Enhancing EFL College Students' Reading Comprehension Through Practical Reading Strategies

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Abstract:

The strategies of reading play a critical part for developing reading comprehension of students. However, many teachers may not be adequately prepared to teach these strategies. Practical reading strategies help learners engage with texts by predicting content, connecting new information to prior knowledge, visualizing concepts, and asking questions during and after reading. Summarizing key ideas and inferring meaning from context further enhance comprehension and retention. This quasi-experimental study investigates the effect of explicit instruction of practical strategies on EFL College learners' reading comprehension. Using a one-group pre-posttest design, the study involved 21 EFL (English as a foreign language) college students from an intact class, serving as the experimental group. It examines whether explicit instruction in these strategies leads to measurable enhancement in their reading comprehension. The findings of this research highlight the significance of integrating practical reading strategies into EFL instruction, as they actively engage students with texts, enhance their reading comprehension, and support their academic and language development.

Introduction

For the purpose of academic and personal success, reading is quite important skill. Anderson et al. (1985) emphasize that it is essential for lifelong learning and communication. Block and Israel (2004) also describe reading crucial for academic success. However, despite its importance, reading remains challenging, especially in a world where high literacy is increasingly valued. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) argue that students must not only read but also comprehend and interact deeply with texts. Effective reading involves interacting with material and being aware of one's understanding, not just decoding words. Strategies like *summarising, querying, visualising, predicting, connecting, and inferring* improve comprehension by promoting deeper engagement (Block and Israel,2004).

According to the "Science of Reading", explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension fosters proficient reading (Snow, 2010b). Strategies like *predicting* and *questioning* allow active processing (Torgesen, Wagner and Rashotte, 1999), *visualizing* improves memory (Gambrell, 2011), and q*uestioning* fosters critical thinking and deeper engagement with the text (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). Snow (2010b, p.46) stresses that comprehension relies on *background knowledge, which helps readers connect new information to prior understanding.* Research confirms that a strong knowledge base enhances understanding of complex texts (EdWeek, 2023). Studies support the link between reading strategies and improved comprehension.

In a study, Song's (1998) trained Korean university students in four reading strategies—*summarizing, questioning, clarifying,* and *predicting*—and found significant in their reading performance.

Küçükoğlu (2012) used strategy instruction with intermediate English learners in Turkey and observed their impact on students' comprehension. The study applied strategies and measured their outcomes. It was experimental and it had qualitative aspects due to its reliance on classroom observations. The teacher directly implemented reading strategies within the classroom setting and monitored their effects. The findings revealed a substantial enhancement in learners' reading comprehension, reinforcing the notion that direct instruction in reading strategies enhances language learning.

In Kaouther's (2016) MA thesis on developing reading strategies for enhancing learners' reading comprehension, teachers and first-year Economics students studying a course in

English language were the target participants at Ouargla University. The study was a descriptive. The data were collected using teachers' and students' questionnaires merely. Among other objectives, it aimed to test if the reading strategies have effect on learners' performance plus their strategy usage, such as *self-monitoring, questioning the text, evaluating prior knowledge, predicting, skimming and scanning, summarizing,* and *previewing.* Kaouther (2016) recommended more emphasis on strategy use in EFL teaching.

Insuasty Cárdenas (2020) has done a research paper to examine the effect of intensive reading on student' reading comprehension in Pasto university, Colombia through a structured three-stage research design. The study was experimentally based on a pre-post-test and a treatment which is used mixed-methods approach, integrating both statistical data and qualitative observations. It demonstrated that students significantly improved their comprehension and successfully addressed reading challenges through a structured, step-by-step reading process.

This current study differs from the aforementioned ones in sample, context, and design. It involves second-year English department learners at the College of Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil in the KRI, and employs a one-group pre-posttest design.

Base on the given review literature, research aims, research questions and significance of the research are presented as following:

This study aims to: 1. Investigate the effect of explicit teaching in practical reading strategies on the reading comprehension performance of EFL college students. 2. Measure the extent of improvement in reading comprehension among students in the experimental group

Research Questions are: 1. Does explicit teaching in practical reading strategies have a statistically significant impact on EFL college students' reading comprehension performance? 2. What is the extent of improvement in reading comprehension among students in the experimental group after receiving explicit instruction in practical reading strategies? This study is significant because it explores how teaching practical reading strategies can help university students understand English texts easily and effectively. While earlier studies focused on different groups and used different research methods, this research focuses on second-year English department students at Salahaddin University-Erbil and uses a clear, step by step design to measure improvement in reading comprehension. By using strategies such as skimming, scanning,

predicting, and summarizing, the study aims to show that students can become more confident and successful readers. The results of this research may help teachers better support their students by including these strategies in their lessons. It also adds to the growing body of knowledge about how reading strategies affect language learning, especially in the context of Kurdish EFL learners. Ultimately, this study hopes to improve the way English is taught and learned in higher education.

