in expository texts rather than narrative types. Davies (1995) asserts that EFL students received training in recognizing text types, their reading comprehension could be facilitated.

### **3.1.4 Linguistic Features of the text**

Research into linguistic difficulties, showed that both structure and vocabulary have an impact on comprehension. As Alderson (2000) expresses it “having to struggle with reading because of unknown words will obviously take the pleasure out of reading” (p, 35).

### **3.2 Reader variables**

These are the aspects of reader which may affect the reading process and product. Readers' background knowledge, his knowledge about text content, knowledge of the world, and purpose of reading and the like influence his comprehension. For example, different readers read texts with different purposes i.e. reading a text to get a general idea may require the reader to pay less attention to details than when reading a text to get key information. Thus we can say that every purpose needs the use of different reading strategies and that the reason for which you are reading will influence the way you read it.

### **Conclusion**

The readers' interest, motivation, expectations and desire all relate to the topic of the text. Searches on readers' types of motivation whether instrumental or intrinsic such as reading to answer an assignment are factors which influence his exam performance during reading comprehension exams.

# Section One

## Method

### Introduction

In order to test the research hypothesis, we have used three means of data collection, a classroom observation was conducted to report how reading and test-taking strategies training is taking place in the 4.A.M class; and reading comprehension tests to diagnose the learners' comprehension difficulties and pupils' questionnaire to deduce the pupils' general strategy use. The results of the tests are then triangulated with the two other methods that are the classroom observation and the pupil's questionnaire.

### 1. Research approach

Since the main aim of our study is to uncover the type of relationship between reading strategies and exam performance; the appropriate approach to use in this research topic is the experimental one: combining both quantitative and qualitative method. That is, the quantitative method is reflected by the use of pupils' questionnaire and reading tests through which data is generated in the form of statistics whereas the qualitative method is represented by the use of the classroom observation.

### 2. Research Design

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between the teaching of reading strategies and the 4.A.M candidates' exam skills. To find out the type of correlation between effective reading strategy instruction and use, and the development of pupils' exam skills; an experimentation is required. The experimental work involves the treatment of the pupils' questionnaire results in addition to the comparison between both reading exam scores of the first and the second terms as a procedure to measure the development of the experimental group as well as the control group.

### **3. Population**

The total number of 4.A.M pupils at Slimane Hadjres middle school at Bejaia is 180 grouped in six (06) classes consisting of an average number of 30 pupils each. These pupils have been studying English for three years i.e. all along the four years devoted to middle school education the subject of English is taught for three hours a week which is considered as the L2 of these pupils. Unlike English, French which represents the first foreign language in Algeria; five hours a week are devoted to this subject at middle school.

#### **2.1 Participants**

For our purpose of research, two classes of the six 4.A.M classes were selected to make up the sample. Hence, 60 pupils or 33.33% of the population represent the parent population; only 30 pupils form the experimental group while the other 30 remaining stand as the control group. The age of these pupils range from 15 to 20 years old.

### **4. Research Instruments**

The data collection instruments employed in this investigation include the teachers' interview, the pupils' questionnaire and reading tests. These are discussed below:

#### **4.1 Classroom Observation**

##### **4.1.2 Aim and description**

An observation checklist was developed to observe what goes on in the classroom and verify what reading strategies and exam techniques are being instructed and provided by the teacher. Additional comments and classroom observation notes were also written down.

#### **4.2 Reading comprehension tests**

Actual past examinations were assigned as reading practice tests to be performed by 4.A.M pupils. These 4.A.M pupils represent the experimental group; they were given one reading test every Thursday along a period of six weeks. They were supposed to insert answers into the provided reading test sheets at home during the weekend and give these sheets back to the researcher the week after.

#### **4.2.1 Aim and description**

Reading practice tests were assigned because they satisfy our research purpose, as well as test-takers' needs. This study attempts to identify not only 4.A.M pupils' reading comprehension difficulties, but also to provide these candidates with useful practice in order to be well-prepared to take the BEM final examination on the English Subject. Accordingly, we did not score those tests once returned back; we have just corrected the wrong answers using ticks, crosses and full comments. This way, we took for granted that even those learners responded to the reading tests at home they would not appeal to cheating and ensured that they would not feel discouraged by a poor mark.

#### **4.3 The pupils' questionnaire**

The questionnaire is made of 17 items presented under four main sections: General Questions, Reading Strategies, Exam Performance and Further Suggestions. It was administered to seek more accurate data about the pupils reading habits in addition to the information obtained through the use of classroom observation.

##### **4.3.1 Aim and description**

The reason behind our choice of questionnaires rather than any other research procedure is that questionnaires are anonymous therefore, pupils feel free to answer questions about their teacher's training on reading strategies and exam advice and techniques.

The pupils' questionnaire comprises four sections: General information, Reading Strategies, Exam Performance and Further Suggestions. The first section is made up of five questions asking the pupils about their age, reading habits and their favourite type of exam. In addition, the second section dealing with reading strategies involves six items each of which is accompanied by a number of options; these items treat the pupils' strategy use before, while and after reading, and their view of our experimentation. Furthermore, the third section includes five items followed by a set of options stating some exam techniques. Finally, the fourth section gives students the opportunity to add any comment or suggestion.

## 5. Data Collection Procedure

The present experimental work lasted two months. The first two weeks were devoted to the researcher familiarization with the environment of the sample and to record observation notes while sitting at the back of the room. After that, the assigning of practice reading tests begun and took six weeks, then after finishing with reading tests; one last step remained which is the administration of the pupils' questionnaire and could not be done during the ninth week because pupils were taking their second term exams. Due to this, we attended to the remedial work devoted to the correction of the second term reading comprehension exam. At the end of the remedial work, we together with the teacher had a discussion in terms of the symbols and the time needed to fulfill the questionnaire by the pupils. The pupils' questionnaire was handed by the teacher to his pupils in the absence of the researcher to avoid any interference which may be regarded as subjective or as a temptation. All the thirty administered questionnaires were given back to us by the teacher. The data collection procedure can be summarized in the following table.

Table 2

### *Timeline for Data Collection*

	Classroom observation	Reading Tests Assignment	Second Term exams	Pupils' Questionnaire Administration
Week 1	✓			
Week 2	✓			
Week 3		✓		
Week 4		✓		
Week 5		✓		
Week 6		✓		
Week 7		✓		
Week 8		✓		
Week 9			✓	
Week 10				✓

## **6. Data Analysis**

As mentioned previously above, data has been collected through the use of classroom preliminary observation, reading comprehension exam scores and the pupils' questionnaire. The data gathered from recorded comments and notes of the classroom observation will be analyzed, then the scores obtained from the exam reading tests of both the experimental and control group are compared and presented in graphs. Furthermore, results of the pupils' questionnaire, on the other hand, are analyzed using statistics calculating the percentages of the respondents' answers; the number of answers and the percentages are illustrated in tables.

## **Conclusion**

This section has presented a description of the method, research design, population and informants. Additionally, the three tools of data collection were presented. In the following section, we move to the presentation and analysis of the key findings.

## Section Two

### Data Analysis and interpretations

#### Introduction

This section presents the findings gained thanks to the three data collection procedures discussed in the preceding section. Representations such as tables and graphs are used to present and illustrate the results; which are going to be analyzed and interpreted just after. Comments on the results and correlation between them generate concrete conclusions.

#### 1. Analysis of Classroom Observation Notes

The first time we went to Slimane Hadjres middle school, we were introduced by the teacher to his pupils. At the end of the lesson, the teacher invited us to have a discussion with the whole class. We stated clearly the aims of our research and then asked the class for permission to conduct the experimental work. They accepted immediately to contribute to the research. The day after we distributed to this same class handouts entitled “Hints for Taking a Reading Exam”.

#### 1.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results

##### 1.2.1 Preliminary classroom observation notes

- ✓ The instructor taught reading strategies implicitly and has never mentioned their appellations or where each of them is supposed to be used: before, while or after-reading.
- ✓ Only seven pupils participated in the classroom even when it was about reading from the board or the schoolbook.
- ✓ These same seven pupils seem obviously to struggle with their oral reading.
- ✓ When a student is reading aloud, the other students do not listen; they all prepare the next paragraph instead.
- ✓ The teacher tolerated many behaviour problems and evoked some humoristic situations intentionally.

- ✓ The teacher used leading questions, a great deal of repetitions and guessing the meaning of difficult words recurrently.
- ✓ Pupils were tested three times a term; two of them consisted of one-hour grammar activities tests and an hour and half reading comprehension exam.
- ✓ The reading exam is scored on the basis of the final standard exam.
- ✓ Pupils were informed before taking any test by the teacher.
- ✓ The teacher reminded his pupils incessantly of the BEM final examination.
- ✓ During remedial sessions, the teacher explained the criteria of scoring the standard test to the pupils.
- ✓ The number of participants in this classroom reduced clearly when the teachers' questions were asking to give a personal example to apply a grammatical rule or to write a composition.

### **1.2.2 Description of the Reading Practice in Middle School**

In most cases, the reading materials presented in the 4.A.M schoolbook are too difficult to understand by pupils. As a result, the teacher translated, explained the grammatical structure of sentences, and gave many derivatives, synonyms and opposites, while students only listen. It happened that of thirty pupils in one class, over twenty never spoke or read an English sentence even once during a sixty-minute class, even though reading comprehension activities usually ensures the participation of the whole class.

The teacher presents new vocabulary. He reads the text aloud to the class while the students follow it in their books, then he asks them oral questions on the text to which pupils answer orally. When answers to comprehension tasks are given orally, the activity is dominated by a small minority of the best students. Then he asks them personal questions to relate the text to the students' own feelings, lives and experiences. After that, individual students read the text and the teacher interrupts to correct pronunciation.

During reading activities, the instructor sometimes taught test-taking strategies on an exam of reading comprehension. This facilitated the teaching of many difficult texts. When the pupils were being taught the exam structure, they participated

willingly in the reading activities. From time to time, the teacher gave test-taking techniques for reading exams which are summarized in the following:

- Giving reasons = telling why
- explanation = telling how
- Statement = stating facts without opinion
- evaluation = giving the writer's opinion
- the main idea of a text is an expansion of the title
- Identify whether the author's opinion is positive or negative.

