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Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition via Intensive Reading

A Case Study of 4th Year Students of Islamic Sciences

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سورة العلق

"اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق(1) خلق الإنسان من علق(2) اقرأ وربك

الأكرم(3) الذي علم بالقلم(4) علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم(5)"

Translation

Read in the name of thy Lord who created.

Created man from a mere clot of blood.

Read and your lord is the most generous.

The one Who taught (them to write) by the pen.

Taught man what he know not.

Ahmad, Aziz(1980)

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the enhancement of English vocabulary via reading, for 4th year students of Islamic History Department. We hypothesize that if vocabulary teaching is handled with care through effective reading, and motivation is involved in reading a lot, the problems of lack comprehension will be reduced. To reach such an aim, we administered a questionnaire of 19 statements to 45 participants at Islamic Sciences University of Constantine with reference to 4th year students of Islamic History Department in particular, for the academic year 2009-2010. The results reveal that vocabulary learning may be improved through effective reading, and motivation involvement is very important too.

Dedication

In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful all the praise is due to God alone, the sustainer of the entire world.

I dedicate this work:

To my parents

To all my family

To my brothers and sisters

To all those who encouraged me, and contributed in the elaboration of this modest work.

Acknowledgement

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To all my friends who have supported me to pursue my interests.

At last, we pray God to convey that thanks in His own way back to you all “Amen”

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

TL: Target Language

FL: Foreign Language

%: Percentage

N: Number

R.M: Reading Motivation

R.C: Reading Comprehension

V.I: Vocabulary Improvement

STH: Something

SB: Somebody

PBUH: Peace be upon him

LIST OF TABELES

The student's questionnaires	The number of students in each answer	The interpretations
There are 19 questions	These questions are administered to 45 students	The interpretations and the commentaries are deduced from the student's answers.

TABELE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgement.....	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
List of Tables.....	V
Table of Contents.....	VI

INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem.....	1
2. background of the Study.....	1
3. Aim of the Study.....	1
4. Hypotheses.....	2
5. ResearchQuestions.....	2
6. Research Tools and Target Population.....	2
7. Structure of the Study.....	2

CHAPTER ONE

SECTION A: READING

1. Definition of Reading.....	4
2. The Nature of Reading.....	7

2.1. The Process of Reading.....	7
2.2. The Product of Reading.....	7
3. Types of Reading.....	8
3.1. Skimming.....	8
3.2. Scanning.....	8
3.3. Extensive Reading.....	9
3.4. Intensive Reading.....	9
4. Reading Drives.....	10
4.1. Reading for Usefulness.....	10
4.1. a. Getting Information.....	10
4.1. b. Know a Piece of Information.....	10
4.2. Reading for Interest.....	10
5. Social Aspect of Reading.....	11
5.1. Social Reasons.....	11
5.2. Compliance.....	11
6. Reading Engagement and Engaged Readers.....	12
7. Features of Engagement in Reading.....	13
7.1. Social Interaction.....	13
7.2. Knowledge Growth.....	13

7.3. Strategy Use.....	14
7.4. Reading Motivation.....	14
8. Variables Affecting the Nature of Reading	14
8.1. Reader Variable.....	14
8.2. Text Variable.....	15
8.2. a. Knowledge of Genre/Text Type.....	15
8.2. b. Knowledge of Subject Matter/Topic.....	15
9. Improving Reading Comprehension.....	16
9.1. Texts.....	17
9.1. a. Lexical Devices.....	17
9.1. b. Grammatical Devices.....	18
10. Effective Reading.....	18
 SECTION B: VOCABULARY	
1. Vocabulary Issue.....	19
1.1. What is a Word?.....	20
2. Word Mastery.....	20
2.1. Knowledge of the Form of the Word.....	21
2.2. Knowledge of the Meaning of the Word.....	21
2.3. Knowledge of the Use.....	21

3. Word Difficulties.....	21
3.1. Idioms.....	22
3.2. Transfer of Meaning.....	22
3.3. Words with Several Meanings.....	22
3.4. Sub-technical Words.....	23
3.5. Super Ordinates.....	23
3.6. Synonyms and Antonyms.....	24
3.7. Irony.....	24
4. How is Vocabulary Learned?.....	25
5. How Many Words Does a Learner Need to Know?.....	25
6. Expanding Vocabulary through Reading.....	27
7. Vocabulary Acquisition from Extensive Reading.....	27
8. Implicit Versus Incidental Vocabulary Learning.....	29
9. Importance of Vocabulary in Reading Comprehension.....	30
10. Vocabulary Improvement.....	31
11. The best Way to Increase one's Vocabulary in a Foreign Language.....	32
12. Successful Vocabulary Learning Techniques.....	33

SECTION C: MOTIVATION

1. Psychological Aspects of Readers.....	35
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1.1. Motivation.....	35
1.1. a. Instrumental Motivation.....	35
1.1. b. Integrative Motivation.....	36
2. Inhibition.....	36
3. How to Motivate Learners of English?.....	38
3.1. Make Use of Learner’s Environment.....	39
3.2. Present the Language in Natural Chunks.....	39
3.3. Use Appropriate Visual Aids.....	39
3.4. Include Cultural Components.....	40
3.5. Become an Efficient Manager.....	40
3.6. Adapt Materials to Local Realities.....	40
4. Academic Motivation and the Role of Teacher.....	41
5. The Relationship Between Vocabulary Learning, Reading and Motivation.....	42

CHAPTER TWO

1. Introduction.....	43
2. Methods Used.....	43
3. Sample.....	44
4. Nature of Research.....	44
5. The Nature of Vocabulary Inside ‘Islamic History’ Field.....	45

6. Discussion and Interpretation of the Student' Questionnaires.....	47
7. General Conclusion.....	52
8. Conclusion.....	54

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appendix: The Students' Questionnaire

Introduction

1-Statement of the Problem

In order to be effective readers, learners of a foreign language should display a readiness to use adequate strategies to achieve successful comprehension of the total text. Some studies show that reading outcomes may be influenced by factors related to reader's feelings; motivation and other factors. We have noticed that students in El AmirAbed El Kadar University faced various problems. When reading a text, they do not get the message therein and they tend to identify their difficulties in terms of the words they do not understand and they think that if the teachers taught them enough vocabulary via encouraging them to read more, their problems will be solved.

2-Background of the Study

The students lose concentration during the course; they were not motivated to read any more. Their lack of interest resulted in losing skills to deal with reading activities. This was a good reason that lets us think about the main causes behind such disinterest.

3-Aim of Study

Reading is very important in learning a foreign language, as it is one of the basic language skills. This study attempts to prove whether or not motivation –as an internal factor –influences the reading outcomes.

4-Hypothesis

If vocabulary teaching is handled with care through effective reading, and if motivation is involved in reading a lot, the problems of lack comprehension will be reduced.

5-Research Question

Our piece of research aims at addressing the following questions:

- a) Does the problem of misunderstanding emerge because students do not read?

- b) How can students be motivated to read more in English?

- c) To what extent can reading help in enhancing vocabulary?

6-Research Tools and Target Population

The main investigation in this piece of research is carried out through a questionnaire given to 4th year students of Islamic History at the University of Islamic Sciences for the Academic year 2009-2010.

These students have been chosen to be the population of this study. We have selected two groups of 45 students.

7-Structure of the Study

This study is divided into two main chapters; a theoretical chapter about the review of the related literature, and a practical chapter.

Chapter one deals with general issues about reading; its nature, the link between reading, vocabulary, and motivation.

Chapter two deals with the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire given to 4th year students.

SECTION A: READING

1. Definition of Reading

Giving a clear, straightforward definition of reading is not an easy matter. Many writers and researchers in the field of psychology, linguistics and language teaching gave different definitions about what reading is, how it takes place.

Baudoin et al (1994:1) state the complexity of reading; they show a distinction between “word recognition” and “comprehension”. They define reading as follows:

Reading is complex activity that involves both word recognition, the processor perceiving how written symbols correspond to one’s spoken language; and comprehension, the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected paragraphs.

The reading process starts with a visual activity being performed by the reader. First, the reader recognizes the language s/he is reading in. Then, the brain processes the information and gives it logical significance.

Some other approaches to reading exaggerate the importance of word recognition over comprehension. Adams (1990:102) asserts that “decoding the words of the text separately is important to build an overall understanding of the text”. Goodman, (1973) on the other hand, contends that successful reading is not based on simple decoding of the script symbols, but it is established on more solid grounds constructed of a number of reading comprehension strategies for extracting meaning from any type of text, including also context cues and linguistic forms.