Practical Reading Comprehension Strategies

Reading can be easier and more effective with the right practical strategies. This section covers useful techniques like quickly looking over a text (skimming), searching for key words (scanning), breaking information into smaller parts (chunking), and using hints in the text to understand new words (context clues). It also explains the benefits of taking breaks, using pictures and diagrams, exploring different types of writing, and making smart guesses (inferences). These methods help students stay focused, understand better, and think more critically so that reading can interestingly be comprehended.

Previewing the Text

Previewing a text before reading it helps set a goal and anticipate content. It involves examining headings, subheadings, highlighted text, and images. Readers make predictions using titles, graphics, and keywords, and adjust their expectations as they progress (Teele,2004). Predicting what will happen next in a text keeps readers engaged and enhances comprehension and memory (McNamara, 2007). It also activates prior knowledge, helping readers connect new information existing knowledge (Grabe and Stoller, 2011). For example, when reading a history chapter on World War II, students can preview headings like "*Causes of the War*," "*Major Battles*," and "*The Aftermath*." Identifying key terms (e.g., *country names, events*) and visuals (e.g., *maps, photos*) helps them activate relevant background knowledge, make informed predictions, and better comprehend and retain the information existing in the text.

So, previewing simply means looking over a text before reading it in detail for students to understand what the text will be about and prepares their minds to learn better. Students do this by looking at *titles, headings, bold or coloured words, and any pictures or maps*. These parts give clues about the main ideas of the text. For instance, if students are going to read a chapter about *World War II*, they can first look at the headings like "Causes of the War," "Major Battles," and "The Aftermath." These headings tell them

what topics will be discussed. By seeing words like country names or battle names, or looking at maps or photos, students can start thinking about what they already know. This aids them predict and understand the text deeply.

Active Reading

Active reading involves interacting thoughtfully and critically with the text rather than passively absorbing information, Strategies such as underlining, highlighting, and taking notes help focus attention and enhance comprehension. Zhao and Hu (2018) argue it fosters critical thinking and deeper interaction with the material, leading to more meaningful learning. For instance, when reading a novel, readers can mark key passages that reveal character attributes. If the text states, "*She smiled warmly despite the storm*," highlighting "*smiled warmly*" can remind readers that the character remains composed and optimistic in difficult situation. Additionally, underlining important passages and writing brief margin notes about their significance or connections to other parts of the text further enhances comprehension. By actively engaging with the text, students develop stronger critical thinking skills, ultimately improving their overall learning experience (Zhao and Hu,2018).

This means that active reading is about engaging with a text thoughtfully and purposefully. Instead of just passing over words, students focus, ask questions, and take notes to deepen their understanding. Techniques like *underlining key phrases, highlighting important points, and writing notes in the margins* help students retain information and think critically. For example, when reading a novel, a student might highlight the sentence, "*She smiled warmly despite the storm.*" Noting "*smiled warmly*" reveals that the character remains positive and calm even in a difficult situation. Writing a short note in the margin like "*This shows her bravery*" helps connect ideas and uncover hidden meaning in the story.

Making Connections

Students enhance comprehension by connecting a text to their own experiences, other literary works, or real-world events. This approach strengthens understanding by integrating prior knowledge with new information (Teele,2004). A structured way to apply this includes:

Text-to-Self: Readers connect the text to personal experiences. For instance, students might reflect on whether they have encountered a similar situation. Teachers can encourage this by asking, "*Have you ever experienced something*

similar?" Students can illustrate these connections through charts, or drawings.

Text-to-Text: This involves comparing a text to previously read work. For example, students may examine the similarities between characters in distinct stories or explore how events in one story evoke another. Comparison charts, drawings, or written reflections can help map out these relationships.

Text-to-World: Readers relate themes in the text to real-world events or issues. For instance, students might compare a character's struggles to those of a historical figure or connect the story's events to current global affairs. Students can demonstrate these links through drawing, writing, or using charts and graphic organizers (Teele, 2004).

Vocabulary Building
A robust vocabulary improves reading comprehension. Snow (2010a) suggests that learning words through context and word families is an effective strategy for improving reading comprehensions. This is strengthened by focusing on context and recognizing word families (e.g., *act, action, active).* For example, when reading about volcanoes and encountering the word "*dormant,*" in the sentence *"The volcano had been dormant for centuries, with no signs of eruption,"* the context suggests that the word "*dormant*" means "*inactive*" or "*asleep.*" Keeping a vocabulary journal,

recording new words with their definitions and example sentences, or using flashcards strengthen retention and comprehension.

Reading Aloud
Reading aloud improves pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension by encouraging readers to slow down and process information more carefully. Rasinski (2010) states that this strategy is particularly beneficial for learners who struggle with decoding words and understanding sentence structures. For instance, reading a poem aloud can clarify rhythm and meaning. Similarly, when encountering a complex sentence, reading it aloud can clarify its structure and improve understanding.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing
Summarizing involves identifying main ideas and condensing information, helping students organize and focus on essential content, particularly in lengthy texts (Adler, 2001). Paraphrasing, in contrast, means rewording a specific idea or passage in one's own words. Both strategies promote retention and comprehension; like rephrasing "*Harry discovers the magic stone's abilities in this chapter.*" And paraphrasing key concepts, like rephrasing "*The stone has the ability to give eternal life,*" to "*The stone can make someone live forever.*" Anderson and Pearson (1984) argue that summarizing

and paraphrasing help students retain information by absorbing and reframing it in their own words.

