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**An Examination of Reading Strategies in Arabic (L1)  
and English (L2) Used by Saudi Female Public High  
School Adolescents**

دراسة لاستراتيجيات القراءة في اللغة العربية (الأولى) و اللغة  
الإنجليزية (الثانية) لدى طالبات المرحلة الثانوية السعوديات  
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### **An Examination of Reading Strategies in Arabic (L1) and English (L2) Used by Saudi Female Public High School Adolescents**

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## **Abstract**

Reading is the most critical aspect of knowledge, it is believed that it affects other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. However, the process of reading on its own is very complex because it is usually associated with strategy instruction. This study observes how female Saudi high school adolescents from different linguistic backgrounds use reading strategies in Arabic and English. The study has used the think aloud protocol to allow students to verbalize their thoughts on how they interpret four different reading texts, two in English and two in Arabic. The element of intertextuality is considered as a text testing criteria. The researcher tries to answer the following questions: 1) what are the symmetries and asymmetries of using reading strategies in L1 and L2? 2) what is the role of genre, register, and students' linguistic background in reading comprehension? and 3) what are the Arabic and English subject teachers' perceptions about the new implemented curriculum and methods of reading strategy instruction? The research has bred interesting and varying results when looking at students individually; however, holistically more research should be done in this area in order to provide a clearer understanding of how strategies are used in both languages.

## ملخص

تعد القراءة أهم أشكال المعرفة، وذلك لتأثيرها على المهارات اللغوية المختلفة مثل: الكتابة، التحدث، والاستماع. إلا أن عملية القراءة بحد ذاتها معقدة جدا لارتباطها باستراتيجيات القراءة الملقنة مسبقا. تهدف هذه الدراسة لمراقبة استخدام طالبات المدارس الثانوية في السعودية (باختلاف خلفياتهن اللغوية و تعدد لهجاتهن) لاستراتيجيات القراءة في اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. اعتمدت الدراسة على استراتيجية التفكير بصوت عال للسماح للطالبات بتحويل استنتاجاتهن عن النصوص التي يقرأنها (نصين بالإنجليزية ونصين بالعربية) من أفكار مبعثرة إلى خلاصة واعية. وتم اختيار النصوص المقروة بعناية على أن يحفل كل نص بعنصر التناسل. حاولن الباحثة استخلاص إجابات عن الأسئلة التالية من هذه الدراسة: 1- ماهي أوجه التشابه و الاختلاف في استخدام تقنيات القراءة بين اللغتين العربية والانجليزية؟ 2- ما دور نوع النص (رواية- قصة- الخ)، درجته من حيث السهولة والتعقيد والنبطية والفصحى، بالإضافة إلى خلفية الطالبة اللغوية في فهم النص؟ 3- ماهو انطباع معلمات اللغة العربية والإنجليزية عن المناهج الجديدة ومفهومهن لطرق تدريس استراتيجيات القراءة؟ استخلصت الباحثة نتائج مثيرة للاهتمام ومتنوعة عند دراسة كل طالبة كحالة فردية، ويوصى بعمل المزيد من الأبحاث لنتائج أكثر شمولا ووضوحا وفهم أفضل لكيفية استخدام آليات القراءة في اللغتين.

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To my father and brother who have waited along with my mother in patience for the much delayed ascending of this piece.

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## **1 Introduction:**

Reading is one of the four language learning skills that has been overlooked in the Arab world in general and in the gulf region to be specific. The ability to read effectively is a basic key to acquiring knowledge universally e.g. using textbooks, writing, revising, developing vocabulary, acquiring grammar, editing, and using computer-assisted language learning programs. As a result, teaching reading is a vital element of every language curriculum. Understanding and recognizing the central facts and mechanisms about literacy, reading, and methods of instruction play a significant role in delivering meaningful reading instruction. Furthermore, the studies about first and second language reading that discuss strategy transfer and instruction hold great value for today's language educators. This is because the world has become a very diverse place people from all around the world of different nationalities live side by side and interact with each other on daily basis. These individuals have unique identities and linguistic backgrounds; thus, schools hold great responsibility for how these individuals become successful learners and later, important leaders in life.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem:***

Languages can be the same or different in terms of their linguistic components when being analyzed closely. In a similar situation, Arabic and English reading curricula and instruction could vary or look alike too. In the past four years, Saudi Arabia has undergone a massive socio-economic shift and transformation. There has been growth and development in the field of education through all levels. Moreover, the economy and its industrial commercial base has been expanding swiftly. The boost of non-Saudi workers, the dramatically evolving manner of locals towards English, and activation of numerous international social media cannot be ignored if a recent portrayal of the status of English in Saudi Arabia is to be demonstrated. As a result, many reform projects have flourished in numerous domains and fields, one of the most vital ones is education. The leading project in this area is the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project (Tatweer / development) which was allocated around 9 billion Saudi Riyals (Al-Kinani, 2008). It focused on reforming aspects of Saudi education i.e. school, teacher, student, and most importantly curricula. This contemporary vision in KSA is dependent on re outlining the Ministry of Education's role. The focus will mostly be concerned about curricula



development, making policies, standards' development, establishing high quality teaching and administrative staff, and providing resources and tools to schools (Tatweer, 2008-2012). According to Saudi Gazette (2011), the project of Tatweer is foreseen to radically alter Saudi education's currently used models in order to bring it in rank with the highest and most respected international standards.

However, the proposition of the Tatweer project especially for EFL, is that none of the planning has included the expertise and knowledge of the teachers who are usually dismissed from material and curriculum development and hindered from creating tasks that cater their learners' needs. It is believed that such plan is simply a prolongation of a lengthy history of adjustments that have come to the summit of their advancement without involving any teachers in the process.

With regards to curricula, the English and Arabic curriculum among others have experienced a paradigm ongoing shift. The current English curriculum is running in pilot mode, it has been implemented all at once throughout years 4 to 12. This implementation has introduced EFL to year 4 primary school students for the first time after much debate and criticism as EFL was only taught to years 5, 6, intermediate, and secondary levels.

In terms of Arabic, the newly developed curriculum is being implemented at a slower rate, each year the new curriculum is provided to a specific year group. At the moment the implementation process has reached year 10.

What makes the Arabic and English curricula evolve is that it is becoming more holistic and communicative in manner and application. Thus, this study is going to look into how this change has affected students with regards to their performance in reading strategies in both Arabic and English. Plus, what makes this study unique is that it is going to magnify adolescents' reading strategy performance in terms of genre and their linguistic background.

## **1.2 Research Questions:**

In connection to what has been previously mentioned above, this dissertation has addressed three questions:

- 1- What are the symmetries and asymmetries of using reading strategies in the first language Arabic and second language English?
- 2- What is the role of genre, register, and students' linguistic background in reading comprehension?
- 3- What are the Arabic and English subject teachers' perceptions about the new implemented curriculum and methods of reading strategy instruction?

Question one shall compare and contrast the symmetries and asymmetries in both Arabic and English reading strategies using think aloud protocol with students. Results will be demonstrated with the help of descriptive statistics in the form of charts and tables. Question two will discuss the effects of genre, register, and students' linguistic background in reading curricula. Moreover, due to the current curriculum reform that has happened to the English books, a brief comparison and contrast between the old and new curriculum is going to be demonstrated in the discussion section. Question three is directed towards understanding the application of the reading curriculum through the Arabic and English teachers' thoughts and opinions when teaching students reading as a subject.

## **2 Literature Review:**

This chapter unfolds the foundational building blocks of this presented research. First, a brief differentiation of terminology between skill and strategy shall be demonstrated. Second, a rich section that consists of respected models from authors of numerous reading taxonomies or hierarchies. Third, the critical role of how reading instruction should be implemented within a language curriculum. Fourth, a clear portrayal of the distinguishable characteristics of excelling and de-excelling learners/ readers. Fifth, it will discuss thoroughly the following theoretical frameworks the interdependence hypothesis, threshold hypothesis, and schema theory. Moreover, it will touch upon national and international studies that share similarities and differences in terms of application to this research.

### **2.1 Literacy Practices:**

According to Mikulecky (2008, p.1):

[r]eading is a conscious and unconscious thinking process. The reader applies many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended. The reader does this by comparing information in the text to his or her background knowledge and prior experience.

When learners are given a text to read values, experiences, and prior knowledge preoccupy and shape their understanding of what is being read. All of the previously mentioned elements are arranged in groups or schemata. Each group, or schema, is attached to many other schemata in a multifaceted mental network. As a result, readers connect what is being read (ideas or facts) to their previously acquired knowledge and then formulate a certain meaning. Scientists in the field of reading comprehension have employed a systematic analogy that formulates how people think, learn, and remember what they have read. When people read, there are two modes that are simultaneously triggered within the brain. If readers focus while reading on preacquired knowledge then they are using a top-down mode or are concept-driven. In contrast, as soon as readers are text dependant i.e. need the assistance of information in the text to understand a topic then they are using a bottom-up mode or are data-driven. (Kintsch and van Dijk 1978; Rumelhart and Ortony 1977; Rumelhart 1980).

To rephrase, reading is a complex process where readers compare what they have read with their prior knowledge. The following diagram below portrays the continuous and simultaneous processes (top down and bottom up modes) that occurs in the minds of readers. The diagram demonstrates readers try to interpret a text in an unconscious and instantaneous manner. They get to compare what they encounter in a text with what they already know to match the information. As a result, data in the text triggers preacquired knowledge and the preacquired knowledge stimulates certain probabilities about the content of the text. This systematic process remains until readers have found a satisfying match between their prior knowledge and what they have read in the text; thus, comprehension occurs. In addition, a reader's mental schemata and mother tongue define what information to notice and how mental schemata are applied to information. Furthermore, a second language reader's mental schemata is founded through mother tongue and culture. In other words, second language readers interpret what they read and notice in texts varyingly due to a difference in their language structure and cultural beliefs towards literacy.

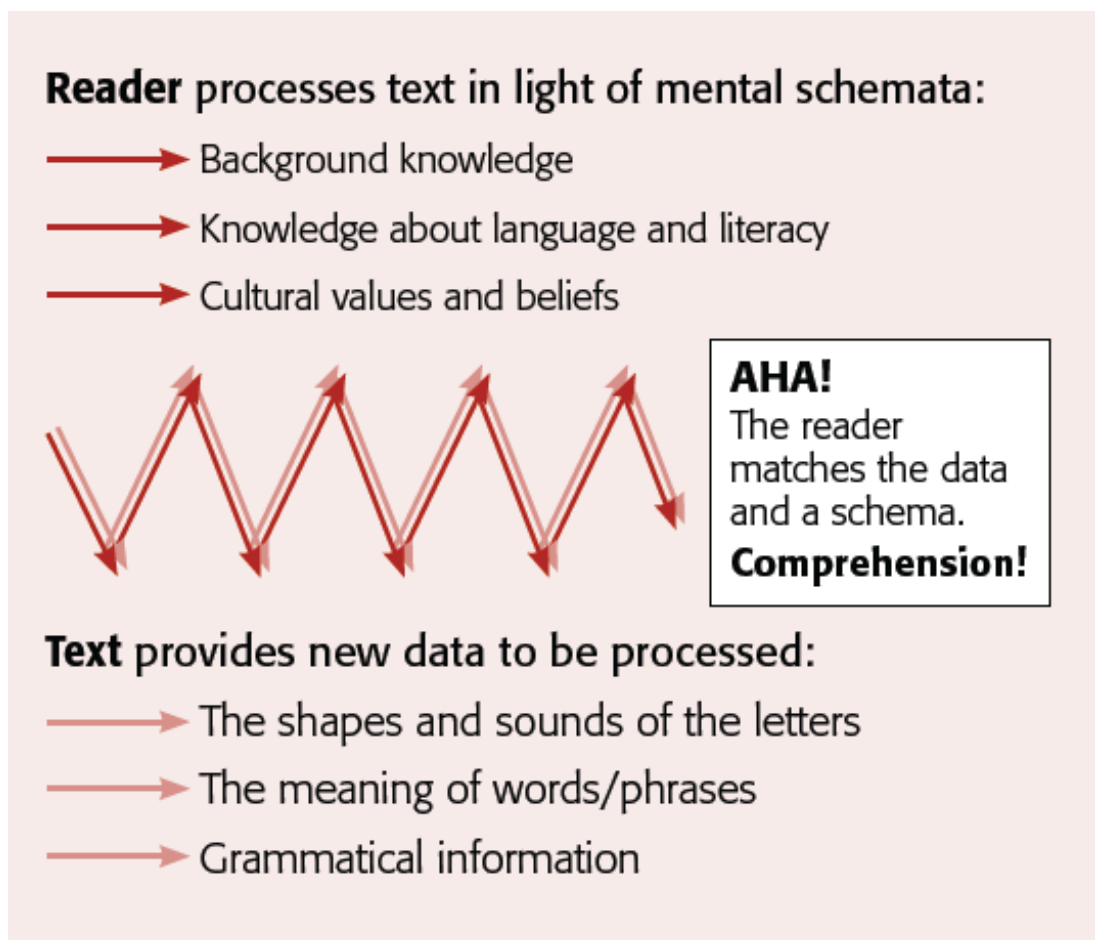


Figure 1 Readers and Schemata (Mikulecky 2008, p.1)

Thus, differentiating between reading and literacy is paramount as they are not the same. As a matter of fact, the uses and definitions of literacy vary culturally; therefore, culturally based contexts of literacy support the attainment and uses of reading and writing. In addition, literacy according to Mikulecky (2008, p.2) is “a set of attitudes and beliefs about the ways of using spoken and written language that are acquired in the course of a person’s socialization into a specific cultural context”. An individual’s culture and language are inseparable. A language’s knowledge and its patterns of thought are socially embedded into its cultural setting; moreover, culture and language have their own perceptions when interpreting the surroundings of our world. In other terms, culture promotes numerous schemata of society. As a result, readers from contrasting cultural backgrounds can comprehend the same text differently due to their distinctive schemata. Thus, a teacher should not presume that an excelling student in his or her mother tongue means that they would transfer their native reading skills to the learned second language (English) successfully. To read in English, a learner needs a series of thinking protocols and skills which originate from written and spoken uses of English. This can be accomplished through teaching second language learners what and how native speakers of English think and practice in reading. In addition, the process of learning to comprehend what is being read in a second language entails learning second language literacy skills: cultural specific formal and content schemata, alternative cultural interpretations, and cultural beliefs about language and discourse. In short, teachers and educators should consider that to be capable of reading in a second language a learner’s cognitive structures and values orientations are altered.