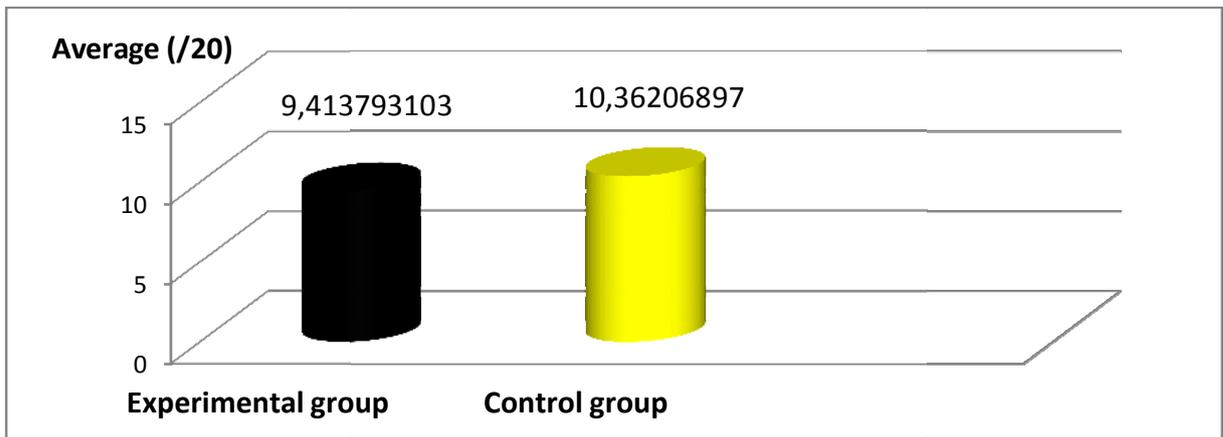
## **2. Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Tests**

### **2.1 Test Administration**

Throughout six weeks, six reading tests selected by the researcher were administered to the 4.A.M pupils. These reading tests are previous actual exams selected on the basis of the text's topic. We chose a variety of past reading exams; we tried to be eclectic since the first one is about exam anxiety taken in 2012 at Hadjres Slimane middle school at Bejaia. The text of the second practice reading test is entitled "Smoking"; it was taken in 2009 in Yahia Benaich middle school at Algiers. The third one is a past BEM exam subject taken in 2011 in Algeria; it is about "reading". The fourth reading exam is a past BEP exam subject taken in 2005 in France; its text is entitled 'Money, money, money'. A fifth subject was administered to 4.A.M pupils; it was taken in 2010 at Hadjres Slimane middle school, about memories of childhood. The sixth and last reading practice test is entitled "Britain Has a Weight Problem", taken in 2006 in France.

### **2.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results**

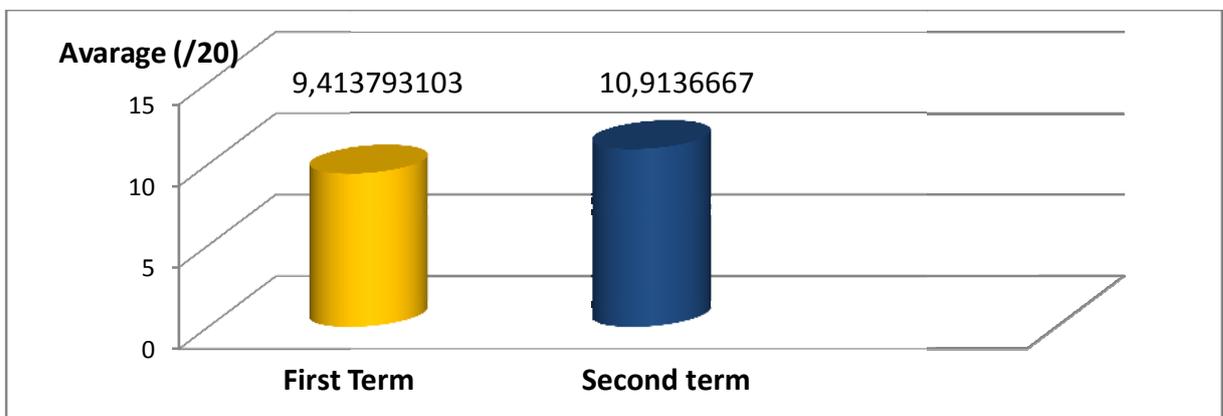
After the analysis of the findings that we have obtained from the six reading tests used to check the pupils' attitude towards how they use reading strategies while performing reading comprehension tasks. We move to present the reading comprehension exams' scores (First and second terms) regarded as landmarks to examine accurately the progress of both the experimental group and the control group.



Graph1. Comparison of the First Term Control and Experimental Groups' Averages

It is clearly shown by this first graph that the average measured (/20) during the first term realized by the control group class is higher than the average achieved by the experimental group. The control group frequency standing for the average scores of the whole class is above average while the experimental group average scores' is below average.

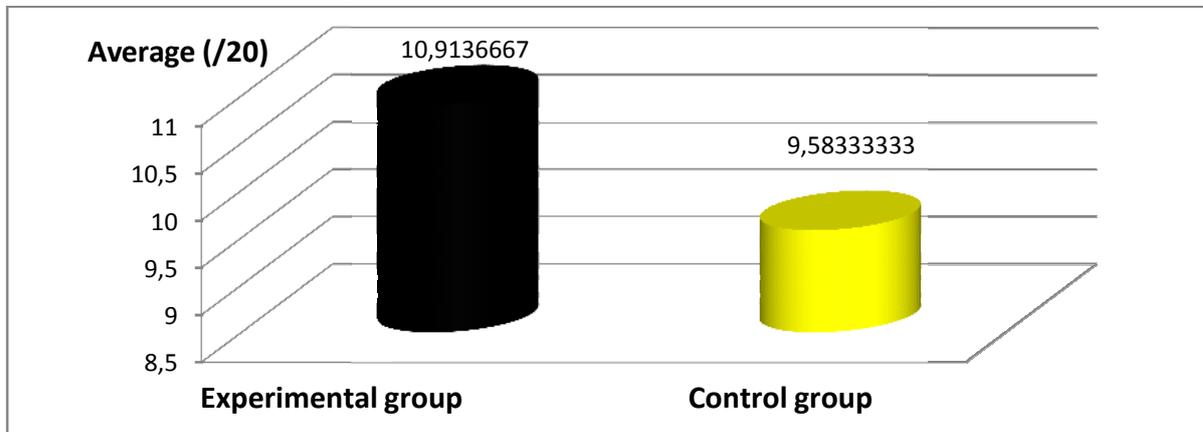
We come now to compare the average scores' of the experimental group realized during the first and second terms. The scores are assessed out of twenty (/20) and calculated using ANOVAs (Analysis of Variance).



Graph 2. Comparison of the First and Second Term Experimental Groups' Averages

We notice from the preceding graph that an improvement of ( $\approx 1.499873$ ) along a period longer than a term happened. The experimental group average scores of the first term reading exam was below average then, when evaluated during the second term reading exam; the average scores of this same group is clearly above the average.

After the comparison of the average scores of both the experimental group and the control group of the first term reading exam; and the comparison of the experimental group scores of the first term reading and second term reading exams; we compare the results of the second term reading exam of both the experimental and control groups.



*Graph 3.* Comparison of the Second Term Experimental and Control Group Averages

These results are displayed by the third graph; they are neatly opposed to the results displayed by the first graph where we have concluded that the first term reading exam average scores realized by the control group is merely higher than the one realized by the experimental group since this latter was below the average. A pure contradiction is generated, during the second term reading exam; it is the experimental group average scores which is above average by contrast to the control group average scores which is below average.

### 2.3 Final Remarks

Thanks to the correction of the reading tests, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. even if the practice reading tests were retyped by the researcher so as to organize the exam subject in a manner which allow the pupils to insert answers directly on the same paper, it was difficult to ignore the pupils' errors in writing. The problem of English BEM exams is that they do not really test reading comprehension because in this type of exam writing is used to check whether candidates understood what they have read.

2. in interpreting questions, pupils reported concrete sentences from the text and never responded with a phrase with does not appear in the reading text.
3. pupils did not express their thoughts freely when writing, they always prefer to use ready-made sentences as if they were concentrating on avoiding mistakes.
4. many of these pupils, accomplished the reading comprehension section of the exam successfully and fail to produce a single coherent sentence in the writing composition section.

### 3. Analysis of the Pupils' Questionnaire

#### 3.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results

##### Item (1). How old are you?

Table 3

*Pupils' age*

Age (years)	15	16	17	18	19	No answer
Number of Answers	17	4	6	1	2	0
Percentage (%)	88.22	13.13	20	3.33	6.66	0

As we notice, the overwhelming majority of pupils are 15 i.e. (88.22%). And the second highest percentage is 20%; it stands for learners who are 17. However, four of these participants representing 13.13% of the 4.A.M class said that they are 16. In addition, the lowest percentage is 3.33%, it refers to pupils who are 18; and pupils at the age of 19 are referred to by the percentage (6.66%) in a class of 30 pupils.

**Item (2). Do you read in English?**

Table 4

*Pupils reading ability in English*

	Options		
	Yes	No	No answer
Number of answers (N°)	22	8	0
Percentage (%)	73.33	26.66	0

Out of thirty pupils, only 22 of them (73.33%) read in English whereas the others represented by 26.66% ticked 'No' to report that they do not read in English.

**Item (3). If 'Yes', what do you read and how often?**

- a) Exam subjects and schoolbook texts.
- b) Books of fiction and stories.
- c) Newspaper and magazines.
- d) Other: Please, specify.....

Table 5

*Students' Reading Habits in English*

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
a	7	23.33	13	43.33	2	6.66	0	0	8	26.66
b	0	0	5	16.66	0	0	17	56.66	8	26.66
c	0	0	2	6.66	2	6.66	18	60	8	26.66
d	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A detailed examination of the table allows us to make the following interpretations. The overwhelming majority (13) of the respondents (43.33%) said that they 'Sometimes' read Exam subjects and schoolbook texts against the

percentage which follows 23.33% which stand for the seven pupils who answered that they 'Always' read in English; and only two of them (6.66%) responded that they 'Rarely' read English subjects and schoolbook texts and the remaining pupils (26.66%) reported that they didn't give any answer.

Concerning option **b**, most of the respondents (56.66%) said that they 'Never' read English books and stories while five of them (16.66%) revealed that they 'Sometimes' read in English books and stories; again another 26.66% did not answer the question.

Finally, 60% of these pupils informed that they 'Never' read newspapers and magazines in English; only two subjects (6.66%) answered they 'Rarely' read in English magazines and newspapers, and another 6.66% did not give any answer to option **c**.

#### **Item (4). How do you find reading in English?**

Table 6

*Pupils' Reading Level in English*

	Options				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Neutral	No answer
Number of answers	5	16	0	9	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	53.33	0	30	0

When asked to measure their reading level in English, all the participants answered this question. More than half (16) of the respondents (53.33%) said that they find reading in English difficult; nine of them (30%) ticked the 'Neutral' alternative while a lesser proportion (16.66%) considered reading in English 'Very difficult.'

**Item (5). What type of English exam do you prefer?**

- a) Reading comprehension exam
- b) Language games exam
- c) Grammar and vocabulary activities exam
- d) Other: Please, specify .....

Table 7

*The Pupils' Favourite Type of English Exam*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	6	9	15	0	0
Percentage (%)	20	30	50	0	0

For this item of the questionnaire, half (15) of the respondents (50%) opted for the grammar and vocabulary exams; 30% said they prefer language game exams while only six pupils (20%) responded that they favour the reading comprehension type of exams.

**Item (6). Before reading the text, you:**

- a) Predict the content of the text from the title.
- b) Read the first and last sentence of the text.
- c) Read the introduction and the conclusion before you decide to read the whole text.
- d) Other: please, specify .....

Table 8

*Pupils' Overall Use of Pre-reading Strategies*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	20	3	7	0	0
Percentage (%)	66.66	10	23.33	0	0

The results indicate that 66.66% of the subjects 'use titles to predict the content of texts' as a pre-reading strategy while a lesser proportion (23.33%) of pupils said that they used option **b** before reading a text whereas three of them (10%) used option **c**.

**Item (7). While reading, you:**

- a) Need to look in the dictionary for the words you don't know.
- b) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and reread the sentence.
- c) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and go on.
- d) See whether the unfamiliar word look like a French word you know.
- e) Analyse the grammatical form of the unfamiliar word.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 9

*Pupils' Overall Use of While-reading Strategies*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	1	2	6	14	7	0	0
Percentage (%)	3.33	6.66	20	46.66	23.33	0	0

According to the informants' results, we can say that the option which collected the highest rate is option **d** (46.66%) namely the dependence of pupils on the resemblance between English words and French words during their reading to handle a vocabulary problem against 23.33% for option **e**. Six respondents (20%) said that they skip the difficult words while 6.66% responded that they guess the meaning of unknown words by rereading the sentence and only one student (3.33%) answered that he needs to look in the dictionary for unfamiliar words.