Visualizing the Text

Visualization involves creating mental images from the text, which enhances understanding, and retention. Teachers can encourage students to visualize settings, characters, or events and express these through drawings or descriptions (Adler, 2001). For example, when a book describes a forest, students can imagine the trees, animals, and sounds to bring the scene to life, this boosts comprehension (Kintsch,1998).

Questioning the Text

Questioning the text involves posing questions at all stagesbefore, during, and after reading to enhance understanding. This strategy encourages students to revisit the text to answer questions and integrate information, improving comprehension (Harvey and Goudvis,2000). For example, students might ask, "*What is the author trying to convey?*" or "*How does this relate to my prior knowledge?*" Palincsar and Brown (1984) argue that challenging the text promotes deeper understanding by getting readers to think critically and draw connections between new concepts and existing knowledge. For instance, when reading a biography, a student might ask, "*What inspired the author to write about this individual?*" or "*How did the character's past influence their future?*" Students can also write down questions they anticipate before reading and respond to them as they arise.

Re-reading

Re-reading difficult texts improves comprehension by allowing readers to grasp details they missed the first time. Samuels (2002) emphasizes that re-reading enhances fluency and provides opportunities for deeper understanding. Students should re-read unclear parts slowly, reflect, and discuss it.

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming refers to reading rapidly to grasp the main idea of a text, whereas scanning focuses on searching for particular details or information. For example, scanning helps students quickly find the date of an event in a history book.

Chunking Information

Chunking means dividing a lengthy text into smaller, easier-to-handle parts for better understanding and processing. This strategy makes it easier to understand and remember the material. For example, when reading a long paragraph, students should break it into smaller sentences or ideas to focus on one idea at a time.

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Sweller (1988) suggests that chunking reduces cognitive load, making it easier for the brain to process information.

Context Hints

It involves figuring out the unknown meanings of vocabulary by using hints or information found in the surrounding text. For example, if students read, "*The ebony chair was so beautiful,*" and they don't know what "*ebony*" means, they might guess it refers to something like "*black*" based on the context. Snow (2010a) highlights that using context to understand new words is an effective strategy for expanding vocabulary.

Use of Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers like mind maps or charts help structure information and clarify relationships between ideas. For example, after reading a chapter in a history book, students can use a timeline to map out important events. Marzano (2001) states that graphic organizers enhance students' ability to organize and retain information effectively.

Taking Breaks

Pausing briefly during reading helps refresh the mind and enhance concentration. For example, students should read for 20 minutes, then take a 5-minute break before continuing. Terada (2018) states that taking breaks helps prevent fatigue and keeps focus sharp during long reading sessions. Bosch,

Sonnentag, and Pinck (2022) found that micro breaks such as pauses of less than 10 minutes are effective in preserving high levels of focus, alleviating fatigue, and increasing energy efficiently.

Reading in Different Contexts

Snow (2010b) emphasizes that reading across various genres improves reading comprehension by exposing readers to different writing styles. Reading different types of texts like fiction, non-fiction, and newspapers, helps build a range of reading comprehensions. For instance, students read a science article to practice understanding technical language and a novel to work on interpreting characters and emotions.

Inferring

Inferring means drawing conclusions by combining explicit knowledge of the text with the knowledge of students. This strategy helps students predict outcomes, identify themes, and interpret deeper meanings (Duke and Pearson, 2002). Pressley notes that "good readers infer by connecting prior knowledge with textual details, filling in gaps that the author leaves unsaid" (2006, p.142). Teachers can support students in using textual elements develop this skill. For example, photographs, illustrations diagrams, and graphs provide clues that help readers understand characters' emotions, scenes,

and data. Titles and headings offer clues about the key concepts, while keywords and specialized terminology highlight important themes. Dates and timelines provide context for historical order of events. McNamara explains, "making inferences is a complex but essential skill in comprehension, as it allows readers to engage deeply with the text by interpreting underlying messages" (2007, p. 95). Using these strategies promote students' critical thinking, enhance comprehension and extract meaningful insights from text as an essential skill for academic and daily life (Duke and Pearson,2002; Pressley, 2006; McNamara,2007).

Together, these practical reading strategies help students understand texts more deeply, think critically, and become more confident and effective readers in both academic and real-life situations.

Methodology

The current study employs one-group pre-posttest method which is called a quasi-experiment. Research data were quantitatively analysed. The participants were 21 college students in an existing class. Strategies were introduced via teacher modelling, whole classroom activities, group work, and independent practice. This study focuses on enhancing reading comprehension by applying effective reading strategies.