Furthermore, Alderson (1984) states that “reading is a matter of making sense of written language rather than decoding print to sound”, he then describes understanding as a basis rather than an outcome of successful reading, and claims that readers will not be able to comprehend any passage without their own understanding of the world, experience and prior knowledge.

Other researchers regarded reading from a psycholinguistic point of view. Goodman (1973), defines reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” in which “reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer”.

Goodman(1973) agree that reading cannot be simply a word –by- word deciphering until meaning is reached ,they emphasis upon text comprehension through using knowledge of the world during the process of reading .

Goodman (1973:20) wrote:

“As readers use cues from the linguistic text, they bring their knowledge and benefits about the world to bear on making sense they guess what’s coming, making predictions and inferences; they are selective about use of text cues and they monitor their guesses for contradictory cues. Effectivereading, then, is not accurate word recognition; it is getting to meaning and efficient reading is using just enough of the available cues, giving what a reader brings to the reading, to make sense of the text”.

To reach an effective comprehension of the passage, the reader requires to use not only the information from the passage being read, but also his/her knowledge about the world.

Another definition of reading is that of Nuttal(1982)who states that in reading, the main purpose is the extraction of meaning from writing, our business is with the way the reader gets a message from a text. In her opinion, the main important matter is the reader’s ability to decode the message transmitted by the writer. This is related more importantly, to the understanding of how he gets and grasps messages.

Goodman (1973) in his own viewpoint relates thought to language during the reading process, when stating that:

There is an important interaction between language and thought. The reader decodes language as thought and the writer encodes thought as language.

According to Goodman, reader proficiency depends on the semantic background the reader brings to any given reading task.

From the above stated definitions, we can deduce the following points:

1) Reading is a process, carried out by the reader, who, in order to achieve a successful comprehension, has to follow some steps and levels that starts immediately when looking at the text being read. The linguistic level has to do with the recognition of the language of the text, and its structures by means of the eye, then the cultural level provides more information about the language of the written material; and the cognitive level helps in analyzing information and building meaning.

2) Reading has to do with written material, i.e., we read different kinds of materials which are available in different places and in different media, and all of these are being processed in the same way and has one ultimate goal which is drawing meaning.

3) Reading is for meaning. Thus, the main aim of reading is not to decipher what is being written, yet, reading is the activity of decoding ideas and meanings that have been encoded by written via the usage of specific symbols that the reader finds more suitable for that.

2. The Nature of Reading 'the Process and the Product'

It is possible to view reading both as a product and as a process, though it is not an easy task to make a distinction between the process of reading and the result of that process.

2.1. The Process of Reading

By process of reading, we mean the cognitive activity operating in real time. It is the interaction between a reader and a given text. Here the reader is supposed to be under different actions which are; reading the print, try to relate the information with each other, and think about what he is reading, and find out how useful or boring the text is, and infer the difficulties he may face when reading, and search for ways to overcome them.

2.2. The Product of Reading

By the product of reading, we mean comprehension of the written input. The product of reading may be different for different readers on different types of texts, at different purposes may some one aims at. Thus the reader may use some strategies which are: reading the lines, to reach a linguistic comprehension. Reading beyond the lines; in attempting to interpret what he is reading. Reading between the lines; to infer implicit information and meaning another thing that is worth mentioning is that achieving successful understanding depends on three interrelated elements which are (the reader, the text and the activity).

a) **The reader** constructs different representation of the text, that are important for comprehension and rejects irrelevant information that may impair comprehension.

b) **A text** may be easy or difficult, depending on its genre, its content, the kind of vocabulary used and its linguistic and discourse structure.

c) Concerning **the activity**, it is performed to achieve a particular purpose that is influenced by many factors such as interest and motivation.

3. Types of Reading

To reach one of the reading purposes; the reader has to use a given type of reading that he/she thinks-would be-the most appropriate. Reading types are the diverse behaviors adopted by the reader during the reading activity. In deed they are categorized according to the speed and concentration that, in their turn, are dictated by the particular purpose the person has in mind when approaching a piece of writing (Davies, 1995:136)

Generally speaking four reading styles i-e, types will be clarified in the coming points:

3.1. Skimming: it is a quick reading, may the reader use to get the gist of a selection. Here the reader glances at the text to find out what it is about, he may select only few parts to read, perhaps, the beginning and the end of the passages where the main points are generally summarized.

3.2. Scanning: it is a quick reading, it occurs when a reader searches for specific information or a particular detail such as a date, a name, a number.....etc

Baudoin et al, (op.cit, 22) advice to follow some steps when scanning a text for specific information:

-the reader limits the target datum clearly, before starting looking for it.

-he uses an appropriate source,

-he lets his eyes run over the print skipping all unnecessary words, and he stops only at the information needed and picks it up without going beyond.

Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading, they are similar in the sense that the reader is going through a selection, and different since in the first, i-e, skimming the information needed is general, and in the second, i-e scanning the information required is very specific.

3.3. Extensive Reading

By extensive reading, we mean slow careful reading of long written materials such as novels and books for the purpose of global understanding (Davies, op.cit:137). This technique is very useful to promote the reader's vocabulary stock, automatic word identification and knowledge of the language and world in general. Extensive reading is performed for entertainment in a relaxed way.

3.4. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is called study reading, it is concentrated and less relaxed, it involves a close study of shorter texts and aims at attaining learning goals. Intensive reading includes critical reading where

the reader on his own tries to make critical judgments about the text he is reading by offering his/her own interpretation. This is what is known as reading between the lines, when the reader looks for meaning behind the author's own words. Some researchers assured that the four reading types may be practiced at once during the same act of reading. For example, a reader may browse a magazine for an article, scan the article for a given item, and then decide to read it all extensively with deep meditation.

These changes from one behavior to another show that the way a person reads is dictated by his drives and serves for reaching the main purposes the reader aims at.

4. Reading Drives

Reading drives are the main reasons that urge people to read. River (1968:95) describes them as being "the normal uses of readings". Carver (1988) within the same scope proposes that the majority of people read either by the need to get information, or experience pleasure. In all cases, reading is usually undertaken for a particular purpose-e, reading is not an isolated activity that takes place in some vacuum. The purpose can be achieved in different ways, depending on the reader's proficiency. Nuttal (1982) states that the most typical use of reading in a foreign language is to improve the language. The authentic purposes of reading are often submerged by the purpose of language improvement. The main aim of foreign language students is to have access to documents, and written material published in the foreign language learned to keep up to date with recent information. Students have to develop a reading ability to get as successfully as possible the message from the text and this can be best achieved via one of the reading techniques that have been already mentioned.

The two reading drives are the following:

4.1. Reading for Usefulness

Reading for usefulness is motivated by two main objectives

4.1.a.The first purpose is *getting the information* for its sake, e.g:reading the newspaper to know current events.

4.1. b.The second aim is *to know a piece of information* in order to employ it in performing a task such as: reading a machine manual, follow the instruction, to make it work.

4.2. Reading for Interest

In fact, reading for 'pleasure' and reading for 'interest' are equivalent. People read novels, magazines or poems to satisfy their inner desires. To do so, they are not looking for information, but rather for enjoyment, be it intellectual or emotional

It has been stated that reading for usefulness and interest categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. E.g.:in the course of study, reading in history book, can evoke the student delight and satisfaction.

5. Social Aspect of Reading

Since reading is perceived as social activity in which readers interact individually and collectively with text, reading motivation includes social aspects of reading. Social reasons for reading and compliance are two dimensions under the social aspect of reading.

5.1. Social Reasons

According to Guthrie (1993:42), social reasons for reading can be described as "the process of sharing the meanings gained from reading with friends and family". Guthrie et al.(1993)state that, reading is an activity that brings some fun, in which readers interact with each other, exchanging ideas and interests about reading materials, and helping each other to achieve comprehension.

5.2. Compliance

b) Guthrie (1993:52) describes compliance in simple words saying that it is “reading because of an external goal or requirement”. Thus, compliance simply means reading for factors outside the reader, and that s/he has to obey since s/he is considered as part of a community.

As mentioned earlier, these dimensions influence reading performance to a given extent; however, the dimensions which are mostly related to reading are social factors, self-efficacy, curiosity, recognition, involvement, grades, and importance

6. Reading Engagement and Engaged Readers

‘Reading engagement’ and ‘engaged readers’ are two concepts related to reading motivation. According to Guthrie et al (1993:400), reading engagement is crucial for the development of life-long literacy learners. “This indicates that reading engagement is not a momentary feature in individuals since it promotes their abilities to undertake literacy activities all their life.