**Item (8). After reading, what do you do to answer the reading comprehension questions?**

- a) Pay attention to all information in the text.
- b) Read the text many times.
- c) Summarize the text.
- d) Read only the part you are interested in.
- e) Read as quickly as possible until you find the information you want.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 10

*Pupils' Use of Post-reading Strategies*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	2	14	3	5	6	0	0
Percentage (%)	6.66	46.66	10	16.66	20	0	0

Among the thirty respondents, 14 of them (46.66%) said they used 'Rereading' as a post-reading strategy against 20% who opted for 'Reading quickly'. 16.66% of the subjects revealed that after finishing reading they read only the part they are interested in while 10% chose summarizing; and only two pupils (6.66%) said they read the text in detail (option a).

**Item (9). When a reading passage has an illustration, you:**

- a) Look at the illustration without relating it to the text.
- b) Compare what is in the illustration to what you read.
- c) Look at the illustration first and guess what the text might be about.
- d) Other: please, specify .....

Table 11

*Pupils' Frequency Answers for 'Interpreting Texts with the Help of an Illustration'*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	11	6	13	0	0
Percentage (%)	36.66	20	43.33	0	0

It is clear from the rate of answers that the highest percentage goes to option c. When given a text and an illustration, most of the pupils (43.33%) they guess the meaning of the text by looking at the illustration; eleven pupils said they do not relate what is in the illustration to the text while only six students (20%) answered that they compare the illustration to the text.

**Item (10). What is difficult about reading comprehension exams?**

- a) Loosing concentration when reading.
- b) The length of the text.
- c) Unknown words.
- d) You are not allowed to use a dictionary.
- e) As you read, you run out of time.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 12

*Pupils' Difficulties When Performing Reading Comprehension Exams*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	7	8	6	4	3	0	2
Percentage (%)	23.33	26.66	20	13.33	10	0	6.66

As it can be read from the previous table, the frequencies are very close; 26.66% said the length of the text hampers reading comprehension; 23.33% (8 pupils) responded that they lose concentration while reading and six of them revealed that the problem about reading comprehension exams is the vocabulary difficulty. Finally, 13.33 % reported that the fact that dictionaries are not allowed during the performance of reading comprehension exams makes the understanding of the written material harder while only three students (10%) regarded reading as a much-time consuming activity.

**Item (11). How do you view reading strategy instruction?**

- a) Efficient for English Language development.
- b) A waste of time.
- c) An opportunity to do extensive reading practice.
- d) Only Helpful for exam results.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 13

*Pupils' Beliefs about reading strategy instruction*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	5	2	13	9	0	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	6.66	43.33	30	0	0

This item of the questionnaire addresses the pupils' opinion about the reading strategy instruction they received all along six weeks. A great proportion of informants (43.33) said it was good for the practice of extensive reading; another proportion (30%) answered that it was only helpful for exam results and a lesser proportion (16.66%) responded that it was efficient for the development of English in general while the lowest proportion considered the teaching of reading strategies a waste of precious classroom time.

**Item (12). As a 4.A.M. pupil, success in the B.E.M exam is important because:**

- a) It is a personal achievement.
- b) It satisfies your parents.
- c) It gives you a pass to secondary education.
- d) It raises your confidence for further academic success.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 14

*The Importance of Exams in Pupils' Life*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	7	14	7	2	0	0
Percentage (%)	23.33	46.66	23.33	6.66	0	0

When it comes to say why exams are so important in life, the overwhelming majority (46.66) of students revealed that they are mainly important because they satisfy their parents and 23.33% responded that success in exams is a personal achievement. While another 23.33% answered that success in the BEM exam is important because it offers a high school entrance; and only two students viewed success in exams enables to further education.

**Item (13). As a candidate for an English reading exam, you expect your teacher of English to:**

- a) Teach you reading strategies.
- b) Provide you with exam techniques and advice.
- c) Do a lot of practice tests in the classroom.
- d) Assign many reading tests as home works.
- e) Give more emphasis to grammar and vocabulary.
- f) Listen to your problems and worries.
- g) Other: please, specify .....

Table 15

*Pupils' Perception about the 4.A.M. Class Teacher*

	Options							
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	No answer
Number of answers	2	5	13	5	1	4	0	0
Percentage (%)	6.66	16.66	43.33	16.66	3.33	13.33	0	0

As we can notice from the table above, most of these candidates (43.33%) believe that the teacher of the exam class should do many reading practice tests in the classroom, however; equal answers (16.66%) went to the options **b** and **d** which consist of the development of exam-taking skills and the assignment of actual past papers. Four of these (13.33%) exam-takers answered that the teacher of exam classes should not only care of his pupils' learning needs but he should also listen to his students' psychological problems. Additionally, a small proportion of this class 6.66% referred to reading strategy instruction as being essential to prepare the 4.A.M pupils to take their final examination while only one (3.33%) student ticked option **e**.

**Item (14). For you, a well-prepared exam taker should:**

- a) Regularly read in English outside the classroom.
- b) Use enough practice tests as a revision for the exam.
- c) Make vocabulary and grammar lists.
- d) Take note of everything he does not understand.
- e) Study on his own.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 16

## Pupils' View of a Well- prepared Exam Taker

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	13	9	4	4	0	0	0
Percentage (%)	43.33	30	13.33	13.33	0	0	0

Here, 43.33% of the informants said that which characterizes a well-prepared candidate from the other candidates is the extensive practice of reading comprehension exams against 30% who qualified the good exam-taker as the one who reads extensively outside the EFL class. While both options **c** and **d** received the same number of ticks, surprisingly; the option **e** which represents the study of exam-takers independently from their teacher did not receive any tick.

**Item (15). The psychological factors which can affect your performance in English reading exams are:**

- a) The fear of failing.
- b) Time management is difficult during exam preparation.
- c) Studying under pressure.
- d) Reading is a tiresome, mental activity.
- e) Lack of extensive reading practice.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table17

*The Psychological Factors Which Affect the pupils' Exam Performance*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	17	4	5	4	0	0	0
Percentage (%)	56.66	13.33	16.66	13.33	0	0	0

According to the answers that we have gathered, more than half (17) of the participants (56.66%) said they fear to fail in their standard exam while a smaller proportion (16.16%) reported that they study under pressure, however; options b and d received the same number of answers where informants expressed their difficulty both to manage their time to revise for exams and to deal with the activity of reading because it is purely mental.

**Item (16). You did reading comprehension tests as home works along six weekends, was it:**

- a) A good practice for the instructed reading strategies.
- b) A waste of time.
- c) A good practice for the provided exam advice and techniques.
- d) A way to build exam skills.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 18

*Pupils' Attitude towards the Practice of Reading Comprehension Tests*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	5	1	10	14	0	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	3.33	33.33	46.66	0	0

As this last table demonstrates, the biggest proportion (46.66%) of subjects informed that the administration of reading tests was an effective way to build exam skills. Another 33.33% (10 pupils) said they considered the administration of reading tests as an opportunity to practice the provided exam techniques while five of these informants considered this as an opportunity to practice reading strategies. Finally, only one (3.33%) pupil ticked the **b** option to say that the practice of those reading tests was a waste of valuable classroom time.

**Item (17). Would you like to add any comment or suggestion?**

Over than a half of the informants i.e. seventeen pupils, representing 56.66% of the experimental group reported the syllabus to be big thus they suggested all of them to reduce it. In addition, a proportion of 23.34% proposed to just omit the situation of integration which consists of the written production. Another, 20% of those participants raised the issue of increasing the weekly time devoted to English as a middle school subject to five hours a week as much as is devoted to the French language and to allot an extra half-an-hour to the BEM exam of English. Only one pupil claimed that 4.A.M teachers should devote much more time to the practice of reading tests in the classroom.

## 4. Summary

Through the analysis of the results obtained from the classroom observation, reading tests and pupils' questionnaire we have reached some insights related to our research topic. Firstly, teaching reading for exams, as revealed by the classroom observation and pupils' questionnaire can be an interesting experience for both teachers and pupils because they liked the idea of working towards a shared goal. Pupils accomplished the reading tests willingly and waited impatiently for the researcher to hand their home works once they were corrected while the teacher was rewarded by feeling that his teaching has contributed to the success enjoyed by the pupils. Thanks to the comparison of the experimental and control groups averages' of both the first and second terms reading exams progress was measured and the research hypothesis was certified. The second and third research questions dealing with active reading and the relationship between reading and classroom participation are going to be answered in the next section among the pedagogical implications. Additionally, the results generated from the pupils' questionnaire led us to conclude the followings. Rereading, using titles to predict the meaning of texts and guessing the meaning of unknown words through resemblance to French words are reported to be highly used by pupils; even if two of these strategies were not presented by the 4 A.M schoolbook and never taught by the instructor. Moreover, the experimental work conducted was seen by this pupils as an opportunity to do extensive reading practice and a good way to build exam skills. Finally, reading regularly in English is considered by those pupils as the main reason behind achieving good exam results; and the fear of failing seem clearly to be the most psychological hindrance of pupils' exam performance.

## Section Three

# Implications, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

### Introduction

In this last section of the last chapter, we assess the limitations of our study and propose some pedagogical implications. Recommendations for teachers and suggestions for future research are also proposed.

### 1. Implications

On a practical level, the findings of the study may be used to determine instructional actions to be followed by both pupils and teachers in the learning and teaching contexts.

#### 1.1 Pupils' training

Syllabus designers should pay more attention to needs analysis and course design. The Algerian educational reform of 2004 came as a reaction to the weaknesses of the previous one. However, till 2013; teachers report many mistakes to inspectors, pitfalls are noticed by students in the schoolbook and corrections are yearly implied. A serious gathering of information should be done in order to know the learners' needs and characteristics and then develop the suitable primary skills to instruct and the type of strategies to present in 4.A.M schoolbook.

#### 1.2 Strategic reading Instruction

1. The practice of silent reading ensures the practice of actual reading rather than reading aloud which obliges pupils to listen before they read and this generates the absence of skimming as a pre-reading activity since pupils cannot skim a text that they have already heard.

2. the instructor should limit the pre-teaching of vocabulary to a few key words that are essential for comprehending the text so as to devote more time to reading

activities and the development of important reading strategies such as guessing and skipping unknown words.

3. the teacher should ask the pupils to read three to four sentences instead of reading a whole paragraph by one pupil at a time to avoid having pupils who prepare the coming paragraphs.

4. pupils are interrupted in mid-sentences for the correction of their mispronunciations. The teacher should wait until the end of the sentence to have the pupil reread.

### **1.3. The role of the teacher**

To ensure an effective training, teachers should also develop an overall plan prior to the lesson which will guide them in the presentation of strategies. We suggest some steps for teaching reading strategies:

1. describe the nature of the strategy the learners are going to learn,
2. explain why a given strategy is important,
3. point out when and where a particular strategy can be used,
4. teach them how to evaluate their successful use of strategy. (Winograd & Hare, 1988)

### **1.4 Spontaneous testing**

Similarly, teachers who prepare a given class for an exam should balance teaching and testing. Tests that students go home and study for do not measure effective teaching and learning since pupils can memorize information that they soon forget after the testing event. As Rand (1997) stated tests are just a natural flow in the teaching and learning process like any other classroom routine. For testing to be spontaneous, teachers should make of everyday of learning a testing situation not to test how well the skills are used or how much information is being retained by the learners, but how much effort is delivered to learn the language. What is more important is effort.