٣,١ Research Scope and Participants

The research was employed in the English Department /Education College/Salahaddin University-Erbil, during the 2023-2024 academic year. The study sample comprised 21 second-year students enrolled in the *"Communication -Reading and Writing"* course for a duration of two months. The study participants included six males and fifteen females, aged 19 to 23 years.

Research Tools

The current study relies on two tests, pre- and post-tests, designed to collect data on learners' performance in reading comprehension. The two tests were constructed using two sources called "North Star 3: Reading and Writing" by Barton and Dupaquier (2015); and "Common Ground: Integrated Reading and Writing Skills" by Hoeffner and Hoeffner (2019). Both tests were of difficulty level, each one utilizing same set of techniques of objective tests like: *choose the correct answer, tick true or false with corrections, fill the-blanks,* and *open-ended questions* (as shown in Appendices A and B).

Validity

To ensure the validity of both tests, six specialists in ELT and applied linguistics reviewed them. They were requested to delete, add, or modify any items they considered inappropriate. Once validated,

the tests were administered to the experimental group. See (Appendix C)

Reliability

Reliability was calculated using SPSS program. The Split-half Coefficient for objective questions was 0.79 for the pre-test and 0.80 for the post-test (as shown in Table1), indicating high reliability. Since it is a subjective question type, the open-ended question in the pre- and post-tests was considered for inter-rater reliability using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) to assess scoring consistency, which was 0.88 and 0.84 successively. This indicates a strong agreement and consistency between the two raters.

The test has high reliability because it gave consistent and stable results over time and across two different raters: one of the researchers and the other teacher who teaches the same material in different college. In this research, the test produced similar results under the same conditions, therefore, it is considered reliable. Since students have been given a reading test twice once before a lesson (pre-test) and once after intervention (post-test). Besides, since majority of students improved their scores in posttest and the test reflects that improvement clearly and consistently, it shows high reliability.

Thus, the study maintains methodological rigor which makes it possible to replicate the findings in future research.

Table1: Split-Half Coefficient Reliability Results of the Tests

	No. of Items	Split-half Coefficient Result
Pre-test objective questions	٢٠	٠,٧٩
Post-test objective questions	٢٠	٠,٨٠

Experimental Phase and Data Collection

To enhance university students' reading comprehension skills, a researcher who was the class instructor taught them multiple practical strategies including reading aloud, predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning, re-reading, vocabulary building, and summarizing. These strategies were taught and practiced over two months. The teacher first asked the participants to take a reading comprehension pre-test (see Appendix A). Then, the teacher taught the students how to practice the reading comprehension strategies based on the teacher's provided classroom activities and tasks which were required to be accomplished in small groups as well as individually. The nature of teaching was based on the teacher's presentation of each reading strategy followed by students' practice in small groups and individually. After teaching the

practical strategies based on a two-month course using Barton and Dupaquier's (2015) reading textbook called *North Star ٣—Reading and Writing*, and "*Common Ground: Integrated Reading and Writing Skills*" by Hoeffner and Hoeffner (2019), the teacher gave the second reading comprehension test called post-test (appendix B) to see the effect of teaching the practical reading strategies on students' performance in reading comprehension.

The reading comprehension tests were given to students before and after the two-month course to measure improvement. First, a pre-test (Appendix A) was given at the start to understand the students' reading level. Then, after teaching the practical reading strategies through group and individual practice, the teacher gave a post-test (Appendix B) to check their progress.

Both tests were administered by the teacher during regular class time. Students completed the tests individually under the teacher's supervision.

The tests included objective questions (like multiple choice or true/false) and subjective questions (like open-ended answers). Objective questions were scored using clear answer keys to ensure fairness. Subjective answers were scored by two independent raters using the same scoring guide to ensure consistency. Their

scores were then compared to make sure they agreed closely, showing high reliability.

This process ensured that the testing was done accurately and fairly, so the results would show whether the teaching strategies were effective.

Results and Discussion

To respond to the first research question (*Does explicit teaching in practical reading strategies have a statistically significant impact on EFL college students' reading comprehension performance?*), data collection was done through pre- post-test treatment, then calculated via paired samples t-test in SPSS (version 25).