## **2.2 Skill VS Strategy:**

When scanning for research results regarding reading and comprehension it has been found that there is a lacking consistency in the usage of two terminologies “skill and strategy”. As a result, this has caused an underlying confusion regarding how to conceptualize these terms among teachers and students which has also caused a less effective classroom instruction. It has been noticed that strategies and skills have been used as interchangeable synonyms, other times they have been used to portray complementary relations e.g. strategies are supportive to skills or a gesture of progressive development as it is first advisable to teach the phonics skills then the reading comprehension strategies. The following fellow

bodies of education: policy makers, curriculum developers, administrators, and test makers state the terms when negotiating a reading program, test, goal, and policy. However, it has been rarely documented that throughout their discussions any definition or distinction has been made of the terms. As a result, the following section shall state a clear distinction between both terminologies and trace back their origins in order to clarify the blurry lines regarding this issue.

Dating back in history, reading has been known to refer to the necessary skills to read a holy book, comprehend directions, or answer questions about a written text. However, recently strategies are used to term the features of reading which involve calculated direction and deliberate control of behaviour. In today's world, teachers and researchers use both terms in a formal and informal context to label the aspects of a child's reading development and teacher's instruction (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). The terminology of reading skills has been mentioned in teachers' reading curricula for the past 50 years. Contrastingly, reading strategies became a trend in the 70s and it was brought up to imply cognitive features of information processing. Furthermore, instead of drawing a thin line between the two publishers, researchers, and educators have grouped both to be inclusive. This trend seems to be on the surface an action towards convenience instead it has caused more confusion. The main three sources of this confusion stem from: inconsistent use of the terms in formal documents, inconsistent definitions, and numerous colloquial usages.

On the other hand, the first studies that have looked closely into strategies trace back to a child's developmental awareness and control of thinking (metacognition) which were conducted in the 70s (Flavell & Wellman, 1977). At that time, the term strategy has been used to portray the mental and physical actions that a child would execute in order to improve cognitive and memory functions. As a result, strategies were coined and defined by providing examples i.e. imagery, rehearsal, and chunking without any precise or explicit definition or use. There were not any registered attempts of used strategies by excelling or developing readers that should be learned. Furthermore, in the late 90s, Alexander, Graham, and Harris (1998) came to a conclusion that a strategy is meant to represent an intention. They further explain that strategic readers intend to make use of strategies in order to reach a certain goal e.g. comprehending a

book, chapter, poem, or written instructions. Although, the authors have not clarified nor described what was meant by intention i.e. what are the steps, how would they be learned, or how they could be taught. Contrastingly in psychology, the term skill has been used in the theories of behavioural learning throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been referred to motor skills, routines of habit, and less mindful activities that are described as automatic. In addition, a skill has been rooted in practical behavioural descriptions of learning. A strategy; however, is rooted in the theories of construction and self-controlled information processing.

In terms of reading skills, they can be labelled as cognitive abilities that are a part of the general reading mechanism which an individual can utilize when interacting with written pieces (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). Others such as Psaltou-Joycey (2010) views a skill as the capability that a learner has, which allows him/her to execute a task in a fast and easy manner. In addition, the literature considers a skill to be part of a routine or automatic behaviour which could be unconsciously chosen through practicing and repeating this application throughout numerous types of texts (Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Urquhart and Weir, 1998). Furthermore, the process of reading is compiled of many subskills in relation to a taxonomy or hierarchy. In turn, this contributes to developing assorted reading syllabi, teaching resources, and examinations (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984; Urquhart & Weir, 1998).

On the other hand, when tracing the origins of the word strategy the following interpretation has been found. The word strategy has roots in the Greek word *strategia* that means leadership or the arts of war; it has and implied meaning of planning and conscious controlling of efforts towards a goal (Oxford, 1990). With regards to learning and education, learning strategies are procedures which are applied by a learner to facilitate in acquiring, storing, retrieving, and using of information (Oxford, 1990). In addition, Chamot (1987, p.71) states that "Learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information". Throughout the literature, there has been numerous strategy classifications; however, the ones with the most influence were those of Rubin (1981), Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). To narrow the research down, Paris Lipson and Wixson (1983) have declared that reading strategies are

precise, willful acts, familiar to the applier by intent and selective goals. Further, Dole et al. (1991) assert that reading strategies are thought and adaptable actions that emphasize reason, which is directly applied and considered to different texts to formulate gist. Finally, Urquhart and Weir (1998) believe that a reading strategy is a used method to resolve challenging reading texts.

As it has been seen above the literature is rich with multiple attempts when it comes to defining and conceptualizing strategies and skills. However, to lift the fog off both terms and to eliminate the confusion; a comparison and contrast shall be demonstrated in the following paragraphs along with a table to sum up the similarities and differences.

The terms shall be distinguished in terms of intention, awareness, flexibility, orientation, and practice. First intention (Dole et al., 1991), strategies are planned steps by readers that lead to achieving a specific goal from reading a text e.g. spotting specific information from the text. In contrast, skills are an automatic process that originate from routine and practice. Thus, a strategy can become a skill after mastery, as a skill can be described as second nature. Second awareness (Dole et al., 1991), students ponder on what they are doing while reading. That makes them aware of whether or not they have comprehended what they just read or have they faced a comprehension slope or difficulty. As a result, learners consciously start retrieving and applying the correct strategy in order to tackle the problem they are faced with. In contrast, skills are automatic and are developed unconsciously by practicing and repeating the use of strategies (Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Dole et al., 1991). Third flexibility (Dole et al., 1991), a strategy tends to be more adaptable because a reader could use or alter multiple strategies depending on the text, genre, and the purpose of reading; i.e. strategies are usually used to solve a problem or reach a goal. Skills on the other hand, are goal and problem free. They are used or applied on numerous texts without referring to a purpose of reading. Fourth orientation, a strategy is reader oriented; however, a skill is text oriented (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). To rephrase, strategy based research depends on the existence of active readers which are often categorized into good and poor learners. Those students usually think aloud when reading and explain their conclusions and thoughts about a text whether during the reading process or after they are done to improve and observe their



comprehension. Contrastingly, skill based research originates from focusing on text analysis and taxonomies. It presupposes a passive reader has excelled at a couple of reading subskills and has automatically developed them in numerous genres (Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Dole et al., 1991). Fifth practice, a strategy could be taught directly through training students how to become aware of comprehension by practicing the what, when, how, and why (Oxford, 1990). Moreover, strategy instruction is taught explicitly through explaining its cycle. A teacher models through guided practice sessions. The goal here is for students to become autonomous learners so a gradual shift in responsibility occurs (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Pressley, Beard El-Dinary, Gaskins, Schuder, Bergman, Almasi & Brown, 1992; Cohen, 2007). Although in contrast, skills could be taught; however, the purpose of instruction is based on the automaticity of applying numerous skills in multiple genres of text which are repetition, practice, and feedback until the learner manages to master achieving these skills.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Skill</b>
Planned	Automatic
Conscious	Unconscious
Goal or Problem Based	Goal or Problem Free
Reader Oriented	Text Oriented
Teach, Explain, Model, Guided & Independent Practice	Teach, Practice, Master, Assess

*Table 1 Strategy VS Skill*

To sum up, the distinction between the two terminologies is a must in order to distinguish the conscious and unconscious processes that learners go through when comprehending texts. This would also help in unifying existing terminology in the literature to avoid generalization and to aim for a more professional output of articles and books.

### **2.3 Reading Strategy Taxonomies:**

Although the literature still lacks a comprehensive and structured L1 and L2 reading strategies taxonomy or hierarchy, teachers of today should take advantage of the many decades that were spent on reading skills research. Such literature facilitates in providing depth to understanding the mechanism of reading, set realistic goals, structured instruction, and a more constructivist approach towards reading assessment, performance, and progression. As a result, here are some of the most well-known reading strategy taxonomies that have been used in the foundation of numerous reading researches.

The first famous hierarchy has been issued by Bloom et al. in 1956. This taxonomy focused on classifying educational objectives; however it has been taken into other areas of application i.e. instruction and evaluation. It has been categorized into three domains: a) cognitive b) affective c) psychomotor. This taxonomy has had great influence as it accentuated the complex activities of the cognitive domain in learning plus the idea that everything should be taught and evaluated. The only downfall and criticism held against this taxonomy was that it does not contain specific mechanisms that are involved in understanding texts.

Furthermore, Barrett's (1968) suggested taxonomy also discusses questions that involve reading comprehension. What makes this taxonomy special is it being very detailed in comparison to the respective ones mentioned above. Barrett suggests four primary categories: a) literal recognition or recall b) inferences c) evaluation d) appreciation. Each classification has four and eight categories.

In 1986 the best interactive theory of reading comprehension has been reflected by Irwin. Within this hierarchy Irwin divides questions into two levels: micro-information (word meaning/ syntactic relationships) and macro-information (main ideas/ summaries). This model has multiple categories and is known to be very useful for reading comprehension classes that are based on classroom discussion. In her system, Irwin has mentioned previous knowledge and metacognitive processes. Such questions are very critical to teachers as they deal with the process of mental instruction which are needed for comprehension.

Further in time, Elijah and Legenza (1975) presented a taxonomy that has been inspired and based by Barrett's (1968) and Sander's (1966). In this taxonomy the authors describe four primary levels and sub levels of comprehension (literal, interpretive reaction, and application). This model considers many items that have not been taken into account by Barrett e.g. interpreting new words and summarizing.

With regards to reading, Herber (1978) tried connecting Bloom's taxonomy to three levels of reading comprehension: applied, literal, and interpretive. In addition, applied questions employ readers' background knowledge and point them towards evaluation, elaboration, prediction, or problem solving based on

implicitly stated information in a reading text. Moreover, literal questions involve readers to remember or familiarize themselves with explicit information that has occurred in a reading text. Lastly, Interpretive based questions rely on paraphrasing, explaining, inferring, concluding, and summarizing.

On the other hand, three taxonomies were presented in 1978 by Pearson and Johnson which are known as the word comprehension tasks and the propositional comprehension tasks both consisted of nine classifications. Moreover, the question taxonomy contained three levels of question typology: textually explicit, textually implicit, and scriptally implicit. The meanings behind these classifications approximately correspond to the ones mentioned in Herber's taxonomy; plus, Gray (1960, p.) has referred to this as read the lines, between the lines, and beyond the lines.

In a different model, Munby's (1978) taxonomy of microskills has spread its influence throughout syllabi, materials design, and language tests. It has been designed as a tool in overall needs analysis and course design. The reason behind its success is that it has focused on the four language skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This taxonomy contains 19 skills of comprehension:

1. Recognizing the script of a language
2. Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
3. Understanding explicitly stated information
4. Understanding information when not explicitly stated
5. Understanding conceptual meaning
6. Understanding the communicative value of sentences
7. Understanding relations within the sentence
8. Understanding relations between parts of text through lexical cohesion devices
9. Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
10. Interpreting text by going outside it
11. Recognizing indicators in discourse
12. Identifying the main point or important information in discourse
13. Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
14. Extracting salient details to summarise (the text, an idea)
15. Extracting relevant points from a text selectively
16. Using basic reference skills
17. Skimming
18. Scanning to locate specifically required information
19. Transcoding information to diagrammatic display

Furthermore, although the previously mentioned taxonomies have classified question types without stating the genre of the used text, Arcay and Cossé (1992) presented a taxonomy that classifies specific text types. Their model categorises fictional and non-fictional texts in accordance to form, content, and organization. The authors' taxonomy targeted numerous areas of form and content. However, no attempt has been noticed with regards to comprehension questions classification in reference to genre.

The previous lists or taxonomies are tempting because they provide a theoretical tabulation that justifies measures of planning a reading test task or item in isolation. Moreover, they could facilitate in the process of diagnosing reader problems and solutions. However, these tables need to be handled with care. Firstly, their origins come from a theorist's point of view and research not the result of empirical observation; therefore, the act of practicality remains in question. Secondly, these taxonomies are usually under defined or misclassified; as a result, they overlap enormously and give a feeling of disconnection. Lastly, these hierarchies are theoretically powerful in terms of their frameworks especially for constructing tests; thus, their usage amongst teachers is doubtless.

Finally, after numerous readings in the previous literature review presented in this section this study will adopt Munby's (1978) taxonomy of microskills as it is more detailed in terms of strategies and it is believed to be more applicable for the purpose of the current study.

## ***2.4 The Role of Instruction:***

This section covers the definition of strategy based instruction and how it would benefit learners in becoming better at comprehending texts with or without their teachers.

Cohen (1998) and Chamot et al. (1999) define strategy based instruction as the procedures that are used by the teacher in the classroom when combining language learning strategies within language teaching. This method has been suggested as the literature is rich with numerous references to its success. It has been proven that higher proficiency students tend to use learning strategies at a higher rate than their lower proficiency counter parts. Moreover, the excelling

learners are more likely to use them in a more flexible and effective manner depending on the required context for maximum learning output (Cohen 1998; Harris 2003; McDonough 1999; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 2001; Zhang 2003). In a study conducted by O'Malley et al. (1985), students have demonstrated that explicit strategy instruction has tremendously improved their performance. The study concluded with the fact that teaching learning strategies along with guided application in a specific discipline has significantly enriched students' learning.