Reading engagement has been defined as follows: it is the extent to which an individual reads to the exclusion of other activities, particularly when faced with other choices. This definition emphasizes the fact that engagement is a deliberate behavior that the reader undertakes rather than other activities.

Concerning engaged readers, the national institute for literacy (2007) explains that the term is used to refer to individuals who “tend to enjoy reading and to read more frequently “(35). In addition, it has been claimed that individuals who are engaged in reading usually develop different goals when undertaking reading activities, using what they have already acquired from their past experiences to produce new meanings and interacting with each other. Guthrie (1993) states that engaged readers have four main features, they are cognitively competent, motivated, knowledge-driven, and socially interactive once we relate this explanation to what reading engagement is in terms of motivation and social interaction, engaged readers can be identified as follows:

Engaged readers are not only motivated and socially interactive but are also using their background knowledge to gain new understanding. As this understanding is often hard won, engaged students are strategic in reading a variety of text. They employ such strategies as questioning and summarizing to learn from books (Guthrie et al (1993:60)

From the above explanation, we can distinguish the following feature of engagement in reading.

7. Features of Engagement in Reading

7.1.Social Interaction:

Reading is assumed to be a social activity (Guthrie, 1993). That is why the social interaction is supposed to be the first feature of engagement in reading and engaged readers.

In fact, readers are socially interacting as they are exchanging different topics and discussing different reading materials, and helping each other when necessary. Guthrie, et al(1993:35) state that, engaged readers are socially interacting in the sense that they “may share vocabulary meanings, comprehension strategies, note-taking techniques, and other tools for comprehending books”.

7.2. Knowledge Growth

Expanding knowledge and experience through text interaction is an essential part of reading engagement. According to Guthrie, et al (1993) engaged readers intend to develop their knowledge by using what they have learned and their experiences to increase their knowledge via reading.

7.3. Strategy Use

Engaged readers are said to process “cognitive competence,referring to comprehensionskills and cognitive strategies for learning from texts” (Guthrie, 1993).Engaged readers, need to use comprehension strategies,and other learning strategies,to develop their reading skills and increase their knowledge.

7.4. Reading Motivation

Guthrie(1993) view that motivationis essential to engagement since motivation is a very important factor serves in activating behavior.

The above four features should integrate so that readers engage in reading, and achieve well in reading activities. In case one of these features is lacking,engagement will not be fulfilled and readers, will said to be disengaged readers (Guthrie1993).

8. Variables Affecting the Nature of Reading

Starting from the fact that reading is a process of interaction between the reader and the text,understanding what we read depends on what is presented to the reader, i-e,the text and what knowledge of vocabulary items the reader already processes before reading a given passage.Thus,the nature of reading can be affected by a number of several variables that belongs to the part of readers,on the one hand,and on thetext type on the other.

8.1. Reader Variables

The product of reading will vary according to the reader .Different readers will arrive at different products since they start off from different positions.Reader’s background knowledge,their motivation to read,and their reading ability are some of the variables that may affect the nature of reading,another element that is worth mentioning is that what a reader knows affect what s/he understands. Moreover,being motivated to read,means that the reader starts reading the text prepared to find a number of things init, such as information and ideas s/he is interested in.This

'expectation' is inherent in the process of reading which is a permanent interrelationship between the reader and the text. In short terms, the more one is motivated to read, the better the outcome of understanding will be.

8.2. Text Variables

8.2. a. Knowledge of Genre/Text Type

The term genre refers to any classification of reading materials based on text type. Texts may be divided by type of publication (newspapers, news, and books with a further breakdown within each unit; or they may be divided by expository type, (essays, research reports, theoretical articles, etc.). There has been surprisingly little empirical research into reader's knowledge of the text feature of particular genres, and its relationship to reading process or product. Once the reader knows how the text- s/he is reading- is organized, what sort of information to expect, in what place, as well as how information is signaled and starve to identify the difficulties inherent in a given type of texts, and the changes of content that might be marked, s/he can think of the importance in facilitating reading, and helping the reader to improve their reading comprehension.

8.2.b. Knowledge of Subject Matter/Topic

If the reader knows absolutely nothing about the topic of a text, s/he will find it difficult to learn new information and understand new topics upon several texts in unfamiliar areas. Similarly, it would appear obvious that readers will find it easier to read texts in areas they are supposed to be familiar with. Thus, subject matter familiarity might be expected to have a facilitating effect. Some studies have provided evidence that superior linguistic proficiency can compensate for the lack of subject knowledge, and that familiarity with subject matter can compensate for inferior linguistic proficiency.

From the above explanation, we can deduce that levels of understanding might be a matter of some variables such as text type, cultural familiarity and subject matter/area, within or outside the reader's knowledge.

9. Improving Reading Comprehension

Almost all researchers and teachers in the field of reading agree upon the fact that the main aim of the reading process is to understand print materials. In fact reading is seen as a dynamic activity that involves a number of perceptual, linguistic and cognitive processes linked to text and reader's features. The processes involved in comprehension include understanding syntactic structure, inferring word meaning, making link within and between sentences and extracting the general meaning of the content of the text. Furthermore, comprehension is assumed to be the result of a balanced interplay between; on the one hand, the data brought in by the text in a script form and, on the other hand data provided by reader's his/her background knowledge.

It has been believed that reading is based on the reader's background knowledge about what s/he is reading, as well as knowledge about the linguistic dimension of the text. It was assumed that meaning is not directly represented in the surface structure of language. Thus, readers must bring meaning-deep structure-to what they read, using their prior knowledge of the subject and of the language of the text.

Moreover, it has been stated that comprehension should be regarded as a basis for successful reading instead of being its logical outcome. In order to improve one's reading comprehension s/he has to be aware of the different elements involved in reading comprehension which are:

9.1. Texts

A text is defined as a piece of writing consisting of one sentence or more, organized to carry a coherently structured message. Halliday and Hasan (1976:85) define it as:

A unit of language in use...and it is not defined by its size...A text

is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of

meaning. A text has texture and that is what distinguishes it from

something that is not a text. It derives this structure from the fact

that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment.

In order to make the task of comprehension easier, teachers have to provide texts related to the student's field of study, and help them to learn and to put into practice suitable strategies applied for extracting meaning.

From what has been said earlier texts-in fact-are not random sequences; they form a semantic unity and can be organized through cohesive devices. These latter can be divided into two types: lexical and grammatical.

9.1.a. Lexical Devices

The lexical content is one of the main aspects of a reading text that requires to be thought in order to bring out the meaning of the text and to enable students to establish relations between its different parts. This is achieved by means of vocabulary: synonymy, superordinates, and general nouns.

9.1.b. Grammatical Devices

Grammar can be taught through a text, despite the fact that the understanding of a passage is the reader's main objective. Reinforcing the mastery of grammatical devices helps in improving reading comprehension. The grammatical devices identified and described by Halliday and Hasan (1976) are reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions. One has to break reading into smaller steps, for improving reading comprehension. The key to improve reading comprehension is not moving the

eyes across a passage quickly. It is about creating a mental framework that helps the reader process words and ideas.

10. Effective Reading

Reading is all about information, it is not about the number of words you read, but the amount of value you extract from them, though, many students, when they read, have no particular purpose in mind, they can make their reading more effective by making use of a plan.

Firstly, they should broaden their knowledge by reading more; and decide precisely why they are reading a particular book. Then, they should decide exactly what they are going to read. Getting a general idea of the contents before starting to read would be very useful in this case. Smart readers should ask themselves a specific question about their reading, and try to anticipate the author and predict future ideas and questions. If they are right, this reinforces their understanding, and if they are wrong, they will make adjustments. Finally, students should try to answer the being asked-questions by making notes as they read Day (1988).

SECTION B: VOCABULARY

1. Vocabulary Issue

One of the main factors that hinder reading comprehension is the vocabulary issue. The teaching of vocabulary has long been neglected. It has not been a primary concern since it is assumed that vocabulary develops naturally through exposure to comprehensible input in meaningful context (Krashen, 1989, cited in Gridharam and Conlan, 2003, on_line pages)

In fact, the word vocabulary has been defined as follows: "the term vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words and their meaning Laufer (1989). Despite the fact that this definition is too limited, since words come in two forms: "oral and print". Oral vocabulary refers to the words

recognized and used in listening and speaking. Print vocabulary includes those words that are recognized and used in reading and writing. Word knowledge also comes in two kinds:receptive and productive.By receptive vocabulary,we mean the words that we recognize when we hear or see them .Productive vocabulary includes the words we use when we speak or write.

In short terms, the term vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words and word meanings in both oral and print languages in productive and receptive forms.