Firstly, each individual student's answer sheet was scored for both tests, and their test scores were recorded out of 100 separately, as demonstrated in Table 2

Table 2: Individual Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Participants

N. of Students	Pre-Test out of 100	Post-Test out of 100
١	٤٠	٥٧
٢	٤٨	٥٩
٣	٥٠	٦٢
٤	٥٠	٥٩
٥	٦٠	٧٦
٦	٧٣	٩٥
٧	٧١	٩٣
٨	٨٠	٩٨
٩	٧٨	٩٢

١٠	٨٠	٩١
١١	٧٠	٨٤
١٢	٦٩	٨٢
١٣	٧٠	٨٥
١٤	٧٢	٨٦
١٥	٧٦	٨٨
١٦	٦٦	٧٦
١٧	٦٠	٧٥
١٨	٦٤	٧٨
١٩	٦٢	٧٤
٢٠	٥٨	٧٦
٢١	٥٧	٧٧

Secondly, the dependent t-test was run to find the overall mean of each test (i.e., pre- and post-test mean scores), standard deviation, the paired samples correlation, p. value, and mean difference results as shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5:

Table 3: Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre_Test	٦٤,٤٨	٢١	١١,١٥٢	٢,٤٣٤
	Post_Test	٧٩,١٩	٢١	١٢,١٨٩	٢,٦٦٠

Table 3 shows that the participants' mean score improved from 64.48 in the pre-test to 79.19 in the post-test. The standard

deviations (11.152 and 12.189) indicate a moderate spread in scores, suggesting some variability in student performance both before and after the intervention.

Table 4: Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Paire 1	Pre_Test and Post_Test	٢١	٠,٩٥٤	,٠٠٠

In Table 4, the p-value (.000) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-and post-test scores, suggesting an improvement in the post-test results following the use of reading comprehension strategies. Additionally, the high correlation coefficient (0.954) reveals a strong positive relationship between pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that participants who performed well in the pre-test tended to also perform well in the post-test. This consistency supports the reliability of the observed improvement.

Table 5: Paired Samples T-Test Results: Comparing Pre-and Post-Test Scores								
		Paired Differences					df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t		
					Lower	Upper		
Pair1	Pre_Test - Post_Test	-١٤,٧١٤	٣,٦٩٠	٨٠٥.	-١٦,٣٩٤	-١٣,٠٣٥	-١٨,٢٧٥	٢٠	٠,٠٠٠

Tables 5 shows that the mean difference between pre- and post-treatment tests is -١٤,٧١٤, suggesting that the post-test scores improved by an average of 14.714 points. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of -18.275 with 20 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, as the post-test mean (79.19) is significantly higher than the pre-test mean (64.48) supported by paired t-test result (t= -18.275, p= 0.000). This finding suggests that the explicit instruction of practical reading comprehension strategies significantly improved EFL college students' reading comprehension performance. Since the p-value is ٠,٠٠٠—well below the threshold of ٠,٠٥—the improvement is unlikely due to chance, indicating that the treatment had a meaningful impact. Thus, the first research question is answered.

On the other hand, to respond to the second research question (*What is the extent of improvement in reading comprehension among students in the experimental group after receiving explicit teaching in practical reading strategies?*), mean difference between post- and pre-test results was found (14.714 at a 0.5 medium effect size, and 0.8 or above large effect size (Frost, 2022).

Based on the SPSS output, with the mean difference of 14.714 and standard deviation of differences of 3.690 (shown in Table 5), the calculation is performed using the following Cohen's *d* equation:

$$d = \frac{14.714}{3.690} \approx 3.99$$

$$d = \frac{\text{Mean Difference}}{\text{Standard Deviation of Differences}}$$

Grounded on the significant development and high scores in post-test (14. 714) proves the participants have improved their performance after the intervention and that the found Cohen's value (3.99) is a very large effect size indicating highly significant improvement on the participants' part after applying the treatment which subsequently confirms that the intervention (i.e., the use of practical strategies in reading comprehension) was very effective. Thus, the second research question is confirmed.

Discussion

Based on the results of the tests, every student showed improvement indicating that teaching practical strategies were very effective between the two tests. The increase in average score (from 64.48 to 79.19) suggests significant overall improvement in applying practical reading strategies. This is a positive outcome, showing that students enhanced better reading comprehension practical strategies after practice they have effectively utilized strategies such as summarizing, inferring, making connections, and interpreting vocabulary within context._This study shows that all students developed their reading and overall performance after the post-test. At first, their average score was64.48, but after learning and practicing, it increased to 79.19. This

means that the students learned a lot and became better at reading. This improvement has been considered through finding mean differences in paired-sample t-test which was 14.714 which implies the overall enhancement from pre- to post-test performance. This performance was generally highly consistent based on the found correlation (0.954), indicating that participants' scores were consistent before and after the implementation of practical strategy-based reading comprehension (as shown in Table 4). The 14.714 mean difference and .954 correlation show consistent improvement from pre- to post-test, proving that strategy-based methods like predicting, questioning, and summarizing effectively enhanced reading comprehension. Research shows that regular reading, good teaching, and interactive activities boost comprehension (Anderson et al.,1985; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998; Block and Israel, 2005). The fact that all students improved proves that learning and practice make a big difference. This study supports the idea that giving students a chance to practice and learn in the right way will help them succeed.