### 1.5 Reading and participation

Learning is social in nature, to learn things people need to do them for this they required to work together in a meaningful way such as in class. Reading tasks are considered by specialists to be the most appropriate task to adopt in large classes because they offer all members of a team a chance to contribute in language learning. So, adapting a variety of reading activities cannot only increase classroom participation and collaborative work, but can also enable pupils to contribute in society.

### 1.6 Active Reading

Teaching pupils to be active readers help the students to understand the reading process. At middle school, teachers try to expose their pupils to a variety of academic texts so as by the time they reach high school, they have already met some comprehension difficulties which result from different types of texts. Active reading leads to productive reading because this teaching method of reading incites pupils to read texts that they might otherwise have avoided.

As the instructor teaches active reading, he gives pupils the required cognitive and metacognitive strategies that is to say while the instructor is responsible for the four main operations used in reading comprehension monitoring: summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting; pupils become aware of their cognitive abilities and resources which they use in their efforts to understand what they read. Konari (1994: 6) said: "What a reader knows about the task of reading will influence how s/he sets about controlling reading activities". By asking pupils to summarize a section of text, the teacher is requesting them to give attention to content. They are then asked to compose questions about that content in order to clarify meaning and engage in critical evaluation. Finally, the instructor asks the students to make predictions to involve them in drawing inferences. As konari (1994) summarized the process of active reading, this process begins with the instructor reading a text and summarizing a passage. Next the teacher asks the students questions to which they respond orally. The students ask questions to the instructor about the text for the purpose of clarification and at the end the instructor and students predict what will occur next. The process should be repeated by the teacher until pupils are familiar with the sequence of activities and the reading skills involved.

## 1.7 Extensive Reading

Pupils in general and exam-takers in particular should be encouraged to adopt good reading habits such as undertaking reading for pleasure and the like. The advantages of extensive reading are numerous:

1. Promoting a positive attitude to reading,
2. Increasing the amount of reading,
3. Encouraging the use of reading strategies; and
4. Acquiring not only a new amount of vocabulary but also an understanding of the properties of word in use. (Zimmerman, 1997)

## 2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This present study has a number of limitations; one of them is the experimental work was both money and time consuming due to the preparation, printing and correction of the reading tests so reading activities targeted to the practice of the instructed reading strategies were not provided. In order not to waste valuable classroom time only reading tests under the form of home works were administered. Another limitation is the use of questionnaires for data collection: questionnaires are self-reported, hence; the participants' answers may not reflect the reality (Angers, 1997). Also, the sample (60 pupils) used in this experimentation may be judged to be insignificant even if it represents 33.33% of the whole population and this is because of the fact that there only three teachers in charge of the six 4.A.M classes subscribed at Hadgeres Slimane middle school; each teacher teaches only two classes this is why a more important number of pupils making up the sample would be unattainable.

Further studies to overcome these limitations are recommended. By investigating accurately the characteristics of the endless set of reading strategies, methods of teaching reading in the EFL classroom and approaches to improve pupils' performance in reading exams; our research problem would stand as a spring-board for a new research and a completion to our research findings.

## General conclusion

The ability to comprehend academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that 4.A.M pupils need to develop. Throughout this study, we have attempted to investigate the difficulties confronted by pupils while reading their reading comprehension exams. All along the experimentation reading strategies and exam-taking tactics were given to equip these beginners from their early stages of learning English as FL and help them overcome their reading problems to be well-prepared for further academic education.

This dissertation was divided into two chapters. After the general introduction to the study, the first chapter was devoted for the presentation of the theoretical background of our work. The second chapter which was practical delved with the research design, the results of the study and concluded with suggestions for further research.

The methodology adopted in this research was quantitative and qualitative. Through the use of questionnaires, pupils' attitude towards the reading strategy instruction and reading comprehension exam-taking training were reported. Thanks to the classroom observation and the administration of reading tests, qualitative data were obtained as far as the instruction and training of reading comprehension test-taking strategies were deeply examined.

The analysis of the information obtained all the way through conducting the three previously mentioned research procedures allowed to testify the hypothesis we set from the beginning of our study, assess the progress achieved by the participants and ensured that both reading strategy training and exam preparation acted positively on the pupils' English language development.

The findings of this research work are interesting, however; more research on this topic using another research tool namely a teacher interview would be very useful to uncover the importance of the role of the teacher in reading instruction and his influence on the pupils' exam performance.

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# Section One

## Method

### Introduction

In order to test the research hypothesis, we have used three means of data collection, a classroom observation was conducted to report how reading and test-taking strategies training is taking place in the 4.A.M class; and reading comprehension tests to diagnose the learners' comprehension difficulties and a pupils' questionnaire to deduce the pupils' general strategy use. The results of the tests are then triangulated with the two other methods that are the preliminary observation and the pupil's questionnaire.

### 1. Research approach

Since the main aim of our study is to uncover the type of relationship between reading strategies and exam performance; the appropriate approach to use in this research topic is the experimental one combining both quantitative and qualitative method. That is, the quantitative method is reflected by the use of pupils' questionnaire and reading tests through which data is generated in the form of statistics whereas the qualitative method is represented by the use of the classroom observation.

### 2. Research Design

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between the teaching of reading strategies and the 4.A.M candidates' exam skills. To find out the type of correlation between effective reading strategy instruction and use, and the development of pupils' exam skills; an experimentation is required. The experimental work involves the treatment of the pupils' questionnaire results in addition to the comparison between both reading exam scores of the first and the second terms as a procedure to measure the development of the experimental group as well as the control group.

### **3. Population**

The total number of 4.A.M pupils at Slimane Hadjres middle school at Bejaia is 180 grouped in six (06) classes consisting of an average number of 30 pupils each. These pupils have been studying English for three years i.e. all along the four years devoted to middle school education the subject of English is taught for three hours a week which is considered as the L3 of these pupils. Unlike English, French which represents the first foreign language in Algeria; five hours a week are devoted to this subject at middle school.

#### **2.1 Participants**

For our purpose of research, two classes of the six 4.A.M classes were selected to make up the sample. Hence, 60 pupils or 33.33% of the population represent the parent population; only 30 pupils form the experimental group while the other 30 remaining stand as the control group. The age of these pupils range from 15 to 20 years old.

### **4. Research Instruments**

The data collection instruments employed in this investigation include the teachers' interview, the pupils' questionnaire and reading tests. These are discussed below:

#### **4.1 Classroom Observation**

##### **4.1.2 Aim and description**

An observation checklist was developed to observe what goes on in the classroom and verify what reading strategies and exam techniques are being instructed and provided by the teacher. Additional comments and classroom observation notes were also written down.

#### **4.2 Reading comprehension tests**

Actual past examinations were assigned as reading practice tests to be performed by 4.A.M pupils. These 4.A.M pupils represent the experimental group; they were given one reading test every Thursday along a period of six weeks. They were supposed to insert answers into the provided reading test sheets at home during the weekend and give these sheets back to the researcher the week after.

#### **4.2.1 Aim and description**

Reading practice tests were assigned because they satisfy our research purpose, as well as test-takers' needs. This study attempts to identify not only 4.A.M pupils' reading comprehension difficulties, but also to provide these candidates with useful practice in order to be well-prepared to take the BEM final examination on the English Subject. Accordingly, we did not score those tests once returned back; we have just corrected the wrong answers using ticks, crosses and full comments. This way, we took for granted that even those learners responded to the reading tests at home they would not appeal to cheating and ensured that they would not feel discouraged by a poor mark.

#### **4.3 The pupils' questionnaire**

The questionnaire is made of 17 items presented under four main sections: General Questions, Reading Strategies, Exam Performance and Further Suggestions. It was administered to seek more accurate data about the pupils reading habits in addition to the information obtained through the use of classroom observation.

##### **4.3.1 Aim and description**

The reason behind our choice of questionnaires rather than any other research procedure is that questionnaires are anonymous therefore, pupils feel free to answer questions about their teacher's training on reading strategies and exam advice and techniques.

The pupils' questionnaire comprises four sections: General information, Reading Strategies, Exam Performance and Further Suggestions. The first section is made up of five questions asking the pupils about their age, reading habits and their favourite type of exam. In addition, the second section dealing with reading strategies involves six items each of which is accompanied by a number of options; these items treat the pupils' strategy use before, while and after reading, and their view of our experimentation. Furthermore, the third section includes five items followed by a set of options stating some exam techniques. Finally, the fourth section gives students the opportunity to add any comment or suggestion.

## 5. Data Collection Procedure

The present experimental work lasted two months. The first two weeks were devoted to the researcher familiarization with the environment of the sample and to record observation notes while sitting at the back of the room. After that, the assigning of practice reading tests begun and took six weeks, then after finishing with reading tests; one last step remained which is the administration of the pupils' questionnaire and could not be done during the ninth week because pupils were taking their second term exams. Due to this, we attended to the remedial work devoted to the correction of the second term reading comprehension exam. At the end of the remedial work, we together with the teacher had a discussion in terms of the symbols and the time needed to fulfill the questionnaire by the pupils. The pupils' questionnaire was handed by the teacher to his pupils in the absence of the researcher to avoid any interference which may be regarded as subjective or as a temptation. All the thirty administered questionnaires were given back to us by the teacher. The data collection procedure can be summarized in the following table.

Table 2

### *Timeline for Data Collection*

	Classroom observation	Reading Tests Assignment	Second Term exams	Pupils' Questionnaire Administration
Week 1	✓			
Week 2	✓			
Week 3		✓		
Week 4		✓		
Week 5		✓		
Week 6		✓		
Week 7		✓		
Week 8		✓		
Week 9			✓	
Week 10				✓

## **6. Data Analysis**

As mentioned previously above, data has been collected through the use of classroom preliminary observation, reading comprehension exam scores and the pupils' questionnaire. The data gathered from recorded comments and notes of the classroom observation will be analyzed, then the scores obtained from the exam reading tests of both the experimental and control group are compared and presented in graphs. Furthermore, results of the pupils' questionnaire, on the other hand, are analyzed using statistics calculating the percentages of the respondents' answers; the number of answers and the percentages are illustrated in tables.

## **Conclusion**

This section has presented a description of the method, research design, population and informants. Additionally, the three tools of data collection were presented. In the following section, we move to the presentation and analysis of the key findings.

## Section Two

### Data Analysis and interpretations

#### Introduction

This section presents the findings gained thanks to the three data collection procedures discussed in the preceding section. Representations such as tables and graphs are used to present and illustrate the results; which are going to be analyzed and interpreted just after. Comments on the results and correlation between them generate concrete conclusions.

#### 1. Analysis of Classroom Observation Notes

The first time we went to Slimane Hadjres middle school, we were introduced by the teacher to his pupils. At the end of the lesson, the teacher invited us to have a discussion with the whole class. We stated clearly the aims of our research and then asked the class for permission to conduct the experimental work. They accepted immediately to contribute to the research. The day after we distributed to this same class handouts entitled "Hints for Taking a Reading Exam".