1.1. What is a Word?

All languages have words. Language emerges first as words,both historically,and in the terms of the way each of us learned his first and subsequent languages.The acquisition and the coining of new words never stops.

If one is not familiar with the terminology of a given text,then,the text will be heavy going,due to both the density and specialized nature of its vocabulary.

Learners of asecond language experience a similar bewilderment even withmuch simpler texts. They may be confronted with words that are totallyunfamiliar, or possibly obscure. They may even be meeting concepts that are simply not represented by words in their first languagetheir problems are compounded when they need to produce language. Finding the right word to fit the intended meaning is frustrating when your store of words is limited. And when words get confused with each other,even within this limited store,then,the results can be disastrous.

2. Word Mastery

Richard (1992) states that the decision about the meaning of a word is not an easy matter since it involves different aspects of knowledge according to him, knowing a word means how often this word is encountered in spoken and written input, and words different usage. Furthermore; it means

also knowing wordclasses, families and formation and the different meanings associated with the word's semantic value.

Richard(1992)) states nine aspects involved in knowing a word.

-Its relative frequency in the language;

-Its register characteristics, which may include social, temporal and geographic variations, and field and mode of discourses;

-The syntactic behavior associated with the word;

-Its underlying form and the derivations that can be made from this form;-the network of associations between that word and other words in the language, which may include such associative links as antonymy, synonymy, and subordinate, coordinate, and super ordinate classifications.

-Its semantic features and connotations.

-The different meanings associated with the word

In the same area; Nation (1997:238-54) mentions three aspects of knowledge involved in knowing a word which are:

2.1. Knowledge of the form of the word(spoken, written and word parts)

2.2. Knowledge of the meaning of the word(what does a given word refer to, and knowledge of words whose meaning has relationship with that word)

2.3. Knowledge of the use of that word including the grammatical function and the different constraints on its use. The main difference between Richard's assumptions and Nation's components of word knowledge is in the distinction between receptive and productive knowledge. This clarifies the fact that there is a difference between recognizing a word once we hear or see it and the ability to use it when we speak or write it.

3. Word Difficulties

The majority of readers think that coming across new words may hinder their reading comprehension. That is why; they should know the reasons behind the difficulty of these new words. Nuttall (1982:76-79), says that there are different factors that make words difficult to understand, she grouped them in seven types:

3.1. Idioms: are composed of certain number of words whose meaning is not inferred from individual words but from the whole group of words. Thus, students have to be trained in the use of this kind of words.

e.g.: 1* 'to feel under the weather', means 'to feel unwell'

2* 'bring something home to somebody', means 'make somebody understand something'

3.2. Transfer of Meaning: metaphors and other similar kinds of transferred meanings cause serious problems for understanding word meaning. The main cause for this is that these items have a hidden meaning that requires to be inferred.

e.g.: 1* 'he is a parrot', expresses the fact that this person just repeats things without thinking.

2* 'have something at your fingertips' means to have something ready for easy use.

3.3. Words with Several Meanings: many words in English have more than one meaning. This reflects the flexibility of language. Writers use particular words that have specific meanings which might be obscure for ordinary readers.

e.g.: the word 'fair' is a polysemous word that has got several meanings:

-this isn't *fair* on anyone, but it does happen.

-we have a *fair* size garden and we may as well make use of it.

-she was only a *fair* cook.

-the sun's rays can be very harmful, beating on unprotected *fair* skin.

-this *fair* city of ours...

-it will be *fair* and warm.

Although there appear to be six different senses of "fair" represented here, ranging from reasonable through quite large, average, pale, beautiful to dry and pleasant, there is an underlying sense that at least some if not all of these meanings are related.

(The examples of fair are from the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary)

3.4. Sub-technical Words: some words have specific technical meanings related to a particular field of study that makes them difficult for readers.

e.g.: legal English, (instances connected with crime and law:)

"Bill committed a crime when he robbed a bank. Someone witnessed the crime and told the police.

3.5. Super ordinates: they are words which have general meanings related to other words which have specific meanings and are referred to by the more general term.

e.g.: A hammer is a kind of tool.

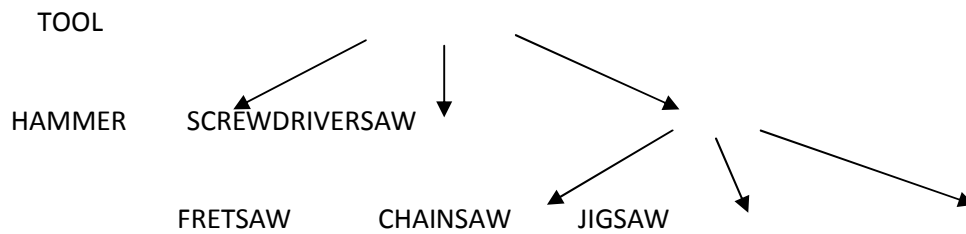
A kiwi is a kind of bird (and a kind of fruit.)

This is what is known as hyponyms. Co-hyponyms share the same ranking in a hierarchy:

hammer, saw, screwdrivers are all co-hyponyms; tool is the super ordinate term. But the saw also has

a super ordinate relation to different kinds of saw: fretsaw, chainsaw, jigsaw, etc. we can illustrate

these relations as follows:



(Thornbury 1988: 10)

3.6. Synonyms and Antonyms: this kind of words may cause problems to learners since there is no exact synonym or antonym to another word.

e.g.: 1*old, ancient, antique, aged, elderly are all synonyms in that they share the common meaning of not young/new.

2*hot is the opposite of cold, safe is the opposite of harmful and dangerous.

3.7.Irony: here the difficulty is not in the words themselves but in their use by writers.

Nuttal(1982:78) says'irony is probably the most difficult of all uses of language for the student to interpret'

From the above explanation, it can be deduced that word difficulties indicate that a word is a more complex phenomenon than it might appear. This would be more obvious through the following points:

-Words have different functions,some carrying mainly grammatical meanings, while others bear a greater informational load.

-The same word can have a variety of forms.

-Words can be grouped together to form units that behave as if they were single words.

-Many words commonly co-occur with other words.

-Words may look and/or sound the same but have quite different meanings.

-One word may have a variety of overlapping meanings.

-Different words may share similar meanings or may have opposite meanings.

-Some words can be defined in terms of their relationship with other words-whether,for instance, they belong to the same set, or co-occur in similar texts.

-Words can have the same or similar meanings but be used in different situations (how to teach vocabularyThornbury: 1988 -25)

4.How is Vocabulary Learned?

Knowing a word is one thing, but how that knowledge is acquired is an important matter that needs to be clarified. In learning the first language, the first words that children learn are typically those used for labeling.

Some investigations show that children's (and adult's) vocabularies are generally much larger than they are popularly believed to be, and that acquiring a vocabulary requires not only labeling but categorizing skills. It has been pointed out that the meanings of a word for a particular individual depend upon his/her experiences with it. The meanings of a word for a child vary much more than adults are likely to imagine.

The mere acquisition of a word is often only the first step in along series of trials and explorations with the child must make with it. Learningsecond language involves learning a new vocabulary network,i-e,a second mental lexicon. The main difference between 1st and 2nd language vocabulary learning lies in the potential size of the lexicon. Thisraises a vexed question that requires more clarification.

This question is mainly about the number of words a learner needs to know.

5. How Many Words Does a Learner Need to Know?

An educated native speaker will probably have a vocabulary of around 20,000 words; this would be the result of adding about a thousand words a year to the 5,000 one had acquired by the age of five. (Thornbury: 20-21-22)

It has been calculated that a classroom learner would need more than eighteen years of classroom exposure to supply the same amount of vocabulary input that occurs in just one year in natural settings. Furthermore, the input that infants receive is tailored to their immediate needs-it is interactive, and it is often highly repetitive and patterned-all qualities that provide optimal conditions for learning.

The answer of the previous question, i.e., how many words does the learner need to know depends to a large extent on the learner's needs.

A learner needs a core vocabulary that will serve him/her in most situations, this core would be about 2,000 words, once equipping a reader or a learner with that number of words, and this will serve in gaining familiarity with nearly nine out of ten words in most written texts. The preoccupation with vocabulary size, however, overlooks the importance of vocabulary depth.

Vocabulary knowledge is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon, that is, a case of either knowing a word or not knowing it. This suggests that, at the very least, estimates of vocabulary size must take into account productive and receptive knowledge, then there is knowledge of spelling and pronunciation, of derivative forms and of different shades of meaning. Again, these different aspects of 'knowing' suggest that the task of acquiring a functional lexicon is more complicated than simply memorizing words.