Additionally, the increase in average scores (14.714) suggests that when students engage in structured reading practices, they develop stronger comprehension skills. This supports

Snow's (2010a) "Science of Reading" approach, which highlights the importance of direct teaching in vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. The study shows all 21 students improved after using strategies like questioning and visualizing (Gambrell,2011), which support better understanding and memory. As Palincsar and Brown (1984) and EdWeek (2023) highlight, linking new texts to prior knowledge also enhanced comprehension. The results confirm that reading is not just about recognizing words but about engaging with meaning, as supported by Block and Israel (2004). Overall, this study reinforces the idea that effective reading instruction, combined with comprehension strategies, leads to measurable improvement in students' reading abilities, just as previous research has shown. Thus, students who passed the test employed key comprehension strategies, such as summarizing the text effectively to extract its main ideas, paraphrasing complex sentences into simpler terms, making connections between the story's elements and their own knowledge or experiences, and inferring implicit meanings from the passage (e.g., the significance of the forest) "This refers to a story in the textbook, where a forest is not just trees but has a deeper meaning, like representing danger, mystery and

freedom." (The melody) "This means a song or music in a story in the textbook, that has a hidden message, like a sad melody representing loss or a joyful tune symbolizing hope. These strategies are critical for advanced comprehension and suggest that these students were better prepared and more familiar with the reading comprehension.

Noted here both melody and forest show how students improved their ability to understand feelings and symbols in texts. Thanks to reading strategies like summarizing, questioning, and inferring, they became better at reading between the lines. The results of the study, like the score increase and strong correlation, prove these strategies helped students read with deeper understanding.

Table 2 shows in the post-test after the treatment there is development but not a promising one as the improvement in the marks in some student is not too much. These low scores may be due to problems with vocabulary, making inferences, or a lack of confidence in reading difficult texts. This suggests that more focus is needed on teaching higher-order thinking skills, advanced reading practice, and strategies for understanding difficult words and sentences. However, the overall post-test score (14.714) shows clear improvement, and Cohen's effect size (3.99) confirms that the intervention had a

strong positive impact. These findings agree with Torgesen et al. (1999), who found that explicit instruction in reading strategies greatly improved students' comprehension.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that explicit instruction in practical reading strategies significantly enhances the reading comprehension performance of EFL college students. Prior to the intervention, students demonstrated limited familiarity with strategies such as *summarizing, inferring,* and *questioning.* Following structured instruction and guided practice, they showed measurable and statistically significant improvement in comprehension, as evidenced by their post-test results, indicating both comprehension gains and strategy application.

Although the overall improvement was substantial, the degree of progress varied across participants. This suggests a continued need for differentiated instruction and sustained practice, particularly in developing higher-order reading skills, such as *vocabulary inference* and *analytical reading.* Teachers should closely monitor students' application of these strategies and provide ongoing scaffolding.

Classroom activities, such as *group discussions, role-playing, and the use of visual* aids can further facilitate comprehension by making abstract concepts more accessible. These practices also support teacher confidence in integrating strategy-based instruction into future EFL coursebooks.

In summary, the study confirms that explicit, strategy-focused reading instruction not only improves comprehension but also strengthens retention and analytical thinking. Embedding such instruction into the EFL curriculum equips students with essential skills for academic success and lifelong learning.

Recommendations

١.EFL instructors should systematically integrate practical reading strategies—such as *predicting, summarizing,* and *inferring*—into their course syllabi and teaching materials.

٢. Additional guided practice should be provided for students who encounter difficulties with key strategies, particularly *summarizing, paraphrasing*, and *building vocabulary*. Small-group instruction and formative assessments can be used to identify specific needs and monitor progress effectively.

٣. Using reading materials across proficiency levels helps scaffold learning by

gradually increasing text difficulty. Exposing students to diverse genres and linguistic structures encourages the application of reading strategies in varied contexts, thereby enhancing their comprehension and adaptability.

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Appendix A (Reading Comprehension Pre-Test)
Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. (Time limit: 1 hour)

Reading Passage: *"The Path of Shadows"*
Lila, a young researcher, explored the mysterious Abyssal Forest to study glowing fungi—and to find answers about her father, who vanished there years ago. He left behind a journal with a note: "The forest reveals its secrets only to those who truly listen." Using her knowledge and instincts, Lila noticed the fungi's glow formed patterns, like a hidden language. One night, she heard a melody in the forest that led her to a glowing cavern. There, she found her father's preserved

notebook. His final words read: "The forest is alive, and its light carries the memory of those who walk its paths." Lila realized the forest wasn't just dangerous—it was a place of connection and memory.

Q1/ Select the correct option (20 marks)

١. What is the primary reason Lila explores the Abyssal Forest?

a. To map its terrain

b. To study its bioluminescent fungi

c. To disprove the legends surrounding it

d. To find evidence of shadowy creatures

٢. What is significant about the fungi in the Abyssal Forest?

a. They glow in response to predators.

b. Their glow resembles a language.

c. They only grow in caves.

d. They emit a golden light only during the day.

٣. How does Lila feel when she hears the melody in the forest?

a. Fearful and cautious

b. Curious and at peace

c. Distrustful and anxious

d. Overwhelmed and regretful

٤. What does Lila discover in the hidden cavern?

a. Her father's preserved journal

b. A map of the Abyssal Forest

c. A new species of fungi

d. Evidence of shadowy creatures

٥. Which statement best summarizes the theme of the passage?

a. Perseverance leads to scientific breakthroughs.

b. The past can illuminate paths to the future.

c. Curiosity often puts people in danger.

d. Legends are always based on facts.