#### 1.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results

- ✓ The teacher tolerated many behaviour problems and evoked some humoristic situations intentionally.
- ✓ The instructor taught reading strategies implicitly and has never mentioned their appellations or where each of them is supposed to be used: before, while or after-reading.
- ✓ The teacher used leading questions, a great deal of repetitions and guessing the meaning of difficult words recurrently.
- ✓ Pupils were tested three times a term; two of them consisted of one-hour grammar activities tests and an hour and half reading comprehension exam.
- ✓ The reading exam is scored on the basis of the final standard exam.

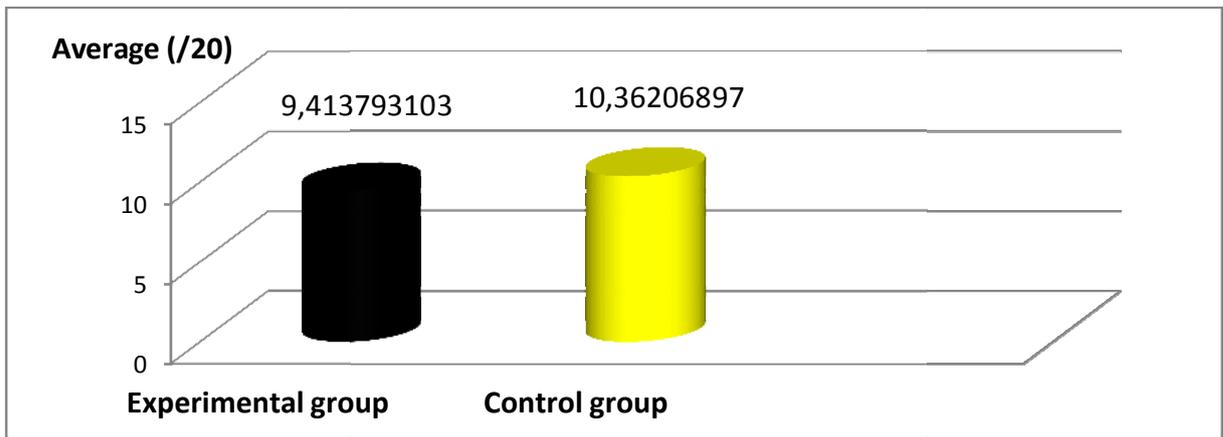
- ✓ Pupils were informed before taking any test by the teacher.
- ✓ The teacher reminded his pupils incessantly of the BEM final examination.
- ✓ During remedial sessions, the teacher explained the criteria of scoring the standard test to the pupils.
- ✓ Only seven pupils participated in the classroom even when it was about reading the board or the schoolbook.
- ✓ These same seven pupils seem obviously to struggle with their oral reading.
- ✓ The number of participants in this classroom reduced clearly when the teachers' questions were asking to give a personal example to apply a grammatical rule or to write a composition.

## **2. Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Tests**

Throughout six weeks, six reading tests selected by the researcher were administered to the 4.A.M pupils. These reading tests are previous actual exams selected on the basis of the text's topic. We chose a variety of past reading exams; we tried to be eclectic since the first one is about exam anxiety taken in 2012 at Hadjres Slimane middle school at Bejaia. The text of the second practice reading test is entitled "Smoking"; it was taken in 2009 in Yahia Benaich middle school at Algiers. The third one is a past BEM exam subject taken in 2011 in Algeria; it is about "reading". The fourth reading exam is a past BEP exam subject taken in 2005 in France; its text is entitled 'Money, money, money'. A fifth subject was administered to 4.A.M pupils; it was taken in 2010 at Hadjres Slimane middle school, about memories of childhood. The sixth and last reading practice test is entitled "Britain Has a Weight Problem", taken in 2006 in France.

### **2.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results**

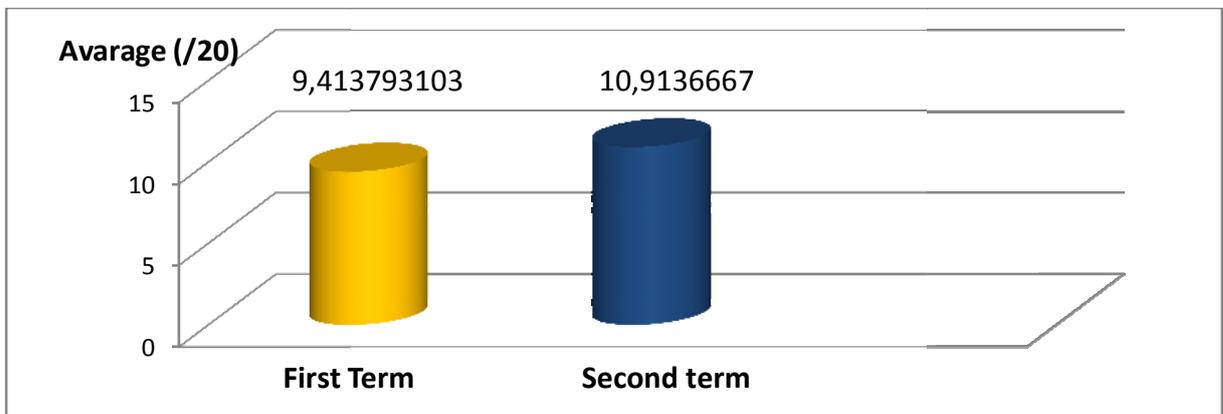
After the analysis of the findings that we have obtained from the six reading tests used to check the pupils' attitude towards how they use reading strategies while performing reading comprehension tasks. We move to present the reading comprehension exams' scores (First and second terms) regarded as landmarks to examine accurately the progress of both the experimental group and the control group.



*Graph 1.* Comparison of the First Term Control and Experimental Groups' Averages

It is clearly shown by this first graph that the average measured (/20) during the first term realized by the control group class is higher than the average achieved by the experimental group. The control group frequency standing for the average scores of the whole class is above average while the experimental group average scores' is below average.

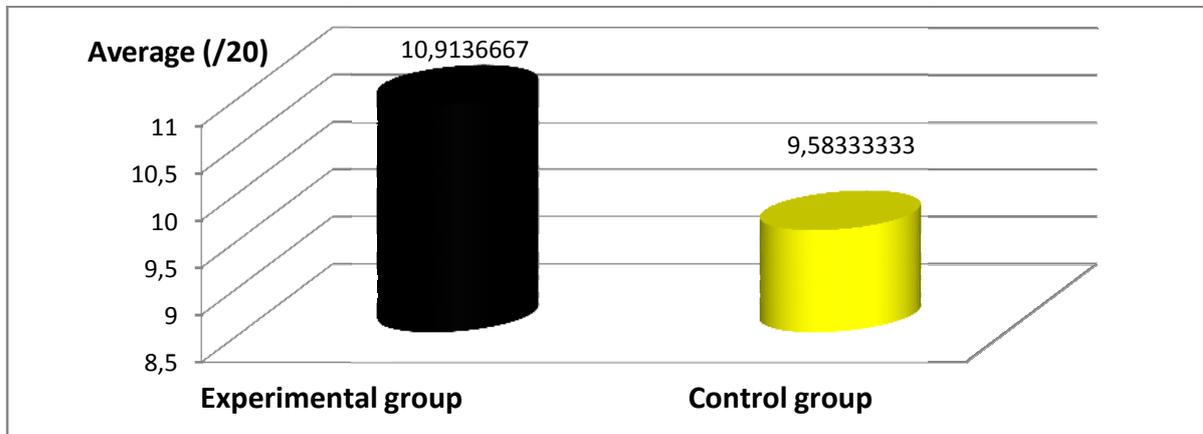
We come now to compare the average scores' of the experimental group realized during the first and second terms. The scores are assessed out of twenty (/20) and calculated using ANOVAs (Analysis of Variance).



*Graph 2.* Comparison of the First and Second Term Experimental Groups' Averages

We notice from the preceding graph that an improvement of ( $\approx 1.499873$ ) along a period longer than a term happened. The experimental group average scores of the first term reading exam was below average then, when evaluated during the second term reading exam; the average scores of this same group is clearly above the average.

After the comparison of the average scores of both the experimental group and the control group of the first term reading exam; and the comparison of the experimental group scores of the first term reading and second term reading exams; we compare the results of the second term reading exam of both the experimental and control groups.



*Graph 3.* Comparison of the Second Term Experimental and Control Group Averages

These results are displayed by the third graph; they are neatly opposed to the results displayed by the first graph where we have concluded that the first term reading exam average scores realized by the control group is merely higher than the one realized by the experimental group since this latter was below the average. A pure contradiction is generated, during the second term reading exam; it is the experimental group average scores which is above average by contrast to the control group average scores which is below average.

### 3. Analysis of the Pupils' Questionnaire

#### 3.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results

**Item (1).** How old are you?

Table 3

*Pupils' age*

Age (years)	15	16	17	18	19	No answer
Number of Answers	17	4	6	1	2	0
Percentage (%)	88.22	13.13	20	3.33	6.66	0

As we notice, the overwhelming majority of pupils are 15 i.e. (88.22%). And the second highest percentage is 20%; it stands for learners who are 17. However, four of these participants representing 13.13% of the 4.A.M class said that they are 16. In addition, the lowest percentage is 3.33%, it refers to pupils who are 18; and pupils at the age of 19 are referred to by the percentage (6.66%) in a class of 30 pupils.

**Item (2). Do you read in English?**

Table 4

*Pupils reading ability in English*

	Options		
	Yes	No	No answer
Number of answers (N°)	22	8	0
Percentage (%)	73.33	26.66	0

Out of thirty pupils, only 22 of them (73.33%) read in English whereas the others represented by 26.66% ticked 'No' to report that they do not read in English.

**Item (3). If 'Yes', what do you read and how often?**

- a) Exam subjects and schoolbook texts.
- b) Books of fiction and stories.
- c) Newspaper and magazines.

d) Other: Please, specify.....

Table 5

*Students' Reading Habits in English*

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
a	7	23.33	13	43.33	2	6.66	0	0	8	26.66
b	0	0	5	16.66	0	0	17	56.66	8	26.66
c	0	0	2	6.66	2	6.66	18	60	8	26.66
d	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A detailed examination of the table allows us to make the following interpretations. The overwhelming majority (13) of the respondents (43.33%) said that they 'Sometimes' read Exam subjects and schoolbook texts against the percentage which follows 23.33% which stand for the seven pupils who answered that they 'Always' read in English; and only two of them (6.66%) responded that they 'Rarely' read English subjects and schoolbook texts and the remaining pupils (26.66%) reported that they didn't give any answer.

Concerning option **b**, most of the respondents (56.66%) said that they 'Never' read English books and stories while five of them (16.66%) revealed that they 'Sometimes' read in English books and stories; again another 26.66% did not answer the question.

Finally, 60% of these pupils informed that they 'Never' read newspapers and magazines in English; only two subjects (6.66%) answered they 'Rarely' read in English magazines and newspapers, and another 6.66% did not give any answer to option **c**.

**Item (4). How do you find reading in English?**

Table 6

*Pupils' Reading Level in English*

	Options				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Neutral	No answer
Number of answers	5	16	0	9	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	53.33	0	30	0

When asked to measure their reading level in English, all the participants answered this question. More than half (16) of the respondents (53.33%) said that they find reading in English difficult; nine of them (30%) ticked the 'Neutral' alternative while a lesser proportion (16.66%) considered reading in English 'Very difficult.'

**Item (5). What type of English exam do you prefer?**

- a) Reading comprehension exam
- b) Language games exam
- c) Grammar and vocabulary activities exam
- d) Other: Please, specify .....