In other multiple attempts over the years, Oxford (1990, 2001) has shown consistent results in the field of learning strategies. She has shown that the role of learning strategies takes part in enhancing students' language proficiency due to practical strategy training. Moreover, others such as (Chamot and O'Malley 1994; Chamot et al. 1999; O'Malley and Chamot 1990) have attempted to employ a systematic transformation to the method at which language instruction has been carried out. Their designed CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach) seeks to link ESL students' learning experiences. In this approach the following elements: strategy instruction, language improvement, and content teaching have been merged in order to provide students with a group of supporting strategies for academic enrichment. None the less, this has showed predictable progress of these students that underwent CALLA training.

In terms of strategy based reading instruction, this practice has been always regarded as critical in educational psychology, reading pedagogy, and first language learning circumstances. Learners' conscious monitor and control lead towards their learning process which are fundamental to meaningful learning (Flavell 1992; Pressley 2002). Conducted research within the field signify that the processes within the metacognitive level have played a significant role in the enhancement of intelligence and facilitates learners; in taking control of their learning process (Dole et al. 1996; Pressley and Afflerbach 1995). In other supporting studies that have proven the positive effects on students' reading advancement, there were specific studies regarding the influences of reciprocal strategy instruction (Brown and Palincsar 1982; Loranger 1997; Palincsar and Brown 1984; Pearson and Fielding 1991). These studies have provided supporting evidence to the benefits of strategy instruction which has

demonstrated progression in students' performance due to the excellence of the strategy instruction program that they have attended.

In the same footsteps, second language researchers compiled studies that have focused on discovering the reading strategies that learners have used (Anderson 1991; Block 1986; Jimenez et al. 1996; Zhang 2001) and the outcomes of strategic reading instruction and how it has led to reading improvement e.g. (Anderson 1999; Carrell et al. 1989; Janzen and Stoller 1998). Janzen and Stoller (1998) have also contributed in supporting second language readers' development through strategic instruction. The study contained four procedures: a) choosing a challenging text according to the student's level b) selecting specific strategies of instruction c) structuring lessons and compiling transcripts to facilitate the process of presenting strategies d) adapting a style of instruction that would suit the learner's needs and in class modelling, practice, discussion, and responses. It has been reported that through using this four step method students have learned effective reading and developed a sense of autonomy and awareness of the involved processes. Although Carrell (1998) suggests explicit reading strategy instruction to second language readers, others argue this method by questioning how explicit should the teaching of such strategies be?

On the other hand, Grabe (1991) warns that effectively based strategy training in second language teaching is not as easy or simple as it seems. There are many factors that contribute to strategy instruction: strategy transfer, clarity of procedures, student responsibility, and the duration of the instruction. The previously mentioned factors should be considered when conducting strategy based instructional programs. As a result, many authors like McDonough's (1999) and Harris (2003) based their articles as reminders to readers of the expected challenges for strategy based instruction. Meanwhile, Chamot et al. (1999) direct their emphasis to explicitness when planning reading strategy based instruction; however, students' consciousness of strategy use should be developed first. This can be done through modelling strategic thinking, practicing the use of newly taught strategies, and evaluating students' practiced strategy transfer into new tasks.

Finally, the authors assert that the previous steps should be considered in strategy based reading instruction design. Also, they believe that such methods should be merged into language curricula and not taught as an independent course.

In addition, when planning a reading curriculum for learners the idea of differentiated instruction arises. The process of teaching or instruction in general is not a one size fits all. The schools of today are filled with children from diverse families, linguistic backgrounds, learning strengths and needs. As a result, the term differentiated instruction has been born; it is an individual and flexible method of instruction. When teachers reach out to a student or a small group of students and vary their teaching approach in order to apply the best learning experiences possible, those teachers are differentiating instruction. It is not an easy method; however if teachers are in search for their students' success then considering this method is crucial.

Although research has been sparse in this area of instruction, some of the posted research results have proven that equal reading instruction does affect students' achievement. When a classroom contains students from multi reading levels and the teacher does not engage in the differentiated reading instruction approach, low and average achievers suffer; however, high achievers are not any better they barely make positive gains (McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006; Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000). In addition, other supporting literature asserts that the idea of differentiation has been brought up in order to minimize achievement gaps that are seen in the schools of today (Allington, 2005; O'Connor, Bell, Harty, Larkin, Sackor, & Zigmund, 2002). In a non-differentiated classroom teachers usually focus on average learners; thus, high or low achieving students end up improperly catered to in terms of instruction and no improvement is noticed in their reading abilities. Furthermore, differentiated instruction aims to amplify the growth and progress of each student. In other words, to instruct individually means that each student obtains qualitative distinct instruction depending on their needs. This might sound like a hassle to many teachers as they would have to tweak and adapt their reading syllabi including the types of strategies that have been mentioned earlier, curriculum, supporting material, assessment, and student groups.

In short, researchers agree on the fact that explicitness is an influential methodology when teaching reading strategy based instruction. However, following a guided systematic differentiated approach and preplanning how such methods can be used in a second language classroom among a diverse sea of learners would save time, produce excelling students, and result in professionally developed teachers in the field of reading.

### ***2.5 Good and Poor Learners:***

The following segment will investigate good and poor language learners through identifying their features and characteristics alone. Some studies will be demonstrated to provide a practical overview from the literature. Lastly, a table of comparison and contrast will be presented to summarize both type of learners' profiles.

Some believe that the most vital purpose of teaching a language would be training language learners to become fluent and accurate, have tremendous grammatical ability and lexical knowledge, and have multi communicative competences. However, this is not the case in reality, in every language classroom some students excel over others on numerous levels linguistic, communicative, and academic. As a result, researchers have become interested to understand what is the key or keys that make these learners succeed and what causes failure to their counterparts.

The term good and poor learners began spreading in the 70s. Many studies have paved the way with the purpose of understanding the characteristics of these learners from multiple standpoints. Furthermore, the first study was conducted by Stern at the OISE Modern Language Centre in Toronto Canada. This study aimed to unlock the processes and learning strategies that have been applied by good learners (Stern, 1990). Moreover, other researchers such as Fröhlich (1976) and Naiman et al (1978) have discovered that good learners had certain characteristics e.g. creating a practical learning environment, making the most out of learning environments, and tailoring learning methods and strategies that cater to their needs.



In addition, Rubin (1975) adds more to the list of characteristics of good learners: a) keen and educated guessers that are flexible outside their comfort zone c) have a strong will to communicate d) unhindered by doubt e) focus on form and communication f) spend time practicing specific language components such as pronunciation g) observe how they and others speak and h) attentive towards the mood, context, and meaning of discourse. Finally, the concept of strategy instruction according to Rubin has risen from working on, teaching, and assisting poor learners with learning strategies.

In a similar vein, Norton and Toohey (2001) have studied a learner's linguistic output, internal characteristics, and learning strategies and their response within specific social and cultural environments and communities. They concluded that good learners' achievements are justifiable due to their ability to openly converse in their communities. Their varied linguistic forms and speed of acquisition of the latter was not what allowed them to become more successful than their peers.

Adding to the list of successful learners' characteristics is Alves' (2008) summary of effective learners' features: to have a strong urge to learn English, to be consistent and fixed on the learning of a language, to measure progression through phases, to enjoy tackling the language outside the boundaries of class, ready to make mistakes and learn from making them etc... The author has also added that being attentive to one's learning style will facilitate into catering his or her multiple intelligences which in hand will develop numerous learning abilities.

In addition, for a better visual display here is a summary of the utilization of successful and unsuccessful learners in the form of a tabulation below.

	<b>Good Learner</b>	<b>Poor Learner</b>
<b>Frequency</b>	Oftenly uses more strategies (Chamot & Kupper 1989).	Employs less strategies with less frequency (Chamot & Kupper 1989)
<b>Range &amp; Selection</b>	Operates a better range and selection of cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies to effectively complete productive and receptive tasks (Chamot & Kupper 1989).	Has a smaller inventory of strategies that leads to an unsuccessful completion of tasks. (Chamot & Kupper 1989).
<b>Suitability</b>	An expert at matching a suitable strategy to a specific task (Chamot 2005; Chamot & Kupper 1989).	Usually applies unsuitable strategies for given tasks which result in an unsuccessful task completion. Could seem lacking in the metacognitive knowledge area with regards to task requirements and strategy selection (Chamot 2005; Chamot & Kupper 1989).
<b>Goal</b>	Oriented towards using strategies for completing a given task (Chamot & Kupper 1989).	Strategies are applied in a random way without careful planning or targeting of strategies to the task (Vann & Abraham 1989).

*Table 2 Comparison between Good and Poor Learners*

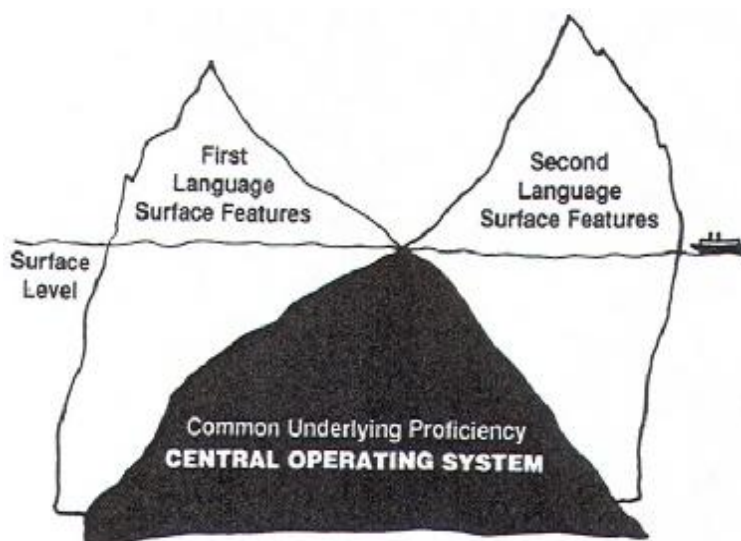
Lastly, quality weighs more in value over quantity as Chamot and Rubin (1994, p.372) point out that “the good language learner cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and develop a personal set of effective strategies”.

As it has been witnessed above in the strategy instruction section and good and poor learners section, the concept of good instruction and learner exists. Many researchers have proven that neither the number of strategies nor the amount of grammar or vocabulary that a learner acquires is the ultimate purpose of learning a language. In contrast the quality of both factors plays a significant role in the success of a learner’s language learning journey.

In the two upcoming sections, two of the most respected theories that have been recognized by second language teaching and learning literature shall be unfolded. Both have been introduced by the famous scholar Cummins (1979). It is believed that these theories are critical to the understanding of the harnessing of first and second language learning.

## **2.6 Interdependence Hypothesis:**

The premise of this hypothesis originates from the idea that languages are universal. They share, differ, assimilate, and oppose each other within their numerous linguistic features. This implies that bilingual or trilingual children's skill in a second language depends on their foundation i.e. mother tongue skill before being exposed to the target language. As a result, this is reflected in a child's values, knowledge, attitude, and skill which are first developed in their mother tongue and later transferred to the target language. This hypothesis has also undertaken the name of the iceberg hypothesis as it is shown in the diagram below:



*Figure 2 Cummins' Iceberg Model of Language Interdependence (Cummins 2000)*

This analogy assumes that a first and second language on the surface seem to be working separately; however, beneath that surface intellectual and academic mechanics are shared in both languages. As a result, Cummins proposes that mother tongue learning aptitudes could be transferred to the target language's learning environment. What makes this theory unique is that it could work in reverse i.e. when a learner learns a second language the capacities of his or her mother tongue are also being developed in that learning setting (Netten & Germain, 2002).

Moreover, (Cummins, 1979) emphasizes further into a critical matter; if a child's first language skills are underdeveloped in specific features and he or she has gotten exposed to a second language intensively this would hinder the development of the first language. As a result, language teachers should be very careful when teaching a language to non-native speakers as this would regress and cause a negative effect on a child's progress. Some researches claim that acquiring all the necessary academic skills in one's mother tongue creates a strong foundation which in hand leads to successful transfer of these skills to the target language. As a result, smooth transitions and transfers between the languages occur and allow better competence achievement in both languages. In addition, another downfall has been reported in this hypothesis, if a child has not fully developed his or her first language competence before learning a second language; both languages might not advance and would not facilitate in the process of a child's high academic achievement.

This hypothesis may be touching upon one of the issues or sources of what is happening in the Saudi language classroom or to why the students might be performing poorly in English. The proposed English pilot curriculum at the moment is very strong and challenging compared to the Arabic curriculum; thus, the English curriculum is not suitable for the students' current level. Naffee (2013) reported the English pilot curriculum's faults through some interviews with public and private English teachers where many agreed on urging the ministry to revise or develop a new English curriculum. Conceivably, curriculum policy makers should consider looking into and researching this hypothesis further as it might help in reaching a sound practical solution. Cummins work could be used for providing a positive framework that could act on predicting cognitive and academic influences for numerous forms of bilingualism.

### ***2.7 Threshold Hypothesis:***

After the iceberg hypothesis, Cummins (1979) decided to evolve his theory due to some received criticism and inconsistent results of some studies that discuss the relation between cognition and bilingualism. The evolved theory suggests that children need to reach a basic level of proficiency in their mother tongue or target language in order to gain benefits of bilingualism. Furthermore, the hypothesis emphasizes the fact that if there are low levels of competence in the first and

second language there could be negative effects and consequences in terms of academia and cognition (Cummins, 1979). Moreover, a child should have minimum competence in his/her first language in order to be capable of developing a second language. In other words, a child's high level of competence in a first language will reflect on their competence level in a second language. As a result, once children gain high levels of bilingualism in both languages they will be capable of achieving great levels of cognitive development.

On the other hand, Baker's (1996) numerous papers have assumed that the more children become bilingually balanced, the greater the probability of cognitive benefits. A balanced bilingual is an individual who has a similar ability of fluency in two languages; however, a semi-lingual is an individual who is lacking in both languages when being compared to a monolingual. These lacks could exist on many linguistic levels: phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic etc... Truly balanced bilinguals are a few, individuals usually suffer from linguistic imbalances as one language is dominant. The case of dominance differs as it may lie in one or more of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

## **2.8 Schema Theory:**

The concept of schema theory in reading cannot be excluded as it plays a major role in the formulation of a learner's general point of view. The theory claims that any text cannot hold meanings within its folds haphazardly. The first discipline to introduce this term is psychology, it has portrayed schema as the interpretation of a group of past experiences or reactions. In other words, when a learner approaches a written text he begins to react by building his understanding through what he already knows about the data in a text. As a result, the learner creates building blocks within his mind and formulates a conclusion about what has been read.