It is not easy to predict learner's needs nor to ensure that the words that have been given in a course of study will be learned. There will be no time, especially in non-intensive language courses, for all the words that the learner needs to be explicitly taught. A good part of vocabulary acquisition has to be incidental that is facilitated through exposure to language input, in the form of extensive reading.

Perhaps, most important of all, is that the teacher, has a great role to encourage an enthusiasm for vocabulary acquisition, and provide learners with the strategies for self-directed learning.

6. Expanding Vocabulary through Reading

In his theory of vocabulary acquisition through reading, Krashen supports the position that vocabulary is best acquired incidentally and effortlessly through reading. He suggests that even 'light reading' can contribute to language acquisition (1989).

Krashen (1989) states that high school students should be encouraged to read higher things faster and in greater quantity, and that teachers go painfully slowly over materials that are too difficult: Their defense is that if they did not familiarize the students with difficult passages, the student would panic when confronted with some of classroom reading materials. Krashen further asserts that massive quantitative of 'pleasure reading' in the student's own area of interest may be the best way to prepare foreign language student for learning vocabulary.

So far, most of Krashen's suggestions seem quite reasonable when he asserts that the use of pleasure reading, can serve in the process of vocabulary learning.

7. Vocabulary Acquisition from Extensive Reading

During the last two decades, a number of studies (Paribakht and Weshe, 1997; Zimmerman, 1997) have confirmed that second language learners can acquire and expand their vocabulary knowledge through reading. In deed most of these studies do not contribute to the understanding of the acquisition process, since they do not investigate the factors that lead to word retention.

A study has been carried out by Pigada and Schmitt (2006) to investigate the relationship between incidental vocabulary acquisition and extensive reading, they have focused on the number of times a word occurs in the text; this latter has been assumed to be the variable that affects the retention of words. They state that "reading and vocabulary studies have almost exclusively focused on word

meaning to determine vocabulary acquisition. However, it has been acknowledged by a large number of lexically-minded researchers that knowing a word involves much more than just understanding its meaning".The main goal of the study was to examine the effects of text frequency on the acquisition of word meaning,spelling and grammatical behavior.

Grabe and Stoller (1997:98-122) point out that "extensive reading exposes learners to large quantities of material within their linguistic competence"

In the same context, manyresearchers assert that vocabulary can be developed through extensive reading.Extensive reading is considered as a pedagogically efficient approach, as two activities- vocabulary acquisition-and reading-occur at the same time.

In their viewpoints, this approach provides learners with the opportunity to meet words in their context of use,increases sight vocabulary, and serves in substantial vocabulary, which seems severe to be achieved with explicit teaching during the short period of time spent in the classroom.

Later, Nation (1997:238-54) arguesthat "the use of reading and other output sources may be theonlypractical options forout of class languagedevelopment for some learners, especially in EFL contexts".

From what has been said above, we can deduce that extensive reading is a crucial approach in the learning and the teaching of vocabulary.

8. Implicit Versus Incidental Vocabulary Learning

The relationship between incidental vocabulary acquisition and extensive reading has been mentioned above. In the coming step, we will try to shed light on the main differences between implicit and incidental vocabulary learning.

According to Ellis (1997), implicit learning is defined as the acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment through a process that is carried out

naturally, while explicit learning is characterized by more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in search for structure.

The main distinction between incidental and intentional vocabulary acquisition would be obvious in these definitions. Hulstijn (1992:113-125) defines incidental vocabulary acquisition as “the learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared at committing information to memory”

Coady and Huckin 1997), and other researchers, agree that L2 vocabulary is predominantly acquired incidentally except for the first few thousands most common words.

The problem that rises from the operational definition of incidental vocabulary acquisition given above is that it seems to suggest that incidental learning occurs unconsciously. The fact that learning occurs as a by-product of reading does not automatically imply that it does not involve any conscious processes.

Ellis (1992) states that incidental vocabulary acquisition is non-explicit in so far as it does not include an explicit learning intention. The overall goal of the learner is text comprehension, but that neither the process nor the product of such learning is necessarily implicit in the sense of non-conscious.

Another definition that includes the meaning of incidental learning is that given by Schmitt (1997:199) who defines incidental vocabulary learning as “learning through exposure when one’s attention is focused on the usage of language rather than on learning itself. Context then plays a very important role in assessing such learning”.

9. Importance of Vocabulary in Reading Comprehension

No language acquisition can take place in the absence of vocabulary of the language in question. Many researchers have claimed that vocabulary knowledge is the single most important factor in reading comprehension, and that once a reader has a good vocabulary background, the

reading comprehension task will be facilitated since words are considered as the building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed.

When students are faced with an unfamiliar text in the foreign language, or a text with many new words, then, the first challenge that will face them is the vocabulary of that text. Thus, students will quickly despair, and will be discouraged.

Indeed, there exists a clear relationship between vocabulary knowledge and success in reading comprehension since when the vocabulary of the text is more familiar; students are more likely to continue with the reading task. That is why Coady and Huckin (1997) insist on the role of vocabulary.

Many researchers stressed on the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading achievement, and that word knowledge is highly correlated with reading comprehension. Thus comprehension is related to a high extent, to the knowledge of word meaning, and knowing word meaning is crucial in understanding reading texts.

So the development of reading skills relies to a great extent on vocabulary knowledge, "as early as 1924, researchers noted that growth in reading power relies on continuous growth in word knowledge".

Laufer and Sim (1989a, 1989b) show that foreign language learners are supposed to rely more on word meaning than on knowledge of the subject or syntax. This indicates that a learner has to know a certain size of vocabulary before approaching any text. Thus, (Nation, (1997) and Alderson (1984) argue that in order to understand a text, readers at any level, should be familiar at least with 95 percent of the words in the text.

From what has been said above, we can say that inferring the meaning of vocabulary items would not be always easy since there exist many factors that make words difficult, and this impairs comprehension.

10. Vocabulary Improvement

Vocabulary improvement and word recognition are recognized as crucial in reading comprehension. It is believed that the most efficient way to improve vocabulary would be via incidental learning from context especially through free reading since this will give learners golden opportunities to meet lots of words, and therefore learn them. It is known that a given word has several meanings, and that these meanings interact with the context and previous background knowledge.

Nagy, Herman and Alderson (1984:53) argue that "incidental learning from context during free reading is the major model of vocabulary acquisition during the school year, and the volume of experience with written language, interacting with reading comprehension ability, is the major determinant of vocabulary growth".

Many researchers have looked at how much vocabulary is learned from reading in a foreign language. They found that weaker learners needed more encounters to learn a word than more proficient learners. This is likely to suit the maxim that says: the more you know, the easier it is to learn, and if students are taught more words, reading will be easier to them. In fact, different techniques can be used to help the learner determine the meaning of words and compensate the lack of vocabulary by consulting dictionaries, or using a glossary, or guessing the meaning from context or even interpreting it.

Another point that is worth mentioning is that, spelling knowledge is a powerful foundation for reading and vocabulary development since the spelling/meaning relationship among words allows students to learn how the structure of familiar words can be a clue and an indication to recognize the spelling and the meaning of unknown words.

In short terms, reading fluency and text comprehension requires, to a great extent, vocabulary instruction. Thus, building vocabulary through reading is an effective but complex activity that requires more guidance and useful strategies. As Laraba (2007:379) says: "vocabulary is the door

behind which lies a wealth of knowledge, and teachers hold the key. It is imperative that teachers use the key to open the door not only to the wealth of knowledge but also to strategies that will serve learners throughout their life time”.

11. The Best Way to Increase one’s Vocabulary in a Foreign Language

Increasing one’s vocabulary stock in a foreign language is not an easy task, though this would be up to one’s finger by following these steps as being cited by Thornbury (1988:22)

Firstly ‘observation’: the unknown word should be observed in its context; more clearly, the neighboring words and the grammatical construction should be noted.

In that phase, a good dictionary should be referred to, and examples of the usage of the word should be noted.

Secondly, ‘imitation’: the student should use the new word he has encountered in its appropriate context via imitating the instances he has already noted.

Thirdly, and finally, ‘repetition’: the student will need to practice using the word for several times before he is confident that he can use it correctly.

In other words, repetition is necessary if the new word is to ‘stick’ and especially if it is to enter the student’s active vocabulary.

12. Successful Vocabulary ‘Learning’ Techniques

In the nineteenth-century, (Thornbury 1988: 159-160), is considered as one successful language learner, is alleged to have mastered around 30 languages, and to have the ability to learn a new one in just two months. The following is an annotated description of this technique, i.e., Burton’s one, in his own words.