Table 7

*The Pupils' Favourite Type of English Exam*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	6	9	15	0	0
Percentage (%)	20	30	50	0	0

For this item of the questionnaire, half (15) of the respondents (50%) opted for the grammar and vocabulary exams; 30% said they prefer language game exams while only six pupils (20%) responded that they favour the reading comprehension type of exams.

**Item (6). Before reading the text, you:**

- a) Predict the content of the text from the title.
- b) Read the first and last sentence of the text.
- c) Read the introduction and the conclusion before you decide to read the whole text.
- d) Other: please, specify .....

Table 8

*Pupils' Overall Use of Pre-reading Strategies*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	20	3	7	0	0
Percentage (%)	66.66	10	23.33	0	0

The results indicate that 66.66% of the subjects 'use titles to predict the content of texts' as a pre-reading strategy while a lesser proportion (23.33%) of pupils said that they used option **b** before reading a text whereas three of them (10%) used option **c**.

**Item (7). While reading, you:**

- a) Need to look in the dictionary for the words you don't know.
- b) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and reread the sentence.
- c) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and go on.
- d) See whether the unfamiliar word look like a French word you know.
- e) Analyse the grammatical form of the unfamiliar word.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 9

*Pupils' Overall Use of While-reading Strategies*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	1	2	6	14	7	0	0
Percentage (%)	3.33	6.66	20	46.66	23.33	0	0

According to the informants' results, we can say that the option which collected the highest rate is option **d** (46.66%) namely the dependence of pupils on the resemblance between English words and French words during their reading to handle a vocabulary problem against 23.33% for option **e**. Six respondents (20%) said that they skip the difficult words while 6.66% responded that they guess the meaning of unknown words by rereading the sentence and only one student (3.33%) answered that he needs to look in the dictionary for unfamiliar words.

**Item (8). After reading, what do you do to answer the reading comprehension questions?**

- a) Pay attention to all information in the text.
- b) Read the text many times.
- c) Summarize the text.
- d) Read only the part you are interested in.
- e) Read as quickly as possible until you find the information you want.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 10

*Pupils' Use of Post-reading Strategies*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	2	14	3	5	6	0	0
Percentage (%)	6.66	46.66	10	16.66	20	0	0

Among the thirty respondents, 14 of them (46.66%) said they used 'Rereading' as a post-reading strategy against 20% who opted for 'Reading quickly'. 16.66% of the subjects revealed that after finishing reading they read only the part they are interested in while 10% chose summarizing; and only two pupils (6.66%) said they read the text in detail (option a).

**Item (9). When a reading passage has an illustration, you:**

- a) Look at the illustration without relating it to the text.
- b) Compare what is in the illustration to what you read.
- c) Look at the illustration first and guess what the text might be about.
- d) Other: please, specify .....

Table 11

*Pupils' Frequency Answers for 'Interpreting Texts with the Help of an Illustration'*

	Options				
	a	b	c	d	No answer
Number of answers	11	6	13	0	0
Percentage (%)	36.66	20	43.33	0	0

It is clear from the rate of answers that the highest percentage goes to option c. When given a text and an illustration, most of the pupils (43.33%) they guess the meaning of the text by looking at the illustration; eleven pupils said they do not relate what is in the illustration to the text while only six students (20%) answered that they compare the illustration to the text.

**Item (10). What is difficult about reading comprehension exams?**

- a) Loosing concentration when reading.
- b) The length of the text.
- c) Unknown words.
- d) You are not allowed to use a dictionary.
- e) As you read, you run out of time.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 12

*Pupils' Difficulties When Performing Reading Comprehension Exams*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	7	8	6	4	3	0	2
Percentage (%)	23.33	26.66	20	13.33	10	0	6.66

As it can be read from the previous table, the frequencies are very close; 26.66% said the length of the text hampers reading comprehension; 23.33% (8 pupils) responded that they lose concentration while reading and six of them revealed that the problem about reading comprehension exams is the vocabulary difficulty. Finally, 13.33 % reported that the fact that dictionaries are not allowed during the performance of reading comprehension exams makes the understanding of the written material harder while only three students (10%) regarded reading as a much-time consuming activity.

**Item (11). How do you view reading strategy instruction?**

- a) Efficient for English Language development.
- b) A waste of time.
- c) An opportunity to do extensive reading practice.
- d) Only Helpful for exam results.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 13

*Pupils' Beliefs about reading strategy instruction*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	5	2	13	9	0	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	6.66	43.33	30	0	0

This item of the questionnaire addresses the pupils' opinion about the reading strategy instruction they received all along six weeks. A great proportion of informants (43.33) said it was good for the practice of extensive reading; another proportion (30%) answered that it was only helpful for exam results and a lesser proportion (16.66%) responded that it was efficient for the development of English in general while the lowest proportion considered the teaching of reading strategies a waste of precious classroom time.

**Item (12). As a 4.A.M. pupil, success in the B.E.M exam is important because:**

- a) It is a personal achievement.
- b) It satisfies your parents.
- c) It gives you a pass to secondary education.
- d) It raises your confidence for further academic success.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 14

*The Importance of Exams in Pupils' Life*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	7	14	7	2	0	0
Percentage (%)	23.33	46.66	23.33	6.66	0	0

When it comes to say why exams are so important in life, the overwhelming majority (46.66) of students revealed that they are mainly important because they satisfy their parents and 23.33% responded that success in exams is a personal achievement. While another 23.33% answered that success in the BEM exam is important because it offers a high school entrance; and only two students viewed success in exams enables to further education.

**Item (13). As a candidate for an English reading exam, you expect your teacher of English to:**

- a) Teach you reading strategies.
- b) Provide you with exam techniques and advice.
- c) Do a lot of practice tests in the classroom.
- d) Assign many reading tests as home works.
- e) Give more emphasis to grammar and vocabulary.
- f) Listen to your problems and worries.
- g) Other: please, specify .....

Table 15

*Pupils' Perception about the 4.A.M. Class Teacher*

	Options							
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	No answer
Number of answers	2	5	13	5	1	4	0	0
Percentage (%)	6.66	16.66	43.33	16.66	3.33	13.33	0	0

As we can notice from the table above, most of these candidates (43.33%) believe that the teacher of the exam class should do many reading practice tests in the classroom, however; equal answers (16.66%) went to the options **b** and **d** which consist of the development of exam-taking skills and the assignment of actual past papers. Four of these (13.33%) exam-takers answered that the teacher of exam classes should not only care of his pupils' learning needs but he should also listen to his students' psychological problems. Additionally, a small proportion of this class 6.66% referred to reading strategy instruction as being essential to prepare the 4.A.M pupils to take their final examination while only one (3.33%) student ticked option **e**.

**Item (14). For you, a well-prepared exam taker should:**

- a) Regularly read in English outside the classroom.
- b) Use enough practice tests as a revision for the exam.
- c) Make vocabulary and grammar lists.
- d) Take note of everything he does not understand.
- e) Study on his own.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table 16

## Pupils' View of a Well- prepared Exam Taker

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	13	9	4	4	0	0	0
Percentage (%)	43.33	30	13.33	13.33	0	0	0

Here, 43.33% of the informants said that which characterizes a well-prepared candidate from the other candidates is the extensive practice of reading comprehension exams against 30% who qualified the good exam-taker as the one who reads extensively outside the EFL class. While both options **c** and **d** received the same number of ticks, surprisingly; the option **e** which represents the study of exam-takers independently from their teacher did not receive any tick.

**Item (15). The psychological factors which can affect your performance in English reading exams are:**

- a) The fear of failing.
- b) Time management is difficult during exam preparation.
- c) Studying under pressure.
- d) Reading is a tiresome, mental activity.
- e) Lack of extensive reading practice.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

Table17

*The Psychological Factors Which Affect the pupils' Exam Performance*

	Options						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	No answer
Number of answers	17	4	5	4	0	0	0
Percentage (%)	56.66	13.33	16.66	13.33	0	0	0

According to the answers that we have gathered, more than half (17) of the participants (56.66%) said they fear to fail in their standard exam while a smaller proportion (16.16%) reported that they study under pressure, however; options b and d received the same number of answers where informants expressed their difficulty both to manage their time to revise for exams and to deal with the activity of reading because it is purely mental.

**Item (16). You did reading comprehension tests as home works along six weekends, was it:**

- a) A good practice for the instructed reading strategies.
- b) A waste of time.
- c) A good practice for the provided exam advice and techniques.
- d) A way to build exam skills.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

Table 18

*Pupils' Attitude towards the Practice of Reading Comprehension Tests*

	Options					
	a	b	c	d	e	No answer
Number of answers	5	1	10	14	0	0
Percentage (%)	16.66	3.33	33.33	46.66	0	0

As this last table demonstrates, the biggest proportion (46.66%) of subjects informed that the administration of reading tests was an effective way to build exam skills. Another 33.33% (10 pupils) said they considered the administration of reading tests as an opportunity to practice the provided exam techniques while five of these informants considered this as an opportunity to practice reading strategies. Finally, only one (3.33%) pupil ticked the **b** option to say that the practice of those reading tests was a waste of valuable classroom time.

**Item (17). Would you like to add any comment or suggestion?**

Over than a half of the informants i.e. seventeen pupils, representing 56.66% of the experimental group reported the syllabus to be big thus they suggested all of them to reduce it. In addition, a proportion of 23.34% proposed to just omit the situation of integration which consists of the written production. Another, 20% of those participants raised the issue of increasing the weekly time devoted to English as a middle school subject to five hours a week as much as is devoted to the French language and to allot an extra half-an-hour to the BEM exam of English. Only one pupil claimed that 4.A.M teachers should devote much more time to the practice of reading tests in the classroom.

## 4. Summary

Through the analysis of the results obtained from the classroom observation, reading tests and pupils' questionnaire we have reached some insights related to our research topic. Firstly, teaching reading for exams, as revealed by the classroom observation and pupils' questionnaire can be an interesting experience for both teachers and pupils because they liked the idea of working towards a shared goal. Pupils accomplished the reading tests willingly and waited impatiently for the researcher to hand their home works once they were corrected while the teacher was rewarded by feeling that his teaching has contributed to the success enjoyed by the pupils. Thanks to the comparison of the experimental and control groups averages' of both the first and second terms reading exams progress was measured and the research hypothesis was certified. The second and third research questions dealing with active reading and the relationship between reading and classroom participation are going to be answered in the next section among the pedagogical implications. Additionally, the results generated from the pupils' questionnaire led us to conclude the followings. Rereading, using titles to predict the meaning of texts and guessing the meaning of unknown words through resemblance to French words are reported to be highly used by pupils; even if two of these strategies were not presented by the 4 A.M schoolbook and never taught by the instructor. Moreover, the experimental work conducted was seen by this pupils as an opportunity to do extensive reading practice and a good way to build exam skills. Finally, reading regularly in English is considered by those pupils as the main reason behind achieving good exam results; and the fear of failing seem clearly to be the most psychological hindrance of pupils' exam performance.

## Section Three

# Implications, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

### Introduction

In this last section of the last chapter, we assess the limitations of our study and propose some pedagogical implications. Recommendations for teachers and suggestions for future research are also proposed.

### 1. Implications

On a practical level, the findings of the study may be used to determine instructional actions to be followed by both pupils and teachers in the learning and teaching contexts.

#### 1.1 Pupils' training

Syllabus designers should pay more attention to needs analysis and course design. The Algerian educational reform of 2004 came as a reaction to the weaknesses of the previous one. However, till 2013; teachers report many mistakes to inspectors, pitfalls are noticed by students in the schoolbook and corrections are yearly implied. A serious gathering of information should be done in order to know the learners' needs and characteristics and then develop the suitable primary skills to instruct and the type of strategies to present in 4.A.M schoolbook.