In addition, the theory explains how a reader uses previously acquired knowledge to understand and learn from written texts (Rumelhart, 1980). The term has been coined by Bartlett (1932, p.201) as "an active organization of past reactions or experiences". However, it was first introduced in reading by Rumelhalt (1980), Carrell (1981) and Hudson (1982) where they discussed the critical role of

previous knowledge in the discipline of reading comprehension. Rumelhart (1980, p.34) defines schema as "a data structure for representing the genetic concepts stored in memory ". Moreover, Anderson and Pearson (1984, p.42) describe it as "an abstract knowledge structure". The primary rule of schema theory believes that written texts do not hold the meaning on its own. Instead, texts supply instructions for learners on to how they could obtain or build meaning from previously acquired background knowledge. This knowledge is defined as prior knowledge or schemata (Barrlett, 1932; Adams and Collins, 1979; Rumelhart, 1980). A reader's schemata are categorized in a hierarchical fashion top (general) down (specific). Based on this theory, the process of text comprehension is an interactive manner it occurs between the reader's schemata and the approached text. Effective comprehension entails the skill to connect what is being read to what is already known. Anderson (1977, p.369) states that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well". Reading comprehension is a bidirectional process it operates from either the bottom up to the top and or from the top down to the bottom of the hierarchy. The bottom-up process is triggered by specific information from a text; however, the top-down process begins with the general or global to verify certain assumptions. The previous processes occur concurrently in collaboration which allows the process of interacting or comprehending among top-down and bottom-up processes (Carrel and Eiserhold, 1983).

When discussing the schema theory it is important to distinguish the different types of schemata as each has its own properties and characteristics. As per the complexion of contents, numerous kinds of schemata have been found: a) formal schemata relates to the rhetorical structures of a text; b) content schemata relates to the components of what is being read; c) cultural schemata relates to the global elements of culture that exists among a large population (Urquhart and Weir, 1998). The list would be incomplete without d) linguistic schemata which has been introduced later by Carrell (1988).

In addition, a formal schema discusses "background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts" (Carrel and Eisterhold 1983, p.79). To rephrase, formal schema relates to the knowledge of how diverse genres are portrayed. As Richards et al. (2000) highlight that schema

(macro structure) is connected to a group of basic structures which justify how a text or discourse is organized. Numerous types of discourse and text like poems, letters, reports, stories, and descriptions are classified according to the methods where the subject, intentions, and other data are connected together to formulate a unit. This foundational structure is identified as formal schemata. To clarify, an example of a story will be used to demonstrate. Usually, a story is made up of a setting that consists of characters, time, and places. Later these elements are followed by an episode of events that lead to a climax; however, diverse genres follow different structures. When a learner lacks this kind of knowledge this causes reading comprehension difficulties and disadvantages.

On the other hand, content schemata is concerned with "background knowledge of the content area of the text" (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983, p.80). This consists of abstract knowledge or data about what is expected to happen and how these events are connected to one another in order to formulate a complete thought. This schema can be portrayed as an open ended group of habitual events that are usually practiced at a specific occasion. A very good example of this schema is going to a restaurant, a person's schema would contain data about the service, placing an order, menu, bill payment etc... These types of schemata are largely culture oriented; as a result, most researchers classify content schema as culture schema.

With regards to culture, Richards et al. (2000, p.117) defines it as "the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviour, social habits, etc., of the members of a particular society". On the other hand, Rivers and Temperly (1978, p.202) label cultural knowledge as "socio-cultural meaning" i.e. "meaning which springs from shared experiences, values and attitudes".

In a similar vein, the studies that were conducted by Johnson, 1981; Carrell, 1981 in Carrell, 1984a have demonstrated that implied cultural knowledge that is assumed by a text reacts with a learner's cultural prior knowledge. If the text's contents are based on the learner's culture the process of comprehension is likely to be easier to read and understand and visa-versa. Furthermore, individuals may understand the same piece of text differently. This has been shown through the research of Steffenson et al (1979). As a result, being sensitive to cultural

similarities and differences is very critical especially when dealing with the culture of the target language the lack of such cultural awareness may lead to the effect of “lost in translation”.

Lastly, linguistic schema discusses grammar and vocabulary. It is the foundation of text comprehension. Eskey (1988, p. 94) assumes that a good reader excels at decoding and interpreting texts, as he or she’s reading skills develop their decoding process becomes second nature.



### **3 Methodology:**

The following research has based its practical practice on the mixed methods approach which is also known as the triangulation method. This model of mixing the qualitative and quantitative approaches has been originated in 1959 by Campbell and Fisk. Their purpose was aimed towards studying the rationale behind psychological characteristics. The major shift behind this was to try eliminating the biases and limitations that each approach contains. Due to the nature of this research, the qualitative elements will be in the shape of teacher open ended interviews and student observations through the usage of the think aloud protocol. On the other hand, the quantitative element will be shaped by the frequency analysis of the strategies used by each student through their interpretation of each selected text. Participants will be classified according to their answers about their linguistic background and their interest in reading.

#### **3.1 Participants:**

The chosen subjects of this study are a homogeneous group of six Saudi female students that attend the same public high school located in the western region of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, they are schooled under the Saudi public curriculum. The chosen students' are senior high school students (year 12) their age range is between 17-18 years old. However, this homogenous group is also a stratified one as well, each comes from a diverse linguistic background. Some are from the north, south, middle, east, and west of Saudi Arabia. These students speak English as a foreign or second language they are late bilinguals i.e. learned English after the critical period. Male students have not been considered in this study due to cultural and practicality issues. Below is a table that will help identify the research participants more clearly and categorize them according to the regions and cities that they are originally from and the spoken dialect in their area.

	Region	City	Dialect
Student 1	South	Beeshah	Southern
Student 2	West	Jeddah	Hijzai
Student 3	South	Al-Baha	Southern
Student 4	Mid and East	Al-Ahsaa and Al-Qaseem	Najdi
Student 5	North	Tabook	Northern
Student 6	West	Jeddah	Hijzai

Table 3 Students' Linguistic Background



Figure 3 Saudi Main Dialects Alghamdi, M. (2003)

### **3.2 Instruments:**

Due to the fact that this research uses the mixed methods approach, there will be three main tools used for collecting data some are quantitative and others are qualitative in their nature. The core tool is Munby's 1978 micro skills taxonomy that consists of 19 reading skills that students would use when deciphering reading texts. This taxonomy is going to be used as a frequency tableau to monitor which skills has each student used while reading the texts. To have a detailed linguistic background check about each participant some personal information will be collected through a student questionnaire or linguistic idiolect that contains seven open-ended questions. Lastly, for an in depth understanding about how both the Arabic and English curricula are taught, a face to face semi-structured teacher interview shall be conducted in the form of nine open-ended questions.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure:**

The collection of data took place at a carefully selected public high school in the northern part of Jeddah Saudi Arabia, as this study was looking for specific participants. Public and some private schools in Saudi Arabia segregate genders for religious and cultural reasons. As a result, the chosen participants for this research are females only. After deciding on which public school to visit, the researcher was advised to meet with the school's principal in order to discuss the conducted research's nature, target participants' age group, and lastly the data collection's procedures. Then the principal suggested going to the school's secretary in order to screen the Saudi from non-Saudi students as the non-Saudi students' percentage in this school is very high. Thus, a list of names of Saudi students from year 12 was provided and collected to facilitate the process of knowing the students that the researcher was going to work with. Later a brief meeting was conducted with the chosen students and subject teachers (Arabic and English) in order to coordinate with their schedules and to inform them about the researcher's purpose and visiting schedule. Next, the subject teachers for both languages have been interviewed orally in Arabic; this is because Arabic is their mother tongue that will make them more comfortable when answering the interview questions; thus, this would deal with far more reliable data. The teachers' responses have been recorded, noted, and translated. Due to the fact that the interviews are being translated from Arabic to English transcription has

been disregarded. An overview of teachers' thoughts and teaching application shall be shared to address research question three. Lastly, students have completed a reading experiment using the think aloud protocol that lasted between 30-45 minutes. Students are asked in this method to speak their thoughts out loud and describe how they came to certain conclusions and answers about the texts. When a student remains silent for about 30 seconds, the researcher reminds the student to speak what they are thinking out loud or questions their understanding about certain phrases or words. Each student is tested individually through reading four challenging texts that are about 150 words long. The texts have been chosen to be difficult because the subjects have supposedly fully developed their literacy skills. Thus, this is a way of testing and observing their ability of employing numerous strategies. Two of the chosen texts are in Arabic and the other two are in English. The texts are different in terms of genre; two are academic articles (expository) and two are newspaper articles (narrative).

The experiment begins when a student starts reading the texts aloud. As the student reads, the researcher monitors the strategies that are being used by adding a tick to the pre-chosen reading taxonomy's strategies every time the student has applied. When a student finishes the experiment a questionnaire is provided which contains questions about her linguistic background and reading habits.

### ***3.4 Data Analysis Procedure:***

After collecting the students' data a contrastive analysis is conducted between the Arabic and English ticked skills. Ticks will be transcribed into frequencies and accordingly skills will be ranked in terms of the highest and lowest scoring skills in general then the highest and lowest scoring skills for each genre. Next, a case by case analysis for each student is done in order to understand each students' strengths and weaknesses in terms of reading skills and why each was successful or unsuccessful. Moreover, teacher interviews are categorized according to their feedback. Lastly, every quantified result is going to be transformed into a graphic representation either bar or pie chart depending on how each should be presented.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations:**

To commence this research, a permission letter was necessary to access the school. Later, after collecting the document from the supervisor the researcher has forwarded the permission letter to the school's principal and accordingly access has been acquired for data collecting. Student consent forms were provided to each volunteering student which stated a brief introduction about the researcher and her purpose. Further, an explanation of the research's description has been clarified. Lastly, the consent form has been concluded with a thanking message for participating in this research. The identities of the participated groups whether teachers or students along with their collected responses and questionnaires have been kept confidential for their protection. Numbers and letters (T1 = Teacher 1 and S1 = Student 1) have been substituted for their names and used to seal the volunteers identities and to ease the data analysis process later on.

## 4 Results:

The following segment demonstrates and interprets the study's research questions using tables, charts, and field notes from the study.

### 4.1 Research Question 1:

What are the symmetries and asymmetries in the usage of first (Arabic) and second (English) language reading strategies?

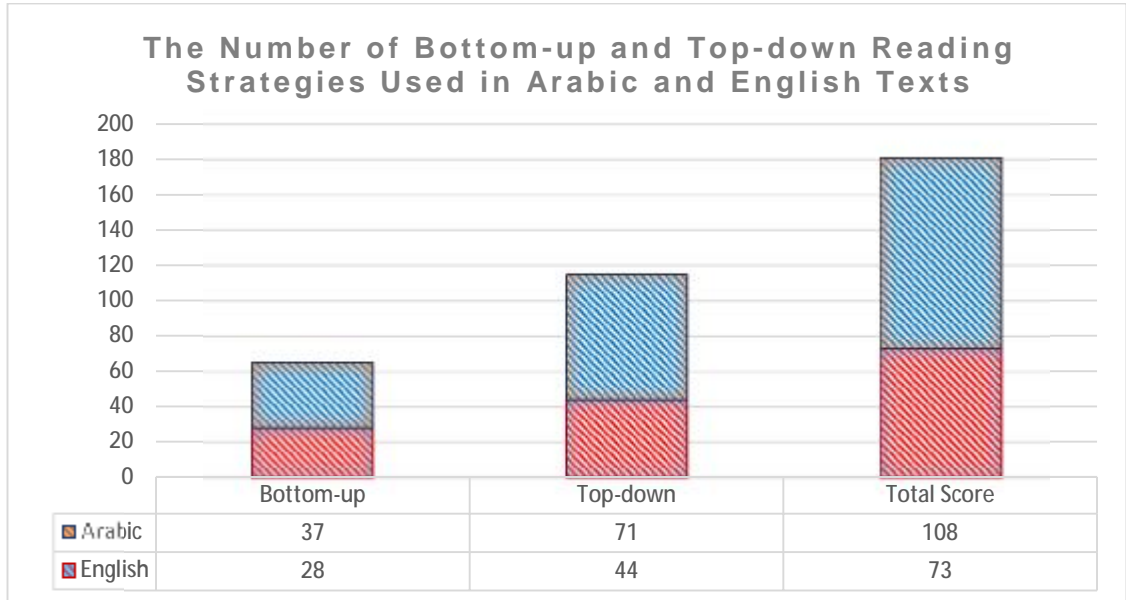


Figure 4 Total Number of Bottom-up & Top-down Reading Strategies Used in Arabic & English Texts

	Bottom-up									Top-down									
	Recognize the script language	Understand conceptual meaning	Recognize discourse indicators	Extract details to summarise	Extract selective points	Use basic reference skills	Scan for specific info	Transcode info into imagery	Infer words meaning from context	Understand explicitly stated info	Understand implicitly stated info	Absorb sentences communicative value	Understand relations in sentences	Understand relations in text by lexicons	Understand text cohesion through grammar	Interpret text by going outside it	Identify the main point	Identify main idea from details	Skim
Arabic	12	3		8	2	1	7		4	12	8	5	4	3	10	10	5	10	4
English	9	1		5	3	2	4	1	3	5		2	5	11	2	8	1	5	5

Table 4 The Number of Bottom-up & Top-down Reading Strategies Used in Arabic & English Texts

To address question one, reading strategies have to be classified into two main groups: bottom-up and top-down strategies, this would allow a better demonstration and practical approach towards a holistic view of the results. The above chart has concluded that more strategies have been used in Arabic than English texts. Furthermore, this is very clear in terms of the bottom-up and top-down classification. In Arabic texts students have used more top-down than bottom-up strategies this is because the students' first language is Arabic. In contrast, more bottom-up strategies have been used in English texts. According to Abu-Rabia (1997, p. 76), "Arabic is perhaps the only language in the world in which readers must first understand the sentence in order to recognize the word". This is because vowels are not represented as letters in Arabic orthography but are presented in the form of diacritics. As a result, Arabs could be less dependent on local cues when reading. Furthermore, in terms of strategy symmetry and asymmetry, most strategies were used in both languages equally; however, transcoding info into imagery is the only strategy that has been used in English. On the other hand, understanding implicitly stated information has been used only in Arabic because it is a top-down underdeveloped strategy for students when approaching English texts.