"I got a simple grammar and vocabulary, marked out the forms and words which I knew were absolutely necessary **1**, and learned them by heart **2** by carrying them in my pocket and looking over them at spare moments during the day **3**. I never worked for more than a quarter of an hour at a time, for after that the brain lost its freshness **4**. After learning some three hundred words **5**, easily done in a week, I stumbled through some easy book-work (one of the Gospels is the most come-at table **6**), and underlined every word that I wished to recollect **7**, in order to read over my penciling at least once a day **8**... if I came across a new sound like the Arabic *Ghayn*, I trained my tongue to it by repeating it so many thousands of times a day **9**. When I read, I invariably read out loud, so that the ear might aid memory **10**... whenever I conversed with anybody in a language. I was learning, I took the trouble to repeat their words inaudibly after them, and so to learn the trick of pronunciation and emphasis **11**". (Thornbury: 160)

Here, is a summary of the strategies that Burdon have employed.

1-He focused initially on what was necessary for the sake of achieving a minimum level of effective communication.

2-At the early stages of learning, he used to memorize the items instead of learning the rules.

3-He used to review what he had learned through the principle of distributed practice.

4-He avoided pressing himself while reviewing what he had learned.

5-He acquired a critical mass of words he thinks to be sufficient as a core vocabulary for the reading of texts.

6-He chose texts whose content was known to him.

7-He inferred words he would learn intentionally, and highlighted them on the page.

8-He constantly reviewed the target items.

9-He used to repeat the new sounds, in order to stick them in his memory.

10-He explained the sound of words to facilitate storage in memory.

11-He used subvocalisation techniques to assist memory.

NOTE:(the numbers refer to the strategies listed above.)

SECTION C: MOTIVATION

1. Psychological Aspects of Readers

1.1. Motivation

“It is argued that motivation is a crucial factor that pushes someone to do something.

Richards, et al (1992:61) define motivation as:

“The factor that determines a person’s desire to do something in second and foreign language learning, learning may be affected differently by different types of motivation”

They assume that there exist two types of motivation which are:

1.1. a. Instrumental Motivation

It is defined as wanting to learn a language for communication purposes especially with people of another culture. In fact a human being will acquire a language better if he is exposed to language data.

1.1. b. Integrative Motivation

It is defined as wanting to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture. In the case of Islamic History Department, student's motivation is not integrative. The main purposes in learning English for these students are, indeed, to pass examinations and to read documents written in English.

In fact, the student's interest in learning English is very important, though their level and the different problems they face in learning that language weaken their interest. The students relate their weakness in English to the lack of motivation. They also think that their teachers do not motivate them enough to learn English and that the lectures are sometimes boring. It has become evidential in FL classes that it is up to the teacher to motivate and create interest in his students. The teacher is viewed as a class manager. The teaching techniques can also be of great support in developing the student's interest. Another way of making the students interested in learning English is to tell them about the objectives of the course. Nuttal(1982:32) highlights this fact when stating that:

A teacher has to draw student's attention to the sort of purposes for which they might conceivably find foreign language reading useful.

From Nuttall's own words, it can be deduced that reading may be a way of raising the student's interest and that motivation is, in fact, a very important factor in any learning situation.

2. Inhibition

Inhibition is considered as one of the main psychological problems encountered by the students of Islamic History Department. Inhibition causes embarrassment in class and leads to the non-contribution in any group work. This attitude is often explained by the fear of making mistakes, and therefore, the fear of being laughed at. These students studied English for a number of years but because all other modules are taught in Arabic, English has always been looked at as something marginal. This together with some other factors explains the difficulties these students encounter when they come to express themselves in English.

The student's low proficiency in English leads them to avoid speaking. This results in a boring situation that consequently impedes the learning process. Here appears the teacher's role in helping the students overcome such problems. Thus they should encourage them to speak spontaneously and to participate as much as possible. This will ease the teacher's task, and allow him to adjust his students' mistakes and, therefore, help improve their level.

In that sense, Cooper (1984) makes a clear distinction between what is called 'practiced' and 'unpractised' readers.

'Practiced' readers are those who pursued much of their education in English, and demonstrated the ability to cope with university texts in English. 'Unpractised' readers, on the other hand, are the non-native readers of English who have been educated in their native language. This explanation is inferred from Cooper's own words:

Unpractised readers differ primarily from practiced readers in their ability to use the linguistic clues in the larger context to determine meaning. They found it especially difficult to deduce word meaning from context, to understand lexical cohesion and to understand the meaning relationships between sentences. (Cooper 1984:122).

The above definition, alerts and helps us to classify Islamic History students as 'unpractised readers', in the sense that they have been educated in Arabic, and have encountered difficulties toward understanding the meaning of English texts, since they are not native learners of English. Thus, the

vocabulary of the English texts in their field of study 'Islamic History' seems severe for them, because of its specific nature.

3. How to Motivate Learners of English?

Motivation has been defined ways: it is what makes one acts; it is a desire for work to achieve a goal or to reach an objective. Effective learning requires the presence of motivation; and without it, learning will be a sever task .It has been stated that interest must be present if learning is to be successful. That is to say; when interest is absent, one can hear things said over without paying too much attention to them. In almost all cases success breeds success and failure breeds failure.

In fact, some studies attribute poor reading to the lack of motivation which is both the cause and the effect of poor reading. Readers with higher interest, engage more actively with text, despite the fact that, the level of readers' interest is not independent of the text, and this latter may decrease during reading, if the text does not meet the expectations of the readers.

The following are some of the principals that may help English teachers to have lively classes. For instance, in Congo, English is a foreign language. It is learned only in the classroom context and the national environment is far from being supportive. Then, most teachers are not knowledgeable of methods that will arouse interest or increase their students' commitment to learn English. A vexed question that rises here is how then should teachers proceed to get the maximum participation?

This can be answered throughout the following points:

3.1. Make Use of Learner's Environment

An important fact that is worth mentioning is that foreign language teaching should be linked to the environment of the class that should not be separated from the learners' experiences. No one can ignore that a learner has a natural context in which he organizes the various activities that make up his life.

If these activities are “reproduced” in the language classroom, it is possible to motivate the learners to do the task at hand. The only new factor will be the language itself. Used in that way, English will no longer be feared and students will be more inclined to study it.

There is a Chinese proverb that indicates the importance of task involvement for successful learning inside the learners’ environment. The following is the translation of that proverb:

“Tell me, and I’ll forget, show me, and I’ll remember; involve me, and I will learn”.

3.2. Present the Language in Natural Chunks

In a foreign language situation, the teacher is viewed as the main source or model for the pupil’s .Thus; he/she should strive hard to use the language as naturally as possible.

In some cases, it happens that the teacher uses the target language unnaturally; i-e, break a sentence into smaller units to help the students get the correct pronunciation of a word or the intention of a phrase.

3.3. Use Appropriate Visual Aids

It is agreed upon that nowadays the time is for the internet yet; visual aids remain as important tools for the teacher. Being used appropriately in the classroom, they enable the teacher to avoid long and confusing explanations. At the same time they help the teacher to have lively class as students associate real objects with their English equivalents. This helps the students exchange information with each other since they will be familiar with the topic and/ or object under discussion.

3.4. Include Cultural Components

Language and culture are interrelated. Learners of a foreign language should note the cultural aspects of native people. However, cultural aspects can be a real hindrance, since they may set up obstacles to comprehension. For this reason, teachers should provide sufficient background to enable the learners understand the cultural context that is naturally present in the T.L.

3.5. Become an Efficient Manager

A company's success is usually attributed to the way in which it is managed. Likewise, the success of a language course reflects the teacher's competence and expertise. The student's needs and experiences must be taken into account, and just as it takes a good factory manager to obtain positive results in the factory, it takes a good teacher to install in his/her students a positive attitude towards the new language. The more a teacher is seen as humane and sensitive, being convinced that his students are capable of contributing something to the lesson, the more a warm and enjoyable classroom atmosphere can be created and maintained.

3.6. Adapt Materials to Local Realities

The materials presented in a FLclass have to be varied and stimulating. It is desirable that they should be adapted to the learners needs and most importantly, they should be interesting. For instance, text books should be considered as tools, and teachers should know how to exploit them. Thus, the teacher should avoid following the text book writer's instruction. Yet, s/he should contribute something personal to the materials used in the classroom.

If the above principles are taken into account and implemented with care, teachers can provide lessons, and students can be more motivated to read and learn English.

(FelicienBaloto(1996:31-32).