٦. What does the phrase "the forest reveals its secrets only to those who truly listen" imply?

a. The forest contains auditory clues.

b. Observing and connecting deeply are vital.

c. Lila's father was overly superstitious.

d. The forest communicates with its inhabitants.

٧. How is the forest described in the opening paragraph?

a. An inviting haven of life   b. A mysterious and foreboding place

c. A barren, lifeless expanse   d. A magical, cheerful realm

٨. What literary device is used in the phrase "a bridge between her father's past and her own future"?

a. Simile   b. Metaphor   c. Personification   d. Alliteration

٩. Which strategy did Lila use to interpret the glowing patterns of the fungi?

a. Summarizing the research   b. Making connections between her father's notes and observations

c. Building a hypothesis based on legends

d. Analyzing the forest's acoustics

١٠. What is the significance of the golden fungi in the cavern?

a. They serve as a warning sign.   b. They symbolize knowledge and connection.

c. They are the source of the forest's danger.   d. They represent Lila's scientific success.

Q2/ Fill in the blanks below with the correct vocabulary provided in the box (20 marks)

١. Lila's father's journal suggested that the forest reveals its secrets to those who _____.

٢. The fungi's glow was compared to a _____, suggesting it held deeper meaning.

٣. Legends warned travellers of _____ creatures in the Abyssal Forest.

٤. The melody Lila heard in the forest evoked feelings of _____.

٥. The golden light in the cavern symbolized _____ and _____.

Q4/ Indicate whether the following statements are true or false, then correct the false ones (20marks)

١.The golden fungi is a source of danger.

٢.The melody in the forest is a guiding force.

٣. Lila's father's journal is a bridge between past and present.

٤.The Abyssal Forest is a living, dynamic entity.

٥.The glowing fungi patterns are a warning of danger.

Appendix B (Reading Comprehension Post-Test)

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. (Time limit: 1 hour)

Reading Passage: "*The Journey Home*"

Aaron, a lone traveler, ventured into a harsh forest with an old family map said to lead to hidden treasure. Determined to fulfill his late grandfather's dream, he braved cold winds and rough terrain using only the map and his instincts. One day, a mysterious old man warned him, "The treasure comes at a price." Though Aaron hesitated, memories of his grandfather pushed him forward. Deep in the forest, he found a stone chest beneath an oak tree. When he opened it, a radiant light appeared, revealing not gold, but a diary filled with ancestral stories. Aaron realized the true treasure was family wisdom and legacy.

Q1/Select the right option (20 marks)

١.What was the weather like during Aaron's journey?
a. Sunny and warm   b. Chilly with rustling winds
c. Stormy with heavy rains   d. Mild and calm

٢. What was the treasure Aaron's family map promised to lead to?
a. A chest of gold and jewels   b. A diary with ancestral wisdom
c. An ancient castle   d. A hidden village

٣. How does Aaron navigate the forest?
a. Using a compass and GPS   b. By following marked trails

c. Relying on his instincts and the cryptic map   d. With guidance from the old man

٤. What phrase best describes the tone of the old man's warning?

a. Encouraging   b. Cryptic and ominous

c. Cheerful and hopeful   d. Dismissive

٥. Why does Aaron hesitate after meeting the old man?

a. He feels tired and wants to quit.   b. He fears the consequences of finding the treasure.

c. He is unsure if the map is reliable.   d. He cannot decipher the map further.

٦. What time of day did Aaron's journey begin?

a. At sunrise   b. At midday   c. At sunset   d. At midnight

٧. What does the chest symbolize in the story?

a. Wealth and prosperity   b. The fulfillment of a dream

c. The legacy and wisdom of Aaron's ancestors   d. The struggles of life

٨. How does the story describe the forest?

a. A welcoming haven for travelers   b. A peaceful and serene area

c. A treacherous and unforgiving wilderness   d. A mystical realm filled with magic

٩. What emotion does Aaron feel when he opens the chest?

a. Disappointment   b. Awe and realization

c. Anger at being misled   d. Confusion about its contents

10. What does the phrase 'radiant light engulfed the area' most likely symbolize?

a. The release of magical energy   b. Aaron's enlightenment and understanding

c. The destruction of the chest's contents   d. The arrival of the old man

Q2/Answer the questions below (40 marks)

١. Who is the main character in the story?

٢. What does Aaron hold in his hands as he wanders through the forest?

٣. Where did the map come from?

٤. How does Aaron feel when the old man warns him, and what gives him the courage to continue?

٥. What is the promise the map makes?

٦. What kind of weather conditions does Aaron face during his journey?

٧. How long has Aaron been traveling before he encounters the mysterious old man?

٨.What gives Aaron the strength to continue his journey?