#### ***4.2 Research Question 2:***

What is the role of genre, register, and students' linguistic background in reading comprehension? Before addressing this question and interpreting the found results, a brief overview of the Arabic language orthography of both modern standard and non-standard varieties shall be discussed.

Arabic in reality is a massive variety of languages arranged and classified according to regions and cities. Dialects vary while some are very similar e.g. Moroccan and Saharan Arabic or very different e.g. Moroccan and Saudi Arabic. Thus, modern standard Arabic is the common language of places where such vernacular dialects are spoken; moreover, modern standard Arabic is the variety used in educational, governmental, formal, and legal affairs. In addition, modern standard Arabic is regarded as a second language to its speakers because it is not spoken as a native language in their communities; on the contrary, it is the language learnt in formal classroom settings.

Due to the diverse varieties of the Arabic language, the numerous forms of the Arabic vernacular are rarely written and when they are they usually lack a standard orthographic system. Furthermore, every Arabic speaking country or region has its own variety of vernacular spoken Arabic. These varieties could appear in written materials such as poetry, newspaper columns, novels, plays, personal letters, cartoons, and comics.

To make better sense of the found results, a map, chart, and table shall be embedded below which shows where each participant of this study is from.

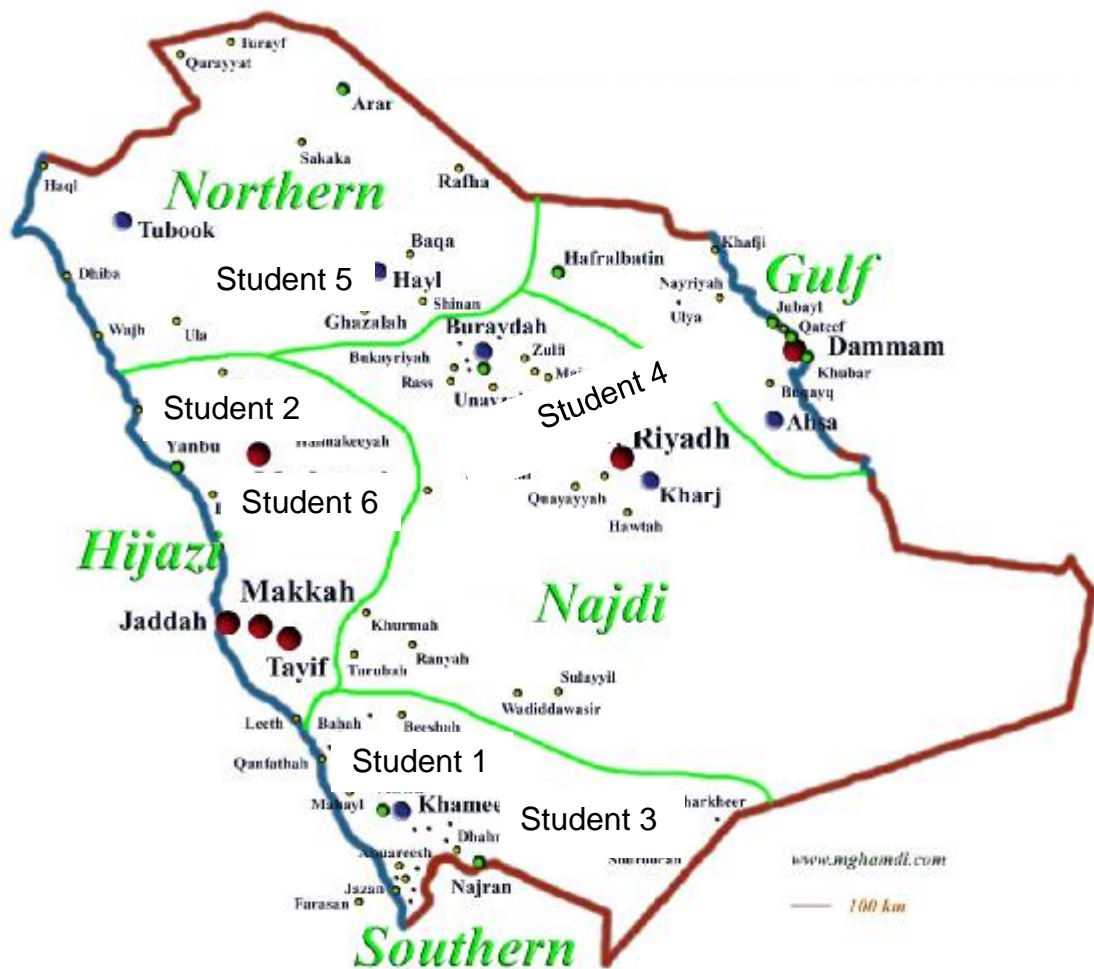
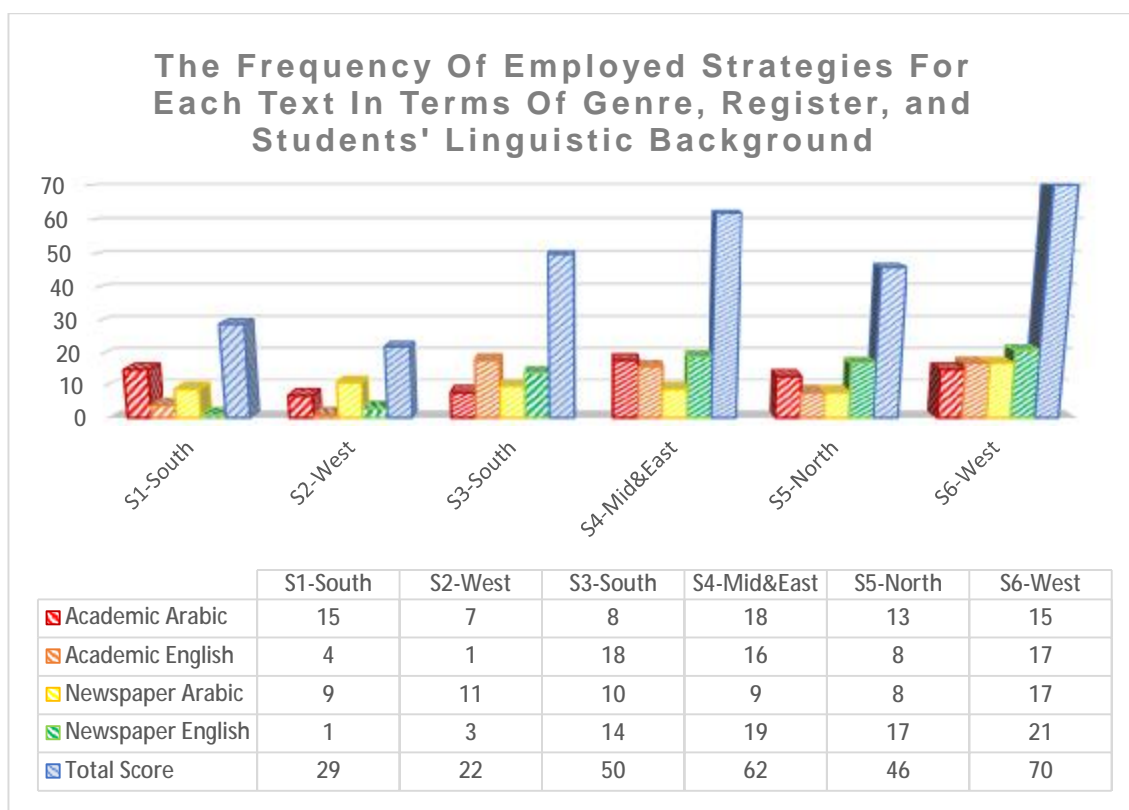


Figure 5 Saudi MainDialects Alghamdi, M. (2003)





*Figure 6 The Frequency Of Employed Strategies For Each Text In Terms Of Genre, Register, and Students' Linguistic Background*

The above chart demonstrates the number of times students have applied strategies in reading texts according to genre. This aspect has bred unique results of variation as it has been directly connected to the students' linguistic backgrounds.

Student four has outperformed the other subjects in the academic Arabic text because of her linguistic background. This subject is originally from the middle of Saudi where Najdi Arabic is spoken in that region. What makes this dialect unique is that its features are very similar to modern standard Arabic. Academic Arabic texts are written in modern standard Arabic thus the connection. On the other hand, student six has excelled with comprehending the newspaper Arabic text also because of her linguistic background. This participant was born and raised in the western region of Saudi between the two western cities of Yanbu and Jeddah plus both of her parents are from the same region; thus, her spoken dialect is Hijazi Arabic. The newspaper Arabic text has been written in Hijazi Arabic; as a result, it has been very easy for her to distinguish the used colloquial words of that region and comprehend what they mean which in turn led to meaningful and complete comprehension in comparison to the other subjects.

On the other hand, student three has shown a higher score in the academic English text this is because of her academic background. According to this subject she has attended a private school back in year four. In Saudi most private schools use different English curriculums and start at a very young age at year one and some even nursery. However, it is not the case with public schools where English is officially taught at the beginning of year four which some believe to be late especially if the curriculum consists of starting with the letters of the alphabet. In addition, classroom sizes differ too, public schools usually have the capacity of taking from 25 to 35 students; however, that is not the case in private schools. In addition, looking back at the recorded field notes this student seemed to be very confident when approaching each text. It was noted that her English accent was very distinct and sounded more like a native speaker. When asked about the reason behind this she stated that she grew up watching foreign series as a teenager. On the other hand, she used less strategies in Arabic because she claimed to fully comprehend both texts so had no need to employ as many strategies.

Furthermore in the results, student six has outnumbered the rest of her classmates in the newspaper English text. This has been the case because the subject found the newspaper's topic to be very interesting. As a result, her reaction and interaction with the researcher other than strategy frequency has been observed to be high. The participant asked numerous questions about the text even after finishing the experiment with her. The chosen text was about Barbie and how some artists transformed her physical appearance to look more like certain religious figures from around the world. Moreover, this student had mentioned in her questionnaire that she enjoys reading in English whether academic or non-academic materials, as she is keen on learning new vocabulary that could help her inside and outside of the English classroom.

In contrast, this aspect of genre not only revealed the high achieving students and the reasons behind that. This chart has reflected interesting results regarding low achievers as well.

Student two has scored the lowest among her peers in the academic Arabic and English genres. This could be explained through the written field notes about this student. The academic Arabic text's topic has seemed unfamiliar to her. Whenever she had been asked a question about certain sections in the paragraphs of the text she had asked if it would be possible to rephrase the question for her. On the other hand, she kept asking for direct translations from English to Arabic for the English texts as she is unable to read in English. Moreover, the student felt disinterested in what she was reading and this could be the main reason behind her low performance. Some of the very basic vocabulary was unfamiliar to this subject as well which has reflected her low vocabulary repertoire. This is very clearly represented in her questionnaire, where she stated that she likes to read short easy-read Arabic materials only. Plus, when asked about these easy read materials she mentioned that she does that occasionally as she dislikes reading in general.

Student five found a challenge with the newspaper Arabic text which resulted from her linguistic background. Although she is attending her formal schooling in the western region of Saudi Jeddah, the participant is affected by her upbringing and parents which are originally from the north of Saudi Tabook. In that region the northern dialect is widely spoken and it differs greatly from the Hijazi dialect which is spoken in the western region of Saudi. Therefore, the student had found a difficulty comprehending some of the colloquial Hijazi words that were in the newspaper Arabic text. Plus, reflecting back on her filled questionnaire the participant mentions that she is not very familiar with the Hijazi dialect as her community and family members speak less Hijazi and more of a northern dialect.

Student one has barely used any strategies for the newspaper English text. She explained that the text was very challenging for her to an extent she asked if it were possible to pass on both English texts and just apply the experiment on the Arabic texts only. In response the researcher offered to read the English text for her as a means of motivation and to clear any tension or anxiety levels that the researcher thought were the reason towards the student's request. However, after many trials it turned out that the student is unable to read aloud in English, even simple words such as "the" and "a". According to the collected field notes about this subject she has clearly stated that she does not know how to read in

English at all and that asking her to read aloud would not be helpful. In the researcher's opinion this is a result of large language classrooms and lack or incorrect management of classroom time. In such cases the large number of students in a large language classroom becomes a burden to the teacher. As a result, weak or under achieving students suffer and get less attention from the teacher. Excellent students are usually chosen to read as role models as a method of better time management, sticking to schedule with the curriculum, and use the given classroom time for the majority of the students.

As it has been observed the students' linguistic background has played a great role in reading comprehension; as a result, such factors should not be dismissed in language classroom preparations. Dialects are a part of an individual's identity they are considered a second language on their own and using them to the teacher's advantage is a bonus point.

### **4.3 Research Question 3:**

What are the Arabic and English subject teachers' perceptions about the new implemented curriculum and methods of reading strategy instruction?

Arabic teacher one answered question one very briefly regarding her understanding of reading strategies. She states that it means students should know the ABCs and 123s of proper reading in order to interpret and understand texts correctly. However, in question two when she was asked to provide examples of reading strategies that she uses with her students she mentioned that she does not really teach them as much as she reinforces reading strategies. This is because students have been taught these strategies at an earlier stage of their education usually in primary and middle school. Then, when students transfer to high school teachers of year 10 lay the foundational grounds of reading strategies again. Thus, by the time they have reached year 12 students should have fully developed their reading strategies and can depend on themselves and feel confident towards using them in later grades.