4. Academic Motivation and the Role of Teacher

There exist different methods for building motivation inside classrooms for learning more vocabulary items through reading, since reading is considered as the best way to get exposure to unknown words, though, students may face difficulties in understanding what they are reading. In

this respect, no one can ignore the crucial role of the teacher, who should ensure that there is a practice, so that passive knowledge is activated.

A creative teacher can use common methods for building motivation. Among these methods relating student academic performance and classroom participation to specific rewards or privileges. Yet, he can refer to other ways that do not require the use of formal reward systems by cooperative learning and task involvement that may kindle the student's motivation and encourage them to challenge difficult reading passages.

Another thing that is worth mentioning is that school libraries can do a lot to motivate students towards reading, they serve as 'factories of intellect'. The teacher should help to strengthen the student's reading motivation with an emphasis on how reading competence may well lead to future professional success. Furthermore, he should strive for ensuring the availability of appropriate materials and attitudes that have major influences on motivation, which in turn may influence the decision to read in a 2nd language.

From the above, it can be deduced that the teacher is less the instructor and more the guide; he acts as a coach to facilitate activities that students carry out themselves.

5. The Relationship between Vocabulary Learning, Reading and Motivation

Building a large vocabulary is essential when learning to read in a second language. Yet, this is likely to be out of reach for most foreign language learners, since the vocabulary of any language is huge and its acquisition takes time, even for a native speaker. Foreign learners need to use effective strategies, to deal with the difficulties they may face during the reading process, and a motivated atmosphere is mostly required in this respect.

Most motivation theories assume that motivation is involved in the performance of all learned behaviours. There is a casual relationship between the learning of vocabulary and the reading process and motivation. This is clearly revealed through the fact that the more learners are motivated to read, the better the outcome of vocabulary improvement will be.

In short terms, reading fluency and vocabulary growth are two of the most important components of both performance and competence in a foreign language. Each of them depends on the other, and motivated atmosphere and creative tutor are mostly required in that respect.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

As mentioned in the first part of this study, vocabulary challenges, students' motivation, and the role of teachers to bridge the gaps encountered will be referred to in this section. This chapter, thus, briefly explains the method used to carry out this study. It defines the sample chosen, and the nature of the research. In the second part, a sample of texts with some suggestions and a brief description and interpretation of the students' questionnaire is made at the end.

1. Methods Used

There are many factors that interfere when intending to choose the most appropriate means of research. In this respect Beiske(2002)states that time are factors that certainly play an important part in deciding how to approach a given research problem, the subject of the research itself should determine the methods utilized.

In this study it was opted for the questionnaire as a means of carrying out this research which is considered as a means of collecting data.

Why the Questionnaire

It is assumed that questionnaires are the most suitable means in such studies, since almost all people are familiar with questionnaires and know how to answer them. Besides, they are easy to analyze, and most importantly the respondents' opinions are not influenced by the researchers' viewpoints and pressure.

2. Sample

Cohen and Mansion (1980:77) agree that there is no exact size of sample to carry out a particular research. That is to say, all depends on "the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny"

In this study, the questionnaire was administered to two groups of 45 students in their 4th year in the department of Islamic History at the University of El Amir Abd Elkader in Constantine during the academic year '2009-2010'.

3. Nature of Research

This research is qualitative; in the sense that it simply studies the learners' introspections of various aspects of the learning process and factors affecting the outcome of vocabulary improvement through reading.

4. The Nature of Vocabulary Inside 'Islamic History' Field

The following are some texts that reflect the nature of vocabulary inside religious texts and more particularly 'Islamic History'.

Some suggestions will be given-later on- to facilitate the reading task for 4th year students of Islamic History.

Text a: Cave of Hera

This cave is the place where Muhammad (peace be upon him) received the first **revelations** from **God** via **the angle Gabriel**. It is the space of his **devotions** and **meditations** and **the sacred spot** where **the Holy Quran** began to be **revealed**. The cave is situated on **Mount Al Noor** on way to **Mina**, near **Makah** and its peak is visible from a great distance.

Muhammad (**peace be upon him**) had just stepped into the forty-first year of his life, when, during a night in the month of **Ramadan**, the first 5 verses of **the surah Al-Alaque** were **revealed** to him.

Text b: Battle of Ohud

Ohud is a hill near **Medina**. The famous battle of Ohud was fought in the valley of this hill. Then **non-believers** from **Qureish** invaded Medina with an army of three thousand, in **the third year of Hijra**. **The Holy Prophet (pbu.h)** with his 700 **worthy companions** fought **the battle** and like all such occasions, in this battle too, **the faith** of **the Muslims** for **Allah** and love for his **prophet** gave them strength to defend themselves in spite of lack of numbers and inferiority of equipment.

Text c: Birth Place of the Holy Prophet

The holy prophet (pbu.h) was born on the early morning of Monday **the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awal** (April 3rd, **571AD**) in Makkah. He was named Muhammad (the praised one, **peace be upon him**) by his grand father **Abdul Muttalib**. The ravages of time have destroyed the original building but the place is the same where stood Abdullah's house, the father of **the Holy Prophet (pbu.h)**, who belonged to the family of **Hashim**, the noblest tribe in **Qureish**.

Concerning the above texts; first, students read the text once, slowly, with pauses to think about what they have read. Then, they read the text at least once more, pausing from time to time to look at other parts of the text. This is in order to see the connections between different parts-of the text, and build a summary in their minds. A very large percentage of students who read in this way remember both general ideas and details that they have encountered.

Note: the words written in bold in the above texts are assumed to have particular nature, in the sense that they belong to '*Islamic History*' field, yet we may help the students to guess their meanings:

*Three things can help the students to guess the meaning of words they do not know:

-What they find in the text,

-What they know of similar words, and

- What they know about the world.

Teachers should make the students aware of the following facts:

-Relationships between words they know and words they do not know can help them to understand the new words.

-Sometimes it is impossible to guess exactly what a word means, but often this is not necessary in order to understand the text as a whole. (Walter:1986).

5-The Interpretations of the Student's Answers

The questionnaires	The number of students in each answer	Population:45 students The interpretations
1-Do you like reading?		The majority of the students (40 of them) choose answer 'a'. This indicates that reading is viewed as an important task to be fulfilled.
a-A lot	3	
b-A little	40	
c-Not at all	2	
2-In witch language do you prefer to read?		Preferring to read in Arabic refers to the fact that their field of study is mainly in Arabic (all modules are dealt with in Arabic). English for them; is taught as a marginal module.
a-Arabic	42	
b-French	3	
c-English	No one	
3-How often do you read?		A lack of practice of reading in general can be noticed from the answers. Hence; the students need to be encouraged to read more.
a-Frequently	3	
b-Sometimes	41	
c-Rarely	1	
4-When do you read?		The students have the desire to read in their spare time. Since they do not read before sleeping, reading then, is not for pleasure, it is carried out for other purposes as Nuttal(1982) states that the most typical use of reading in a foreign language is to ameliorate the language, and to keep up to date with new information.
a-Only when the teacher asks me	4	
b-Only during weekends and holidays	2	
c-Whenever I have time	No one	
d-Every night before I sleep	39	
5-Where do you read?		The students prefer to read at home. They

d-Elsewhere	1	overcome shines and to use the language without hesitation or boredom.
6-How often do you read in English?		This answer reveals that the students rarely read in English due to lack of motivation, or other factors. They are not aware of the importance of the English language.
a-Frequently	No one	
b-Sometimes	10	
c-Rarely	35	
7-How often do you read outside?		The students answer in this question resemble the one in question (N: 3). Thus the interpretations will be similar in this case.
a-Frequently	No one	
b-Sometimes	9	
c-Rarely	36	
d-Never	No one	
8-How often do you read without being asked?		The results show that these students have inner desire to read, they do not see reading as an obligatory task.
a-Frequently	No one	
b-Sometimes	43	
c-Rarely	2	
d-Never	No one	
9-What pushes you to read a particular text/ in a particular field?		The result shows that the student's friends neither read nor consider reading an important task to be carried out.
a-Its writer	2	
b-Its title	42	
c-Someone told you about	1	
10-If someone tells you about a given text or book to read, who may she/he be?		This answer assures that the teacher plays a crucial role in reading engagement and creating the suitable learning environment for his/ her students.
a-Your brother/sister	6	
b-A friend	2	
c-Your teacher	37	
d-Other sources (ex.TV programme, a magazine, ect.....)	No one	
11-How often does your teacher encourage you to read?		The results determine- for a 2 nd time the important role of the teacher in pushing and encouraging the students to read, hence; it emphasizes the previous answer of the question (N:10).
a-Frequently	43	
b-Sometimes	2	
c-Rarely	No one	
d-Never	No one	
12-How often do your friends/classmates encourage you to read?		The results here determines - to some extent-our previous interpretation, where we have said that that student's classmates and friends neither