#### 1.2 Strategic reading Instruction

Reading strategy instruction should be based on the examination of a number of variables including:

1. existing use of strategies prior to instruction,
2. levels of English proficiency,

3. Age of learners,
4. L1 background,
5. the length of instruction.

### **1.3. The role of the teacher**

To ensure an effective training, teachers should also develop an overall plan prior to the lesson which will guide them in the presentation of strategies. We suggest some steps for teaching reading strategies:

1. describe the nature of the strategy the learners are going to learn,
2. explain why a given strategy is important,
3. point out when and where a particular strategy can be used,
4. teach them how to evaluate their successful use of strategy. (Winograd & Hare, 1988)

### **1.4 Spontaneous testing**

Similarly, teachers who prepare a given class for an exam should balance teaching and testing. Tests that students go home and study for do not measure effective teaching and learning since pupils can memorize information that they soon forget after the testing event. As Rand (1997) stated tests are just a natural flow in the teaching and learning process like any other classroom routine. For testing to be spontaneous, teachers should make of everyday of learning a testing situation not to test how well the skills are used or how much information is being retained by the learners, but how much effort is delivered to learn the language. What is more important is effort.

### **1.5 Reading and participation**

Learning is social in nature, to learn things people need to do them for this they required to work together in a meaningful way such as in class. Reading tasks are considered by specialists to be the most appropriate task to adopt in large classes because they offer all members of a team a chance to contribute in language learning. So, adapting a variety of reading activities cannot only increase classroom

participation and collaborative work, but can also enable pupils to contribute in society.

## 1.6 Active Reading

Teaching pupils to be active readers help the students to understand the reading process. At middle school, teachers try to expose their pupils to a variety of academic texts so as by the time they reach high school, they have already met some comprehension difficulties which result from different types of texts. Active reading leads to productive reading because this teaching method of reading incites pupils to read texts that they might otherwise have avoided.

As the instructor teaches active reading, he gives pupils the required cognitive and metacognitive strategies that is to say while the instructor is responsible for the four main operations used in reading comprehension monitoring: summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting; pupils become aware of their cognitive abilities and resources which they use in their efforts to understand what they read. Konari (1994: 6) said: "What a reader knows about the task of reading will influence how s/he sets about controlling reading activities". By asking pupils to summarize a section of text, the teacher is requesting them to give attention to content. They are then asked to compose questions about that content in order to clarify meaning and engage in critical evaluation. Finally, the instructor asks the students to make predictions to involve them in drawing inferences. As konari (1994) summarized the process of active reading, this process begins with the instructor reading a text and summarizing a passage. Next the teacher asks the students questions to which they respond orally. The students ask questions to the instructor about the text for the purpose of clarification and at the end the instructor and students predict what will occur next. The process should be repeated by the teacher until pupils are familiar with the sequence of activities and the reading skills involved.

## 1.7 Extensive Reading

Pupils in general and exam-takers in particular should be encouraged to adopt good reading habits such undertaking reading for pleasure and the like. The advantages of extensive reading are numerous:

1. Promoting a positive attitude to reading,

2. Increasing the amount of reading,
3. Encouraging the use of reading strategies; and
4. Acquiring not only a new amount of vocabulary but also an understanding of the properties of word in use. (Zimmerman, 1997)

## **2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

This present study has a number of limitations; one of them is the experimental work was both money and time consuming due to the preparation, printing and correction of the reading tests so reading activities targeted to the practice of the instructed reading strategies were not provided. In order not to waste valuable classroom time only reading tests under the form of home works were administered. Another limitation is the use of questionnaires for data collection: questionnaires are self-reported, hence; the participants' answers may not reflect the reality (Angers, 1997). Also, the sample (60 pupils) used in this experimentation may be judged to be insignificant even if it represents 33.33% of the whole population and this is because of the fact that there only three teachers in charge of the six 4.A.M classes subscribed at Hadgeres Slimane middle school; each teacher teaches only two classes this is why a more important number of pupils making up the sample would be unattainable.

Further studies to overcome these limitations are recommended. By investigating accurately the characteristics of the endless set of reading strategies, methods of teaching reading in the EFL classroom and approaches to improve pupils' performance in reading exams; our research problem would stand as a spring-board for a new research and a completion to our research findings.

## General conclusion

The ability to comprehend academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that 4.A.M pupils need to develop. Throughout this study, we have attempted to investigate the difficulties confronted by pupils while reading their reading comprehension exams. All along the experimentation reading strategies and exam-taking tactics were given to equip these beginners from their early stages of learning English as FL and help them overcome their reading problems to be well-prepared for further academic education.

This dissertation was divided into two chapters. After the general introduction to the study, the first chapter was devoted for the presentation of the theoretical background of our work. The second chapter which was practical delved with the research design, the results of the study and concluded with suggestions for further research.

The methodology adopted in this research was quantitative and qualitative. Through the use of questionnaires, pupils' attitude towards the reading strategy instruction and reading comprehension exam-taking training were reported. Thanks to the classroom observation and the administration of reading tests, qualitative data were obtained as far as the instruction and training of reading comprehension test-taking strategies were deeply examined.

The analysis of the information obtained all the way through conducting the three previously mentioned research procedures allowed to testify the hypothesis we set from the beginning of our study, assess the progress achieved by the participants and ensured that both reading strategy training and exam preparation acted positively on the pupils' English language development.

The findings of this research work are interesting, however; more research on this topic using another research tool namely a teacher interview would be very useful to uncover the importance of the role of the teacher in reading instruction and his influence on the pupils' exam performance.

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## APPENDIX A : Observation Checklist

<b>Date</b> :.....	<b>Time</b> :.....	<b>Class</b> :.....
<b>N° of learners</b> :.....	<b>Attendance</b> :.....	<b>Average age</b> :.....
<b>Lesson</b> :		
.....		
.....		

**APPENDIX B: Reading Test N° 1****Money, Money, Money**

According to surveys<sup>1</sup>, 11-16- year-olds in the UK have £6.09 (€9.56) a week on average<sup>2</sup> in their pockets, and in the US, \$19.17 (€20.34) - that's much more than in the past.

Parents are giving more money to their children, but young people are also more responsible about their money than before. They try to earn<sup>3</sup> it themselves. They also open bank accounts to save their money instead of spending it all at once<sup>4</sup>

**Jobs**

Typical jobs for teenagers are baby-sitting, newspaper rounds, and helping at home: cleaning and cutting grass. Boys and girls in the UK earn an average of 65p a week doing these jobs between the ages of 11 and 13 and £4.55 when they're 14-16.

In the US, 47% of teenagers say most<sup>5</sup> of their money comes from part-time jobs. When they're 16, more than 60% of teens start summer jobs and earn a lot more!

**Pocket money**

Last year in the UK, average weekly pocket money for 14-16- year-olds was £5.66.

In the US, teenagers say they get \$5 to \$10 per week. But 45% of 12-18-year-olds say they get no regular pocket money. US teenagers say they feel very independent, but 53% admit they often still depend on parents and family for money.

**What is it spent on?**

Sweets and chocolate are still favourites for teenagers. In the UK, 57% spend money on these products.

Sociologists have noticed that as more British teenagers have mobile phones, fewer teenagers smoke. One theory is that teenagers can't afford to pay for both cigarettes and phone calls.

In the US, teenagers spend an average of \$20 a week in shops. But 60% say they also save money (compared to 21% of British teens).

Many US teenagers can drive a car at 16, and the first thing they save for is a car. The second thing they save for is university, because it is very expensive in the US.

Adapted from *Easy Going* N°4, 2001...

1. *surveys* : enquêtes.
2. *on average* : en moyenne.
3. *to earn* : gagner.
4. *all at once* : tout à la fois.
5. *most* : la plupart.

**Comprehension (8, 5 points)**

1. Cross the right answer.

This article deals with:

- the story of money in Europe.





## APPENDIX C: Reading Test N° 2

### Britain has a Weight problem

We are the fastest people in Europe. According to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO), nearly two-thirds of men, over half women, and one in 10 children under age 11 are overweight. The prevalence of obesity has tripled over the past twenty years and continues to rise. By 2010, we'll have caught up with America.

According to new research on fat, certain genes predispose some people, perhaps 4% of the population, to store extra fat, even if they eat small amounts of food. Another 5% may have a genetic disorder that makes them feel hungry when they are not. As for the rest of us, Stephen O'Rahilly, A Cambridge professor who has been working on this research, says the only solution is "good old boring exercise."

Adapted from Sanjida O'Connell, *The Independent*, October 2001.

### Comprehension (11 pts)

1. Answer the following questions.

a) What sort of document is it? .....

b) What's the origin of the document?.....

c) Who wrote it?.....

2. Say whether the following statements are true or false. Justify each answer by citing from the text.

a) The French are the fattest people in Europe.....

.....

b) NAO means natural Allergy Organization.....

.....

c) Obesity has doubled over the past 20 years.....

.....

d) Stephen O'Rahilly is a professor at Cambridge.....

.....

e) Practising sport is the solution against obesity.....

3. Find in the text the equivalents of the followings words.

- Poids .....
- Obèse .....
- Augmenter .....
- Recherche .....
- Maladie génétique .....
- Ennuyeux .....

**Linguistic competences (3 pts)**

Write the followings words in numbers

- Half .....
- A quarter.....
- Two thirds.....

**Expression (6 pts)**

Answer the following question in a paragraph of about 50 words.

*In your opinion, why are there so many overweight people, nowadays?*

Give 3 reasons and justify them.

.....

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## **Appendix E :Pupil's Questionnaire**

Dear pupils,

You are kindly invited to take part in this research through filling in the questionnaire below. This questionnaire is designed to gather information about how you use reading strategies while you answer English reading exams. Your answers will be treated with great confidence. Please, put a tick (✓) by the appropriate option or give full answer where necessary.

May I thank you for your collaboration.

## Section One: General Questions

1) How old are you? .....

2) Do you read in English? Yes  No

3) If 'Yes', what do you read and how often? Always sometimes Rarely Never

a) Exam subjects and course book texts.

b) Books of fiction and stories.

c) Newspaper and magazines.

d) Other: Please, specify .....

4) How do you find reading in English?

Very difficult

Difficult

Easy

5) What type of English exam do you prefer?

a) Reading comprehension exam  b) language games exam  c) grammar activities exam

## Section Two: Reading Strategies

6) Before reading the text, you:

a) Predict the content of the text from the title.

b) Read the first and last sentence of the text.

c) Read the introduction and the conclusion before you decide to read the whole text.

d) Other: please, specify .....

7) While reading, you:

a) Need to look in the dictionary for the words you don't know.

b) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and reread the sentence.

c) Guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word and go on.

d) Analyse the grammatical form of the unfamiliar word.

e) See whether the unfamiliar word look like a French word you know.

f) Other: please, specify .....