When the teacher was asked about the nature of instruction for reading strategies in the classroom she wished she could teach them in a more explicit manner. However, due to the rigidity and inflexibility of the old curriculum, the teacher ends

up focusing on assessment, how many points has each student scored in terms of reading correctly with the usage of diacritics, compiling main ideas and supporting details for each paragraph, answering questions about the text, and lastly, providing the meanings of difficult words from context. She asserts further by stating that what the researcher is discussing is truly amazing; however, this would usually be implemented in a master class where a supervisor would attend and grade teachers. Moreover, she rephrases her thoughts by explaining that reading strategies are important but that teachers are suffering from educational bureaucracy. It has resulted in things of importance losing their value. For example, in the reading classroom the paramount concern is to assess the student, to an extent this teacher believed that this subject has become undervalued, tedious, and honestly extremely boring to both teacher and student alike.

In addition, Arabic teacher one became very excited when an idea struck her regarding the school library. She thought of an innovative idea whereby library studies and reading could be fused. Her premise being that the books on the school library's shelves are just sitting there and the students have no idea of what is inside of them. However, I reminded her that sadly, in library studies books are treated according to classification, labeling, and shelving protocols; whereas reading strategy instruction is taught with the confines of the language reading classroom.

In terms of question four where the new and old Arabic curriculum are compared, Arabic teacher 1 explained that she has not taught the new curriculum and has seen it yet. However, from other teachers' feedback at lower levels, she had heard that the curriculum reform has not helped at all. Not that the old curriculum is any better but let us hope that by the time the reform reaches year 12 the provided materials will be much better than the old textbooks.

In questions five, the teacher mentions that most of the texts are religious they either Quranic verses or stories and also poetry. Moreover, the instructor shows concern by saying, to be frank there are not many academic texts in the curriculum; thus, students are used to specific types of texts the element of intertextuality is lacking.

In question six the teacher simply repeats herself by briefly saying that due to pressure and bureaucracy it is very difficult to implement extra reading materials outside of the supplemented curriculum as we have to follow it to the tee.

From a different angle question seven discussed the difficult texts that students struggle with in the classroom. The teacher mentioned that academic based texts are usually more challenging than literary texts. However, in terms of texts' difficulty of the current curriculum it could be easily said that they are not very challenging. This could be observed when asking students to look up difficult words only two or sometimes no words are found. In her opinion, the new curriculum should contain challenging texts for the students as she believes if one's abilities are not challenged they can never improve.

In addition, question nine has discussed the significance of diacritics. The Arabic instructor shared the following. Diacritics will allow you to understand words that are being read as without them certain words could be ambiguous. Sadly, most texts in the reading curriculum lack having diacritics and this is what we call for as Arabic language teachers. Once texts have fully employed diacritics, students would have excellent pronunciation. Although the curriculum lacks diacritics students are tested for proper pronunciation and they hate this part of their assessment the most because they lose most of their grade points in this section. I usually tell my students that even though your curriculum lacks diacritics you should be able to easily add these diacritics by applying the learned grammar when reading. When asked about the method of assessment, the teacher clarified that assessments could only be carried out during the two 45 minute lessons given per week.

Furthermore, Arabic teacher 2 admits when addressing question one that she is not familiar with the scientific concept of reading strategies; however, she continues by answering questions two and three thereby demonstrating some of the strategies that are being instructed in her classroom are done in an implicit manner. First, silent reading as that aims to provide readers with a general idea about a text. Second, skimming through the main titles of a text and its figures to absorb more specific main details. Third, asking questions about what has been read in order to discuss emerging new ideas and thoughts. Four, the ability to

create a main idea and supporting ideas about each paragraph in a text as it teaches the students how to summarize paragraphs.

When discussing the topic of curriculum reform in question number four the Arabic instructor had so much to say. She mentions that she is one of the teachers that were lucky enough to teach the new curriculum to the lower high school levels before other teachers. She taught it for a month to grade 10 students. In her opinion the new Arabic curriculum focuses on teaching smaller chunks of information and keep repeatedly explaining it through various methods to ensure that students have fully comprehended the lesson. Moreover, in terms of reading, the new curriculum has given so much attention to this skill as it emphasizes upon instructing students with fundamental steps on to how to read diverse types of texts well and understanding how to analyze literary and scientific texts too.

Question five shortly touches on the types of texts that are taught in the current curriculum. Arabic teacher 2 mentions that it relies mostly on literary and religious texts and very little scientific material.

Question six has similarly been answered by stating that old curriculum that she uses with year 12 students currently does not support adding new or extra materials.

When asked about the type of texts that students struggle with the most her answer was Quranic and poetic texts. With regards to Quranic texts, she has tried to motivate her students by asking them to prepare the texts at home via choosing their favorite reciter and listening to the correct recitation as preparation before class. Moreover, with poetic texts she usually reads them out aloud in class a day before reading the chosen text so that her students can apply diacritics on every word in texts and then practice reading this a day before the lesson. This would allow proper and correct pronunciation of words in the encountered text.

Lastly, in question eight Arabic instructor 2 cannot emphasize enough the role of diacritics. She states that they are extremely critical in all kinds of texts. I wish that all the school textbooks contained diacritics not just the Arabic curriculum.

This would allow students to become more familiar to seeing the proper form of words and become more acquainted with correct pronunciation. Lastly, just like the previous instructor she has mentioned that reading is taught twice a week for a period of 45 minutes.

On the other hand, the perceptions of the English teachers have arguably rich input from this interview due to the reform of curriculum for all high school levels.

English teacher one has not provided a clear overview of her understanding of reading strategies; however, she has managed to answer questions one, two and three altogether. In her opinion the passages in the new curriculum are too long and there is not much time to cover such material. As a result, she sadly states that on so many occasions she had assigned reading passages as homework for the students. Moreover, she has confidently asserted that 90% of them do not read the passages as their lengths are demotivating. In terms of strategy instruction she was more used to using the implicit method where students are divided into groups. Each group has a dictionary that they used to help them look up new words. She argues that students should not depend on the teacher, instead they should depend on themselves. In addition, she adds that another strategy she employs is; asking students to explain parts of an assigned passage among themselves and then exchange information between groups. She says that she tries her honest best to help them with these passages as they are excellent and contain useful topics; however, they are very lengthy and contain lots of difficult vocabulary. As a result, this led to her applying another strategy where students explain new and difficult words in English not Arabic but in a simplified way.

In question four English teacher 1 rephrases her thoughts about the new curriculum by stating that it is excellent and rich she likes it because it contains topics that benefit students because of the unfamiliar places and experiences that are represented in the new textbook. She adds that it allows students to expand their knowledge, learn more vocabulary, how to speak, how to write, and how to deal with such experiences. Furthermore, English teacher 1 complains about having too much to cover and learn. As a result, she answers question nine by clarifying that the curriculum is dense and long it does not fit the 45 minute class



periods four times a week. She suggests more English periods to be introduced to the students' schedule as they are not covering the whole curriculum instead only 5 units out of 7. On a different note, the instructor mentions that some grammatical exercises are repeated in the workbook; plus, it contains some silly exercises too. She further expresses her wishes of reducing the amount of compulsory? In contrast, English teacher 1 steps back to answering question four by comparing the old English curriculum to the new one. She believes that the old curriculum is silly the only thing she respected about it is the element and idea of Saudi. In contrast, she proceeds by stating that the new textbook has no sense of local identity as it is an international series. However, in terms of materials' value I do not think that the old students have benefited as much from the old curriculum as it is very simple, dull, and did not challenge the students what so ever. In contrast, the teacher points out to the fact that the new curriculum supports reading strategy instruction as passages contain different types of questions. Plus, it focuses on explicit reading strategy instruction through stating the necessary strategies that students should know e.g. reading for gist, scanning for specific information, and pre reading. Finally, to sum up she highlights that the new textbooks provide a clear idea of what has to be done. They are more structured in terms of reading strategy instruction which she believes is what students lack and need.

With regards to question five, English instructor one has mentioned that the new curriculum considers various types of genre e.g. articles, emails, and descriptive texts; however, this variety is absent in the old curriculum. One aspect she finds absurd about the new curriculum is that the reading texts do not match the writing activities. She has felt that students get confused because of this. In the old curriculum she says that the writing is in direct connection to the reading passage. Moreover, she argues that this difference in theme makes the students think a little bit more which in her opinion is also a good thing.

In another vein, question six brings up the idea of supplementary reading texts. English teacher one believes that there is no need for extra materials because the curriculum is already is rich with in terms of passages. In fact she says that there is actually not much time to cover all of them because of the short time period that is allocated for the class.

In question seven, English instructor 1 explains that her students usually struggle with all the assigned readings passages; however, according to her students she feels that descriptive texts are the easiest and letters are the most difficult. This is because with the letter students cannot express themselves confidently in words due to their lack of vocabulary. In contrast, students could easily make adjustments to a descriptive text through following the given model and personalizing it for themselves. In terms of how she helps her students with a passage such as the letter, she breaks the letter into small units and explains what each section discusses e.g. address, salutation, etc... in an outline format. This she says makes it a bit easier to follow.

On the other hand, In terms of the significance of diacritics in Arabic texts English teacher one explains that students have to learn how to read properly as they sound ridiculous when they mispronounce very simple sentences in Arabic. Without diacritics students could easily misinterpret words in a passage. Furthermore, she points out to a very sensitive topic regarding connecting Arabic and English together in the classroom. She states that when she asks students about looking up key words in a certain passage, students do not understand such instruction. As a result, English teacher 2 asks them about the meaning of the word “keyword” in Arabic they reply كلمة مفتاحية (a literal translation of the previous). English teacher 2 believes that students are weak in English especially in terms of strategies because they are weak in Arabic. She assumes that students do not get a similar type of instruction in Arabic; thus this leads to a huge gap in terms of performance in both languages.

Lastly, in question nine the teacher has expressed that the allocated class time of 45 minutes is too short. She also believes that four periods of English per week is not enough the ministry of education should consider teaching English on daily basis. This is because she says as teachers we are not able to cover the whole curriculum. We teach 5 out of 7 two are optional. She further explains that one lesson takes more than one period to cover. Finally, she summarizes by stating that the new curriculum is very dense for the students’ abilities and that the earlier curriculum was not challenging at all. She suggests that students can only improve their English if it is implemented from year one otherwise the same

results will keep repeating themselves. In short she says, curriculum reform is not enough adjusting it to students' needs and abilities is very important too.

In a similar voice, English teacher two answers questions one, two, and three by jumping straight into the strategies that she teaches in her classroom. First, she focuses on lesson presentation, she works on connecting the reading passages of the curriculum with students' lives. This makes the new taught vocabulary more clear and understood. Second, she asks her students to provide examples about the passage from their daily lives e.g. in the lesson about leisure it is typical to ask students about what do they do in their spare time. Furthermore, her strategy instruction is taught in both ways explicitly and implicitly as she claims that it really depends on what she is trying to explain to the students in the classroom.

In questions four, and nine, English teacher two states that the new English curriculum has been found to be easier than the previous one. She thinks that it is better and easier for students to understand because of the pictures, quality of the text books' papers, and topic variety. In her opinion, this teaches students how to deal with daily life situations e.g. job interviews. In contrast, she says that the only down side to this new curriculum is lengthy vocabulary and grammar. In terms of grammar, she points out that it is repeated a lot throughout the book which confuses students. As a result, she does not feel there is a need for extra reading, grammar, or vocabulary as the textbook has provided many resourceful materials. In addition, she feels that the new curriculum has a clear teaching and learning methodology and it contains all the necessary reading, writing, listening, and speaking strategies.

With regards to question five, she explains that there are different types of passages and that is what she favors the most. Students get to have a feel of what an essay, report, email, and letter are like.

In terms of curriculum flexibility in question six, English teacher two believes that it is possible to add extra reading materials both ways either from the teacher or the students. She further expresses her interest about the new curriculum by mentioning that she loves how it is created. However, some teachers believe that it is difficult to handle especially traditional teachers. Plus, she has heard that

other teachers are teaching a totally different curriculum than the one she is using at the moment. These teachers have expressed positive thoughts about it as well. In short, she states that the new curriculum is better than the old one on so many levels that it is very difficult to compare.

When asking English teacher two about difficult reading passages in question seven, she feels that students struggle with historical texts the most. This is because she feels that they dislike like them due to difficult vocabulary. However, she keeps telling her students that they must know something about history as it is very interesting.

In question eight, she says although she is an English teacher, she feels that using diacritics in Arabic texts is very important and critical because it teaches the exact manner of articulation of words when it comes to pronunciation. Thus, it leads to proper pronunciation and better comprehension of what is being read and dismisses any lexical ambiguity. She then reflects about her time of schooling as she remembers that as a child she was taught how to read and pronounce words properly through studying something called the Noorani Qaida. She then questions the disregard of teaching it in schools nowadays as she believes that a lot of children are suffering especially the ones that are attending international schools they cannot read in Arabic. Thus, it is shameful to say that most of the kids of this new generation are incapable of reading and writing in Arabic their own mother tongue.

Lastly, in question nine the English teacher two expresses the fact that although 45 minutes of class time four times a week seems like a lot of time; however, with this new curriculum it is difficult to cover everything thus the goal is to work with the students on the quality of what they are learning not covering the curriculum only.