a-Frequently	2	read nor regard reading as important as it is supposed to be .
b-Sometimes	11	
c-Rarely	29	
d-Never	3	
13-Do you enjoy the time you spend on reading?		In answering this question, students integrate their personal feeling; since reading enjoyment is seen as a psychological factor
a-Always	9	
b-Sometimes	27	
c-Rarely	4	
d-Never	5	
14-How would you classify the following reasons for reading outside the class? Order them according to their importance for you.		
a-The teacher asks me	30	<p>Choosing the teacher as the first and the most important reason for reading, laid us to make two interpretations:</p> <p>The first one is that reading is considered as a duty given by the teacher.</p> <p>The second one is that the teacher is less the instructor and more the guide, (Coady&Huckin 1997).</p> <p>Choosing learning new words in the second position, reveals the student's eagerness toward vocabulary learning.</p>
b-I want to learn new words	9	
c-I want to acquire knowledge	3	
d-For pleasure	1	
e-For bonus marks since reading is a part of class assignment	2	
15-What type of reading do you like?		<p>The respondents seem to involve themselves with stories, for enjoyment. This proves the reading drives which have been discussed in the literature review when it has been stated that people may read for the sake of enjoyment be it intellectual or emotional, rather than looking for information.</p> <p>Students feel like being friends to the stories' characters. It is assumed that reading short stories saves time and energy on the one hand, and helps in the learning of vocabulary on the other hand.</p>
a-Short stories	43	
b-Poems	1	
c-Newspapers/ magazines	No one	
d-Others	1	
16-When you read a text or a book outside the class, what do you expect to get from it?		The results show that reading is seen as an effective way for vocabulary learning. This reminds us of Krashen(1689) who suggest that

b-Acquire new ideas	16	literature review in relation to vocabulary expansion via reading; that was determined once by Zimmerman, 1997), Paribakhat&Wesche, 1997), who confirmed that 2 nd language learners can acquire and expand their vocabulary knowledge through reading. In the same respect, Grabe&Stoller(1997:50) point out that “extensive reading exposes learners to large quantities of material within their linguistic competence”.
c-Know more about the language you are reading	4	
d-Get pleasure	No one	
17-When dealing with a text, which activities you think is not useful for you?		
a-To do comprehension exercises	2	A kind of contradiction can be noticed in this answer; since the previous answer reveals the student’s eagerness toward vocabulary learning; despite the fact that 38 students out of 45 being asked view the explanation of difficult vocabulary an unusual task. It seems that most of the students are not aware of their real needs, or may be, they are giving answers at random.
b-To extract and discuss the different ideas	5	
c-To explain difficult vocabulary	38	
18-During the English courses, when you read a text related to your field of study (Islamic History) what are the main problems impairing your comprehension?		The results emphasize the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension, as Oakhill(1994) insist that word knowledge is highly correlated with reading comprehension ability. This latter is related to the knowledge of word meaning, and knowing word meaning is essential to understanding reading texts. In the same respect as we already said, in the absence of grammar very little can be conveyed, yet;without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.
a-The meaning of words	14	
b-New terms related to religion	26	
c-The general meaning of the text before you	5	
19-The nature of the vocabulary items in Koran& Islamic text is:		The results reflect the student’s awareness about the fact that there is a difference between common English vocabulary and the vocabulary related to their field of study ‘Islamic History’. Then, religious items seem new for them on the one hand and difficult only for them remains a matter of level on the other hand.
a-Different from English vocabulary	30	
b-More difficult than common English vocabulary	10	
c-Difficult only for you	5	

General Conclusion

Our piece of research is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter by itself is divided into three interrelated sections; about reading, vocabulary and motivation respectively. A literature review about reading definition, its nature, its types, reading purposes, and how to be effective readers.... are integrated in the first section.

Concerning vocabulary, we have included some issues related to vocabulary such as; word difficulties, the expansion of vocabulary via reading more....etc. The third section in this chapter; includes some issues tied to motivation; the psychological aspect of readers, how to motivate learners of English, in addition to that we have included the role of the teacher in managing the course and helping his/ her students to cope with new knowledge and overcome the being confronted difficulties.

At the end of this theoretical chapter, a small conclusion that reflects the link between the already stated concepts, i-e, 'reading, vocabulary, motivation' is made.

The second chapter, i-e, the practical one, is divided into two parts.

In the first part a sample of texts extracted from Islamic history books, is included to show the nature of vocabulary items in this particular field.

The second part includes the interpretations of the student's questionnaires that were administered to two groups of 45,4th year students from the Islamic history department.

The student's answers reveal that reading is very important in vocabulary learning and that motivation together with a creative tutor are so needed in that respect.

Conclusion

Throughout the interpretations of the student's answers; we deduce that the lack of vocabulary items is a serious obstacle that impairs –to a great extent- the student's reading comprehension. Thus; reading is considered as a crucial factor that helps these students to meet new words; and hence to improve and to enlarge their vocabulary stock.

They are in deer need for a creative tutor, who is supposed to be more the guide and less the instructor and; who serves in creating motivation for reading more.

To conclude, the previous results obtained serve in confirming our stated hypotheses and asserts the fact that reading and motivation are important factors which help in improving the reader's vocabulary knowledge and breaking down the being confronted reading comprehension barriers.

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Appendix

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

We would be very grateful if you accept to fill in the following questionnaire.

The information you will provide us with will serve a study about learning English vocabulary under the register of Islamic religious items (terminology) through reading .

Please put a tick (✓) in the box just in the front of each statement. Some questions will require the arrangement of different items, while you can choose more than one answer to other questions.

Thank you

1_ Do you like reading?

- a. A lot.....?
- b. A little.....?
- c. Not at all.....?

2_ In which language do you prefer to read ?

- a. Arabic.....?
- b. French.....?
- c. English.....?

3_ How often do you read?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?

4_ When do you read?

- a. Only when the teacher asks me.....?
- b. Only during weekends and holidays.....?
- c. Whenever I have time.....?
- d. Every night before I sleep.....?

5-Where do you read?

- a. In class.....?
- b. In the library.....?
- c. At home.....?
- d. Elsewhere.....?

(Please specify)

6_ How often do you read in English?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?

7_ How often do you read outside?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?
- d. Never.....?

8_ How often do you read without being asked ?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes?
- c. Rarely.....?
- d. Never.....?

9_ What pushes you to read particular text /in a particular field ?

- a. Its writer.....?
- b. Its title.....?
- c. Someone told you about?

10_ If someone tells you about a given text or book to read, who may she /he be?

- a. Your brother/sister.....?
- b. A friend.....?
- c. Your teacher.....?
- d. Other sources (e.g. TVprogramme, a magazine, etc.....?

(Please specify)

11_ How often does your teacher encourage you to read ?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?
- d. Never.....?

12_ How often do your friends/ classmates encourage you to read ?

- a. Frequently.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?
- d. Never.....?

13_ Do you enjoy the time you spend on reading ?

- a. Always.....?
- b. Sometimes.....?
- c. Rarely.....?
- d. Never.....?

14_ How would you classify the following reasons for reading outside the class? 'Order the statements using numbers from 1 to 5 in terms of their importance for you'

- a. The teacher asks me.....?
- b. I want to learn new words.....?
- c. I want to acquire knowledge.....?
- d. For pleasure.....?
- e. For getting bonus marks since reading is part of a class assignment.....?

15_ What type of reading do you like?

- a. Short stories.....?

- b. poems.....?
- c. Newspapers/magazines.....?
- d. Others.....?

16_ When you read a text or a book outside the class, what do you expect to get from it ?

- a. get more vocabulary items.....?
- b. Acquire new ideas.....?
- c. Know more about the language you are reading.....?
- d. Get pleasure.....?

17_ When dealing with a text, which activities you think are not useful for you ?

- a. To do comprehension exercise.....?
- b. To explain difficult vocabulary.....?
- c. To extract and discuss the different ideas.....?

18_ During the English courses, when you read a text related to your field of study (Islamic History) what are the main problems that impair your comprehension ?

- a. The meaning of words.....?
- b. New terms related to religion.....?
- c. The general meaning of the text before you.....?

19_ The nature of the vocabulary items in Koran & Islamic text is:

- a. Different from common English vocabulary.....?
- b. More difficult than common English vocabulary.....?
- c. Different only for you.....?