- 8)** After reading, what do you do to answer the reading comprehension questions?
- a) Pay attention to all information in the text.
  - b) Read the text many times.
  - c) Summarize the text.
  - d) Read only the part you are interested in.
  - e) Read as quickly as possible until you find the information you want.
  - f) Other: please, specify .....
- 9)** When a reading passage has an illustration, you:
- a) Compare what is in the illustration to what you read.
  - b) Look at the illustration without relating it to the text.
  - c) Look at the illustration first and guess what the text might be about.
  - d) Other: please, specify .....
- 10)** What is difficult about reading comprehension exams:
- a) Loosing concentration when reading.
  - b) The length of the text.
  - c) Unknown words.
  - d) You are not allowed to use a dictionary.
  - e) As you read, you run out of time.
  - f) Other: please, specify .....
- 11)** You received reading strategy instruction along six weeks, was it:
- a) Efficient for English Language development.
  - b) A waste of time.
  - c) An opportunity to do extensive reading practice.
  - d) Only Helpful for exam results.
  - e) Other: please, specify .....

### Section Three: Exam Skills

12) As a 4.A.M. pupil, success in the B.E.M exam is important because:

- a) It is a personal achievement.
- b) It satisfies your parents.
- c) It gives you a pass to secondary education.
- d) It raises your confidence for further academic success.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

13) As a candidate for an English reading exam, you expect your teacher of English to :

- a) Teach you reading strategies.
- b) Provide you with exam techniques and advice.
- c) Do a lot of practice tests in the classroom.
- d) Assign many reading tests as home works.
- e) Give more emphasis to grammar and vocabulary.
- f) Listen to your problems and worries.
- g) Other: please, specify .....

14) For you, a well-prepared exam taker should:

- a) Regularly read in English outside the classroom.
- b) Use enough practice tests as a revision for the exam.
- c) Make vocabulary and grammar lists.
- d) Take note of everything he does not understand.
- e) Study on his own.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

15) The psychological factors which can affect your performance in English reading exams are:

- a) The fear of failing.
- b) Time management is difficult during exam preparation.
- c) Studying under pressure.
- d) Reading is a tiresome, mental activity.
- e) Lack of extensive reading practice.
- f) Other: please, specify .....

16) You did reading comprehension tests as home works along six weekends, was it:

- a) A good practice for the instructed reading strategies.
- b) A waste of time.
- c) A good practice for the provided exam advice and techniques.
- d) A way to build exam skills.
- e) Other: please, specify .....

**Section Four: Further suggestions**

17) Would you like to add any comment or suggestion?

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## APPENDIX C: Reading Test N° 3

## Reading is better

Do you want to be a better reader? Turn off the television! A recent study found that kids younger than 6 spend about 2 hours a day watching TV, playing video games, or using computers. That is about the same amount of time they spend playing outside. It is three times the amount of time they spend with a book! The study which was released on Tuesday included more than 1000 parents of kids between the ages of 6 months and 6 years.

Spending a lot of time on the computer, watching TV or playing video games can make it hard to get better at reading. Kids who live in homes where the TV is on "most of the time" are less likely to be able to read by age 6.

Reading is still popular, though. Almost 80 percent of kids under 6 read or are read to. In fact, researchers say kids spend an average of 49 minutes a day with a book. And what is the average amount of time spent in front of the TV or computer? About two hours and 22 minutes!

Victoria Rideout, a researcher for the study, said kids who watch TV, use computers, and play video games will have an advantage in their lives. She says media can help their learning. But there are disadvantages, too.

Dr Henry Shapiro studies kids' development and behavior<sup>1</sup>. He says playing with toys, playing and talking with others is much better for kids' learning than watching TV. He also says there is a good side to TV, computers and video games. "Kids are home, safe, they are learning things."

1. *the behavior*: le comportement.

Adapted from [www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com), Oct 31 2004.

## Comprehension (10 points)

## 1. Cross the right answers:

## a) This document is:

a newspaper article.

an interview

a website article.

an advertisement

## b) It is about:

teenagers and TV.

children, TV and reading.

learning with video games and TV.

## c) This document wants:

to convince you that TV is bad.

to convince you that reading is the only way to learn.

to inform you on the place of TV in children's education.

## 1. Are the following statements true or false? Cross the appropriate column then justify your answers by citing from the text.

## a) Children spend less time watching TV than reading.

True

False

Justify: ...

b) Because of TV, children do not read any more.

True

False

Justify: ...

1

c) TV prevents kids from learning.

True

False

Justify: ...

d) Dr Shapiro is totally convinced TV is bad.

True

False

Justify: ...

2. Read the text carefully to find out the required information (cite only what is essential, without copying all the sentences!):

a) Two arguments in favor of TV.

b) Two arguments against TV

### Linguistic Competences: (6 points)

1. Complete the sentences by choosing each time the correct preposition;

a) Reading Harry Potter is:

most interesting

the more interesting than

watching the Harry Potter video.

more interesting than

b) Children spend too:

much

to watch

few time

watching

television.

many

watch

c) Children watch:

the

that's why

any

a Tv a lot,

because

they have

the

time left to read.

Ø

whereas

little

d) I'll do my homework as soon as:

I'll get home back home.

I get back home.

I got back home.

2. In the following sentences, replace by pronouns, or possessive pronouns, the underlined elements:

a) John and Mary watch TV a lot

.....watch.....a lot.

b) Mary's doctor comforted my fathers' friend.

.....doctor has comforted.....friend.

3. Ask questions on the underlined elements:

a) In 1905, children read a lot because there was no TV.

b) The study will include more than 1000 parents.

## Written Expression:

Write a paragraph of about 50 words on the following topic:

Imagine there is no TV any more... How would you spend your time? What would you regret?

## Britain has a Weight problem

We are the fatter people in Europe. According to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO), nearly two-thirds of men, over half women, and one in 10 children under age 11 are overweight. The prevalence of obesity has tripled over the past twenty years and continues to rise. By 2010, we'll have caught up with America.

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- Poids .....
- Obèse .....
- Augmenter .....
- Recherche .....
- Maladie génétique .....
- Ennuyeux .....

**Linguistic competences (3 pts)**

Write the following words in numbers

- Half .....
- A quarter.....
- Two thirds.....

**Expression (6 pts)**

Answer the following question in a paragraph of about 50 words.

*In your opinion, why are there so many overweight people, nowadays?*

Give 3 reasons and justify them.

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## Michael Schumacher

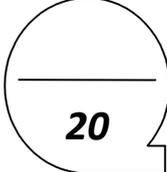
Michael Schumacher drove in his first kart at the age of five. Although his father, Rolf did not approve of his son's expensive kart ambitions, the boy pursued his career and occasionally received financial support from local sponsors. Rolf had built his first kart and registered him in the kart-club Kerpen\_ Horrem.

In 1980, the members of that club built new track in Maheim, suburb of Kerpen. Michael and his brother Ralf spent most of their free time there. As Michael was still too young for championship races, he had to wait until 1985 for his German kart licence.

In 1984 he promptly became German Junior Championship and in 1985, he won the German Championship again.

In 1988, M. Schumacher started his first season in Formula Racing Car. At the end of the year, Michael drew the attention of Willi Weber who was looking for outstanding talents. Weber invited him to many tests drives that ended up to a two-year contract for 1989 and 1990. Nowadays, Michael is four-time World champion and tops the list of most Grand Prix won in the history of Formula One.

[www.michael-schumacher.org](http://www.michael-schumacher.org).

**Mark**  20

### Comprehension (8 pts)

1. Right or wrong? Justify your answer.

a) Michael Schumacher drove his first kart when he was a teenager.....

Justify.....

b) Rolf is Michael's brother.....

Justify.....

c) Michael Schumacher won two world championship titles. ....

Justify.....

d) Michael Schumacher was born in Switzerland. ....

Justify.....

2. Find out in the text equivalents in English to the following words.

a- Circuit .....

b- Voiture de course .....

c- Championnat .....

**Linguistic competences (7 pts)**

1. Put the verbs between brackets in the right tense.

a) In 1991, he (to make) his debut in Belgian Grand prix.

.....

b) Since the age of five, his enthusiasm (to continue) to grow.

.....

c) In 2005, he (to be) probably one of the most famous champions.

.....

d) Nowadays, M. Schumacher (to be) a very popular Formula One driver.

.....

2. Write the followings in letters.

a) 1969 .....

b) 1988 .....

c) 1997 .....

**Written Expression (5 pts)**

Write a composition of about 5 lines to answer the following question:

*What type of car do you like? Why?*

Give three reasons.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Money, Money, Money

According to surveys<sup>1</sup>, 11-16- year-olds in the UK have £6.09 (€9.56) a week on average<sup>2</sup> in their pockets, and in the US, \$19.17 (€20.34) - that's much more than in the past.

Parents are giving more money to their children, but young people are also more responsible about their money than before. They try to earn<sup>3</sup> it themselves. They also open bank accounts to save their money instead of spending it all at once<sup>4</sup>

### Jobs

Typical jobs for teenagers are baby-sitting, newspaper rounds, and helping at home: cleaning and cutting grass. Boys and girls in the UK earn an average of 65p a week doing these jobs between the ages of 11 and 13 and £4.55 when they're 14-16.

In the US, 47% of teenagers say most<sup>5</sup> of their money comes from part-time jobs. When they're 16, more than 60% of teens start summer jobs and earn a lot more!

### Pocket money

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In the US, teenagers say they get \$5 to \$10 per week. But 45% of 12-18-year-olds say they get no regular pocket money. US teenagers say they feel very independent, but 53% admit they often still depend on parents and family for money.

### What is it spent on?

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Sociologists have noticed that as more British teenagers have mobile phones, fewer teenagers smoke. One theory is that teenagers can't afford to pay for both cigarettes and phone calls.

In the US, teenagers spend an average of \$20 a week in shops. But 60% say they also save money (compared to 21% of British teens).

Many US teenagers can drive a car at 16, and the first thing they save for is a car. The second thing they save for is university, because it is very expensive in the US.

Adapted from Easy Going N°4, 2001...

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2. *on average* : en moyenne.
3. *to earn* : gagner.
4. *all at once* : tout a la fois.
5. *most* : la plupart.

### Comprehension (8, 5 points)

1. Cross the right answer.

This article deals with:

- the story of money in Europe.
- the way British and American teenagers get money and what they do with it.
- British and American teenagers who have less money than in the past.



## APPENDIX C: Reading Test N° 3

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## Comprehension (10 points)

## 1. Cross the right answers:

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an advertisement

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Justify: ...

b) Because of TV, children do not read any more.

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Justify: ...

1

c) TV prevents kids from learning.

True

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Justify: ...

d) Dr Shapiro is totally convinced TV is bad.

True

False

Justify: ...

2. Read the text carefully to find out the required information (cite only what is essential, without copying all the sentences!):

a) Two arguments in favor of TV.

b) Two arguments against TV

### Linguistic Competences: (6 points)

1. Complete the sentences by choosing each time the correct preposition:

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3. Ask questions on the underlined elements:

a) In 1905, children read a lot because there was no TV.

b) The study will include more than 1000 parents.

## Written Expression:

Write a paragraph of about 50 words on the following topic:

Imagine there is no TV any more... How would you spend your time? What would you regret?

## Taking a reading exam

- 1 Look through the whole paper for a long time before you start.
- 2 Make sure that you can see a clock, or that you have a watch with you. Make a note of when the exam will end so that you can plan your time.
- 3 Read the instruction for each part **carefully**, even if you think you know what to do. Sometimes the instructions give you information about the type of text you will read.
- 4 If there is an example, read it first.
- 5 Don't panic if there are words you don't understand. You may not read them for the task.
- 6 If you are allowed to use a dictionary, use it for every word you don't understand.
- 7 If you are not sure of an answer, go on the next. You can always go back at the end. Don't waste time.
- 8 Leave time at the end to go back and check any answers you are not sure of.