In short, the Arabic and English teachers had opposing opinions about the currently taught curriculum this could be summarized in the following table below:

	<b>English</b>	<b>Arabic</b>
<b>Strategy Instruction</b>	Implicit and strong Curriculum motivates teachers to instruct their students with different reading strategies in every reading	Implicit and weak The curriculum is more concerned about grading the students
<b>Curriculum Flexibility</b>	Mixed, it depends on how the teacher is handling the materials. Some believe because of its density it is difficult to add extra reading materials; however, others argue otherwise	Not flexible, teachers have to focus on teaching what has been assigned by the ministry without adding any extra materials
<b>Periods per week</b>	Four periods Not all of the curriculum is being covered there is more focus on the quality of instruction rather than quantity	Two periods Teachers must finish all the assigned reading passages the focus is on assessment
<b>Types of Texts</b>	Various genres Essay, letter, report, newspaper article, stories	Limited genres Religious versus from the Quraan and, religious stories, poems, some articles
<b>New curriculum</b>	Communicative Consists of all the four language skills Interesting, challenging, and lengthy Contains lively texts and graphics International series Lost the element of culture	Communicative Integrates all Arabic subjects into one Some have used it and thought it facilitates strategy instruction especially with regards to reading
<b>Old Curriculum</b>	Structured Boring , easy, and short Locally designed Very cultural	Structured Focuses on forms i.e. reading, literature, composition, syntax and morphology, and rhetoric and criticism are all taught as separate subjects

*Table 5 Comparison between the English & Arabic Curriculum*

## 5 Discussion:

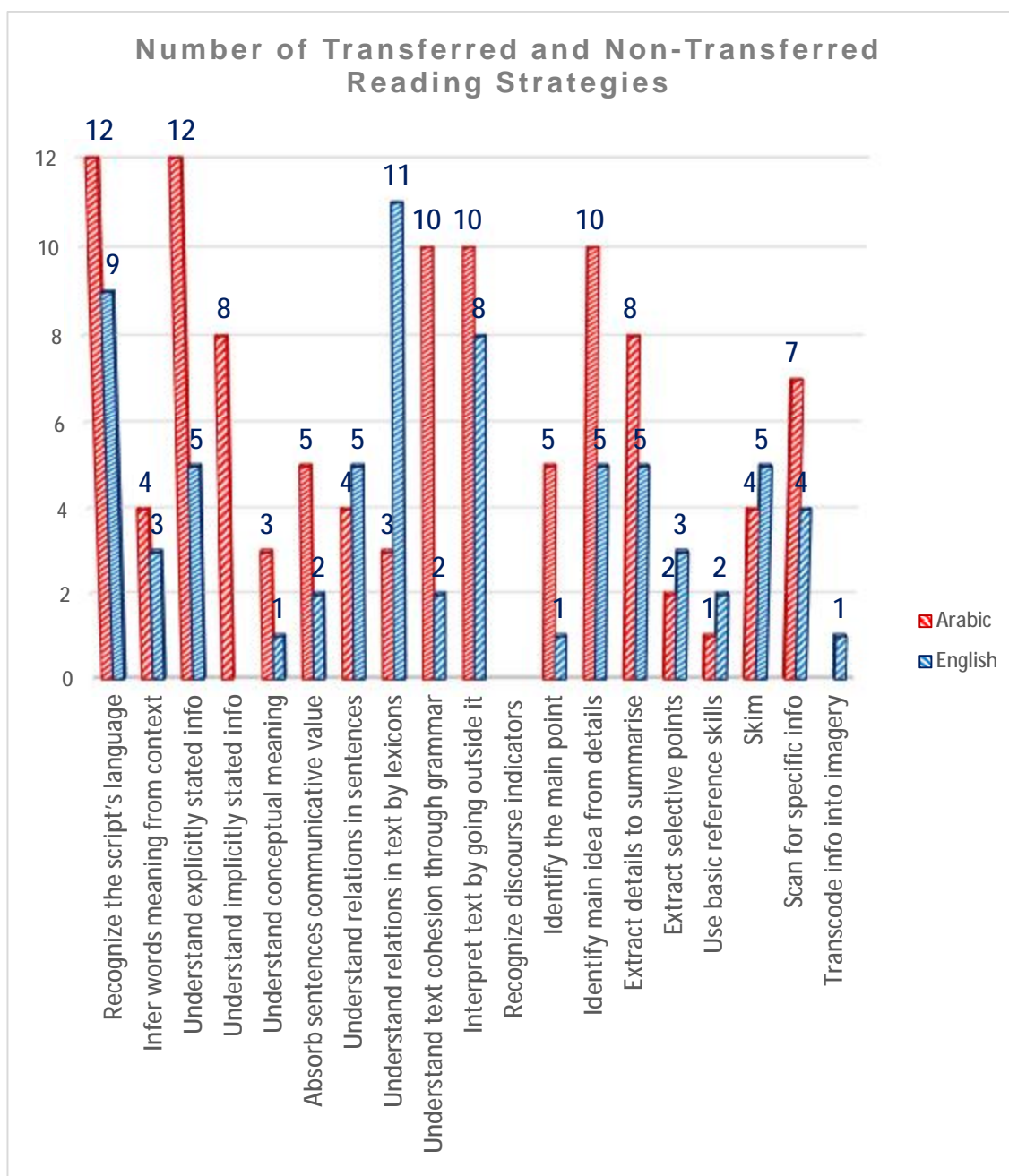
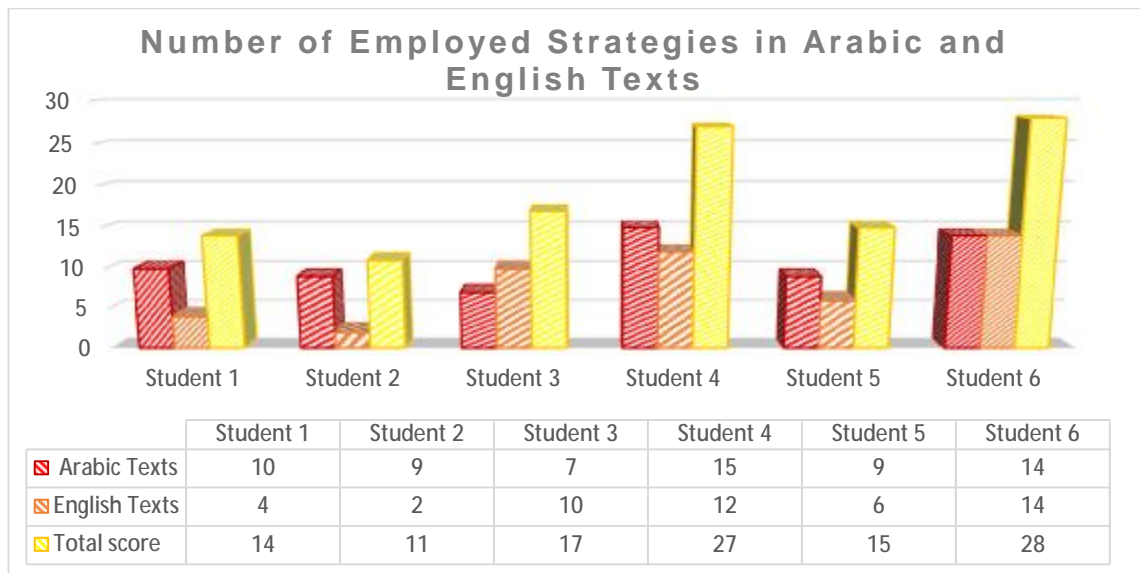


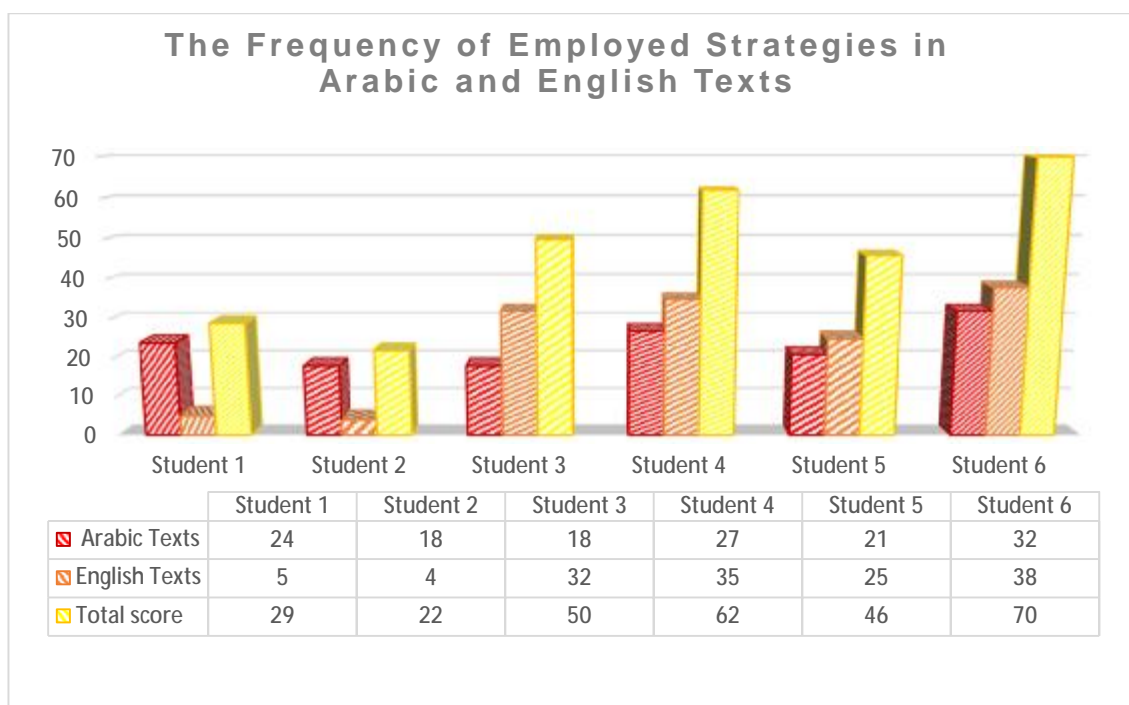
Figure 7 Number of Transferred and Non-Transferred Reading Strategies

Results from the think aloud procedure have bred very general results when comparing strategy use between languages. Most strategies have been employed in both Arabic and English equally; however, when looking at the data more closely through comparing students' performance via case by case analysis more results are found.



*Figure 8 Number of Employed Strategies in Arabic and English Texts*

The chart above demonstrates the number of employed strategies for both Arabic and English texts. Most students have used more strategies in Arabic due to the fact that Arabic is their mother tongue which has indicated better text comprehension. Student four has used more strategies in Arabic texts among her peers due to the rich material she reads outside the classroom. In her questionnaire she mentions that she loves to read different types of Arabic texts novels, short electronic online stories, and self-enrichment books. Student six had a balanced usage in both Arabic and English texts. This is because student six is the only student that likes to read in both Arabic and English. However, in terms of why she has used more strategies in the English texts compared to her peers is because when reading in English she focuses on learning new vocabulary so she could improve her speaking skills. In contrast, student three has used less reading strategies in Arabic because she has mentioned that she has fully comprehended the read texts; thus, there is no need to use as many strategies. Student two has used the least amount of strategies in English because the text is too challenging for her; moreover, she is very weak in terms of reading English texts aloud the researcher had to read the text for her to help her finish the task. In addition, the student kept asking for translation from English to Arabic in the hopes of understanding the English texts.



*Figure 9 The Frequency of Employed Strategies in Arabic and English Texts*

In this chart reading strategies are portrayed in a way that shows the amount of times they have been used in both Arabic and English texts. What could be noticed is that most participants have used English strategies more frequently than Arabic because they found English texts to be more challenging than the Arabic ones. Moreover, they feel more confident when reading in Arabic rather than English because it is their first language; thus, the frequency of Arabic strategy usage is lower than English.

On the other hand, students one and two have proved otherwise, they have repeated the usage of Arabic strategies more than English because these were the least verbal subjects of this study. According to the logged field notes, both students were quiet most of the time it could be due to their character, feeling inferior towards the experiment, or their disinterest in what was being read. In addition, they have seemed to be challenged when reading both Arabic and English texts in general as the researcher had to rephrase certain sentences and questions more than once throughout the texts. Moreover, they have asked for translations of the English texts more than once as they practically could not read nor comprehend English texts well which may indicate that they are low achieving learners and need help.



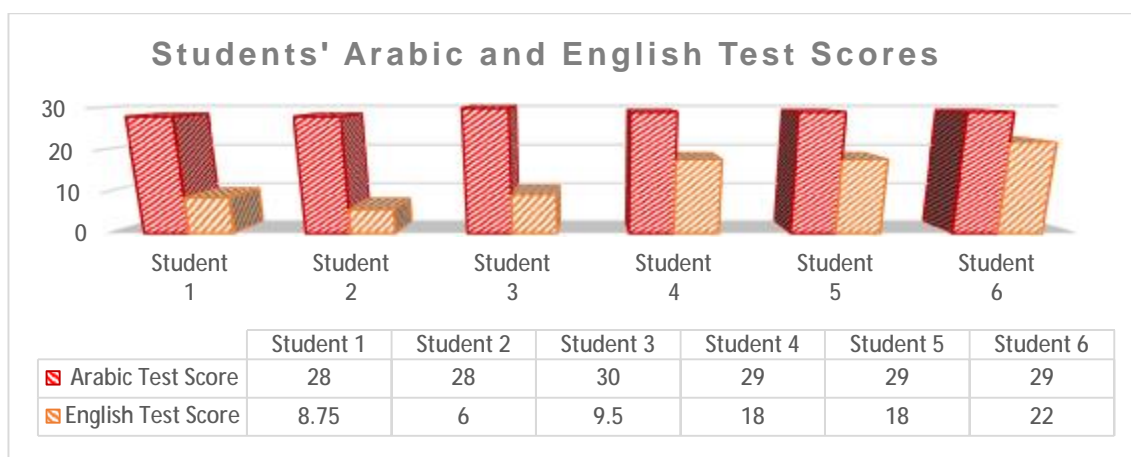


Figure 10 Students' Arabic and English Test Scores

The chart above demonstrates students' test scores in both Arabic and English. The Arabic test is originally out of 50 and the English test is out of 30; thus, to have an equivalent representation of the scores the Arabic scores have been multiplied by the resulting ratio of both scores which is 0.6 i.e.  $50/30 = 0.6$  and rounded to the nearest ten.

From the scores listed above there is a huge noticeable gap between the two scores. Thus, this shall be discussed thoroughly in the pedagogical implications section.

### 5.1 Pedagogical Implications:

From the think aloud protocol, students' test scores, and teacher interviews, the following can be learned. First, the symmetry and asymmetry of reading strategies between Arabic and English and vice versa was not very clear due to the varying differences and results between the participants of this study. This could be because the number of participating subjects was only 6 students that were diverse in terms of their linguistic backgrounds. Meanwhile, if there were more participants involved a rich pattern of results would have emerged and led to a deeper understanding of strategy transfer.

Second, from teacher interviews it has come to the researcher's attention that methods of reading strategy instruction in Arabic and English are implicit where according to the previously demonstrated literature (Cohen 1998; Harris 2003; McDonough 1999; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 2001; Zhang 2003)., strategy instruction should be practiced explicitly.

Moreover, from students' test scores it can be learned that different curriculum approaches, implementation, and unequal assessment result in a huge gap between the two languages' test scores. The Arabic curriculum is a locally designed text book by the ministry of education it abides by the structured approach. Each language skill or linguistic component is taught as a separate standing subject and assessed separately e.g. reading, literature, composition, syntax and morphology, rhetoric and criticism. In contrast, the English curriculum is an international series customized textbook for local use it follows the communicative approach. All four language skills are integrated and taught through a global perspective. Moreover, all of the aforementioned Arabic subjects are tested in a written format; however, reading assessment is done orally. Students are asked questions about the written text e.g. main idea, supporting details, cause and effect etc... On the other hand, the four language skills in English are assessed in a written manner, the focus is usually on grammar and vocabulary. Third, the English pilot curriculum has proven to be unsuccessful as it was reflected in students' low test scores compared to the Arabic ones. The pilot program should have been introduced gradually. The implementation process should have started from year 4 and rose upwards on a yearly basis, just like the Arabic curriculum. High school and middle school students were the ones negatively affected the most by this sudden change of curriculum, as they were originally taught under a structural based curriculum.

Fourth, there is immediate need for differentiated instruction in both Arabic and English classes. This is because not all students learn their first and second languages equally (McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006; Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000). Plus, this has been clearly observed in the students' test scores. In order for students to transfer their skills or strategies correctly, English teachers should introduce the idea of comparative analysis of reading passages and texts in their language classrooms. This would be a useful tool as a warmup session where students are first introduced to an Arabic text to make them feel less inferior in the English classroom. Next, the teacher identifies students' strengths and weaknesses in terms of skills then applies these skills on the Arabic text. Later the English teacher demonstrates to the students how this process is possible in English as well by reinforcing those skills through explicit strategy instruction.

Fourth, the interviewed teachers have acknowledged the concept of strategy instruction; however, admitted that they only practice it implicitly this is because most of them have assumed that students have learned these strategies at earlier stages of education. Moreover, teachers complained about having a limited class time of 45 minutes where they have to make sure that most of the students have understood the delivered lesson. With that being said, low and high achieving students would be completely overlooked. Educational bureaucracy and large classrooms are to blame in this case as teachers have to follow what is given down to them from the ministry of education and exactly as it is. As a result, there is not much flexibility in terms of authentic and custom reading materials for all types of students in the classroom.

Lastly, an extensive reading or enrichment program should be introduced to the Saudi school system. This could be done in cooperation with the school library and the language subject teachers. In this program, students get to pick an Arabic and English book every two weeks from the school library and a month later compile a book report about each read book. Furthermore, at the end of the academic term three students would be chosen with the best book reports to present in front of the whole school body. Such programs will facilitate in building a strong connection and relationship between students and books in both languages which in turn will help in increasing and developing students' reading comprehension skills, vocabulary, composition, and produce balanced bilinguals.

## ***5.2 Limitations:***

Based on practicality issues males were not considered in this study due to cultural and religious reasons. Moreover, due to the time consuming nature of using the think aloud protocol in this study and due to the unavailability of trained individuals in this method, the researcher has chosen a small sample of students; moreover, finding students from different linguistic backgrounds in the same school has been the utmost challenge.

## **6 Conclusion:**

This study has aimed to investigate the use of reading strategies among adolescent students in both Arabic and English. Genre, register, and students' linguistic background have added more value and interesting results to the study per student. Moreover, the study neither supported nor refuted the hypothesis as it has produced mixed and unclear results. Strategy use has been noticeably higher among students in Arabic than in English. When the analysis shifted to comparing students and both languages together more varying results have been found. In terms of the frequency of used strategies in Arabic and English most students have repeated usage of strategies in English texts as they felt challenged unlike in Arabic texts.

### ***6.1 Further Research:***

For future research opportunities, a bigger and cross-sectional study sample of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds should be considered. By doing this better results could be revealed especially if the purpose of the study is to generalize findings. Moreover, including more non-structural factors such as age and gender would lead the study in a different direction.

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### **6.3 Appendices**

#### **Appendix A: Munby's (1978) micro skills taxonomy:**

1. Recognising the script of a language
2. Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
3. Understanding explicitly stated information
4. Understanding information when not explicitly stated
5. Understanding conceptual meaning
6. Understanding the communicative value of sentences
7. Understanding relations within the sentence
8. Understanding relations between parts of text through lexical cohesion devices
9. Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
10. Interpreting text by going outside it
11. Recognising indicators in discourse
12. Identifying the main point or important information in discourse
13. Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
14. Extracting salient details to summarise (the text, an idea)
15. Extracting relevant points from a text selectively
16. Using basic reference skills
17. Skimming
18. Scanning to locate specifically required information
19. Transcoding information to diagrammatic display

## Appendix B: Student Consent Form:

السلام عليكم...

أنا أروى المغربي باحثة و طالبة ماجستير من الجامعة البريطانية في دبي. تخصصي تعليم الإنجليزية لغير المتحدثين بها و بحثي يتمحور حول مهارات القراءة في اللغة العربية و اللغة الإنجليزية. تأكدي بأن بانضمامك للبحث ستكون جميع بياناتك الشخصية سرية لن يتم الإفصاح عنها إلا بموافقتك جميع النتائج المحصودة من هذا البحث ستستخدم لأغراض بحثية و أكاديمية فقط. يشرفني انضمامك و تعاونك معي في فريقتي البحثي إذا لديك أي سؤال أو استفسار لا تتردي في طرحه.

Al Salamu Alikum...

My name is Arwa Al-Moghrabi I am a researcher and a master student from the British University in Dubai. My current concentration is TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and my dissertation is reading strategies in Arabic and English. Your personal details are kept confidential I will not use any without your consent all the final results will be used for research and academic purposes only. I am pleased to make your acquaintance thank you for your cooperation and for joining my research team. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me at any time.

Researcher  
Arwa Al-Moghrabi

الباحثة  
أروى المغربي

Name الاسم:

Class الفصل:

Signature التوقيع:

## Appendix C: Student Questionnaire:

\_\_\_\_\_ الاسم: Name \_\_\_\_\_: العمر Age \_\_\_\_\_: الفصل: Class

1) Which language do you read in the most? Why?	(1) في الغالب بأي لغة تقرئين؟ لماذا؟
2) What type of texts do you read?	(2) ما نوع النصوص التي تقرئينها؟
3) How often do you read?	(3) ما مدى ممارستك للقراءة؟
4) Which dialects are you acquainted to? Which do you speak? (Southern, Western etc...)	(4) ما اللهجات التي تلمين بها؟ و ما اللهجات التي تتحدثين بها الرجاء التفصيل (جنوبية، حجازية إلخ...)
5) What about your parents? Where are they from? Where in Saudi?	(5) بالنسبة لوالديك من أي مدينة في المملكة أو بلد هما؟
6) Where have you lived throughout your life?	(6) في أي البلدان نشئت خلال مراحل عمرك؟
7) What schools have you been to (public/private) (local/international)?	(7) و ما نوع المدارس التي ارتديتها (حكومية/خاصة) (سعودية/عالمية) ؟

## Appendix C: Teacher Interview:

1) What is your understanding of reading strategy instruction?	(1) ما هو مفهومك عن تعليم مهارات القراءة؟
2) Do you provide strategy instruction to your students? Please provide examples?	(2) هل تقومين بتعليم طالباتك مهارات القراءة في الصف؟ اذكري بعض الأمثلة عليها؟
3) Is the strategy instruction implicit or explicit?	(3) هل عملية تعليم هذه الاستراتيجيات ضمنية أم مرسلة؟
4) What are your thoughts on the new Arabic/English curriculum? Are there any significant differences between them? Do you think that the new one enhances your students reading strategies?	(4) ما هي أفكارك حول المنهج الجديد للعربي/ الإنجليزي؟ هل هناك فروقات واضحة بين المنهجين؟ هل برأيك أن المنهج الجديد يقوم بعملية تعزيز فكرة تعليم مهارات القراءة للطالبات؟
5) What types of reading texts do you use in class?	(5) ما هي نوعية النصوص التي تستخدمينها في الصف؟
6) Do you have the flexibility in terms of integrating supplementary reading materials?	(6) هل المنهج مرن بحيث يسمح بدمج مواد قراءة إضافية تعززية؟
7) What type of texts do your students struggle with the most? How do you assist them with these struggles?	(7) ما هي نوعية النصوص التي تصعب على فهم طالباتك؟ كيف تقومين بمساعدتهم على فهمها؟
8) What is the significance of using diacritics in reading texts?	(8) أين تكمن أهمية استخدام التشكيل في نصوص القراءة؟
9) How many periods of reading are you instructing per week and for how long?	(9) كم عدد حصص القراءة في الأسبوع و كم مدتها؟





## Appendix E: Texts:

### البوليميا و الأوريكسيا

#### (Academic Arabic Text 1)

مرضان مرتبطان بعنصر التغذية، ربما في عالمنا العربي غير متداولان كمصطلح لكن لو علمنا اعراض المرضين لوجدنا انهما منتشران في كافة المجتمعات.. البوليميا... عبارة عن مجموعة متنوعة من المشاكل الفسيولوجية المرتبطة بمدخول غذائي غير سليم، يتناول الإنسان كميات كبيرة من الطعام في وقت قصير يشعر فيها أنه غير قادر على السيطرة و التحكم في كمية الطعام و بعدها يشعر بالذنب و القلق و الإكتئاب فيلجأ إلى التخلص من الطعام عن طريق التقيأ بإدخال الأصبع إلى داخل الحلق أو إستخدام مدرات البول أو الأدوية و المليينات أو ممارسة نشاط رياضي قاسي. الأوريكسيا.. اضطرابات في نظام الأكل و الإمتناع عنه بشكل تدريجي، يخف تناول المريض للأكل و يلاحظ عليه خسارة تدريجية في الوزن. من يصيب المرض ؟ البوليميا و الأوريكسيا يصيبوا كافة الناس لكن الإناث بنسبة أكبر من الذكور و بخاصة الفتيات في سن المراهقة و أيضا يصيب النساء في عمر متقدم. 80% من المصابين بمرض البوليميا هم من الإناث.

## New windowless planes set to fly within a decade

(Academic English Text 2)

Over 832 thousand litres of fuel are used and 700 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is released into the environment each year as a result of air travel. The aviation industry is constantly looking for ways to reduce the weight of aircraft, which would cut fuel consumption and airfares.

So researchers are now developing a windowless plane, in which the heavy windows and cabin walls of current planes would be replaced with lightweight full-length smart displays. According to the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) in the UK, which is the company behind the innovative design, 80 percent of an airline's weight is due to fuel and the plane itself, so removing the windows could save on running costs.

The team envisions that windows would be replaced with hi-definition, ultra-thin and lightweight screens that display the outside world through cameras that are mounted on the plane's exterior. Passengers would be able to control their view with the interactive technology, and could also use the display to browse the Internet.

بالبلدي الفصيح – فتحي حلواني  
(Newspaper Arabic Text 3)

ايش دي الشنط كلها ياسيدي وكمان جايب معاك ميزان؟ ليه ده كله؟ هدا ياستي عشان أبغى أوزن الشنط كلها اللي اخدتها من المكتبة واشوف اقل وحدة في الميزان ونشترها عشان ياستي وزارة التربية والتعليم قالت انه الشنط هية السبب في تعب اولادنا وبناتنا لما يجوا يشيلوا الشنط على ظهورهم او يداتهم وقالت كمان انه الاوزان لازم تكون محددة بالنسبة للابتدائي والمتوسط والثانوي، ومتى قالت ده الكلام؟ اهو قدام عيونك في الجريدة مكتوب (أطلقت وزارة التربية والتعليم حملة توعوية موجهة لطلاب وطالبات التعليم العام وأولياء الأمور بعنوان «نحو حقيبة مدرسية أقل وزنا.. من أجل صحة أفضل»، تهدف إلى نشر الوعي بين الطلاب وأولياء الأمور بالوزن المثالي للحقيبة المدرسية، والتعرف على بعض الإرشادات الصحية الواجب اتباعها عند اختيار واستخدام الحقائب المدرسية لكل المراحل التعليمية).. وايش يعني ده الكلام ياسيدي؟ يعني ياستي انه الشنطة الغلبانة هيه السبب في تعب ظهور بناتنا واولادنا من شيلها مو الكتب المدرسية اللي بنوزعها وزارة التربية والتعليم.

Yup, this is a Barbie and Ken version of Jesus and the Virgin Mary

(News Paper English Text 4

When you think of Barbie you picture billowing blonde hair, a tiny waist, legs that are as long as the River Thames and some sort of pink sparkly outfit, right? Not anymore. Two artists in Argentina have just given the famous doll and her handsome (if not a little camp) boyfriend Ken a very religious makeover and it's causing all sorts of controversy.

Marianela Perelli and Pool Paolini created a set of boxed dolls designed to represent religious figures and are set to display the results in an exhibition In Buenos Aires on 11 October named Barbie, The Plastic Religion

There are 33 dolls in the collection which represent figures from Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam – and, of course, one of the dolls has sparked outrage with locals.

The Difunta Corea Barbie represents a mythical figure who is worshipped by people in both Argentina and Chile and, it turns out, they don't love their beloved saint being turned into a plastic bimbo.