٩.What does Aaron find inside the chest at the heart of the forest?

٥. The story teaches that the true treasure lies in _____ and the bond of family.

Q4/ Indicate whether the following are true or false, then correct the false ones. (20 marks)

No.	Name	Academic position	University
١.	Dr. Aref Muradian	Assistant Professor	Salahaddin
٢.	Dr. Anjuman Muhammad Sabir	Professor	Salahaddin
٣.	Dr. Muhammad Qadr Saeed	Assistant Professor	Salahaddin
٤.	Ms. Baraa Ismael Faqe	Lecturer	Salahaddin
٥.	Dr. Parween Kawther	Assistant Professor	Salahaddin
٦.	Mr. Muhammad AbdulWahab	Assistant Lecturer	Salahaddin
٧.	Mr. Hiwa Faqerasool	Lecturer	Salahaddin

١٠.What does Aaron realize is the true treasure?

Q3/Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary provided in the box. (20 marks)

١. The map Aaron carried was a relic passed down through _____.
٢. Aaron met a mysterious _____ who gave him a cryptic warning.
٣. The chest Aaron discovered was buried beneath an ancient _____ tree.
٤. Inside the chest, Aaron found a _____, not gold or jewels.

Appendix (C): Jury members

١.The map Aaron carried was a recent creation.
٢.Aaron was able to rely on a compass to guide him through the forest.
٣.The old man in the forest warned Aaron about the dangers of the treasure's location.
٤.The treasure Aaron sought turned out to be a chest of gold.
٥.Aaron's grandfather's dream was to find the hidden treasure.

خوێندکاران لەگەڵ دەقەکاندا ئاوێته دەکەن، تێگەیشتنیان لە کارامەیی خوێندنەوە باشتر دەکەن، و پاڵپشتی لە گەشەپێدانی زمانی و ئاستی ئەکادیمیان دەکەن.

وشه سەرەکییەکان: خوێندکارانی کۆلێژ، باشترکردنی تێگەیشتنی خوێندنەوە، ستراتیژییە کاریگەرەکانی خوێندنەوە، توێژینەوەی نیمچەتاقیکاری

تعزيز فهم القراءة لدى طلاب الكليات الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال استراتيجيات الفعاله للقراءة

الملخص

تعد استراتيجيات الفعالة للقراءة عنصرا أساسيا في تطوير مهارات الفهم والاستيعاب لدى الطلاب. ومع ذلك، قد لا يكون العديد من المعلمين مؤهلين بشكل كاف لتدريس هذه الاستراتيجيات بفاعلية. تمكن استراتيجيات الفعالة للقراءة المتعلمين من التفاعل مع النصوص من خلال التنبؤ بالمحتوى، وربط المعلومات الجديدة بمعرفتهم السابقة، وتصوّر المفاهيم، وطرح الأسئلة أثناء القراءة وبعدها. كما يُعزّز تلخيص الأفكار الرئيسية واستنتاج المعاني من السياق عملية الفهم ويساعد على الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات. تتناول هذه الدراسة شبه التجريبية تأثير التعليم الصريح لاستراتيجيات الفعالة للقراءة على فهم المقروء لدى طلاب الكليات الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. واعتمدت الدراسة على تصميم اختبار قبلي وبعدي لمجموعة تجريبية مكونة من ٢١ طالبًا جامعيًا خلال فصل دراسي كامل. وتهدف إلى استكشاف ما إذا كان التعليم الصريح لهذه الاستراتيجيات يؤدي إلى تحسينات قابلة للقياس في فهم المقروء. وتشير النتائج إلى أهمية دمج استراتيجيات الفعالة للقراءة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، إذ تسهم في تعزيز تفاعل الطلاب مع النصوص، وتحسين فهمهم المقروء، ودعم تطورهم الأكاديمي واللغوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب الكليات ، تعزيز فهم القراءة، استراتيجيات الفعالة للقراءة، دراسة شبه تجريبية

باشترکردنی تێگەیشتنی خوێندنەوەی خوێندکارانی کۆلێژی زمانی ئینگلیزی وەک زمانێکی بیانی له ڕێگەی ستراتیژییه کاریگەرەکانی خوێندنەوە

پوخته

ستراتیژییه کاریگەرەکانی خوێندنەوه زۆر گرنگن بۆ پەرەپێدانی تواناکانی تێگەیشتن له خوێندنەوەی خوێندکاران. بەڵام ڕەنگه زۆرێک له مامۆستایان به شێوەیەکی گونجاو ئاماده نەبن بۆ فێرکردنی ئەم ستراتیژیانه. ستراتیژییه کاریگەرەکانی خوێندنەوه یارمەتی فێرخوازان دەدەن که ئاوێتەی دەقەکان ببن له ڕێگەی پێشبینیکردنی ناوەڕۆک، بەستنەوەی زانیاری نوێ به زانیاری پێشوو، وێناکردنی چەمکەکان، و پرسیارکردن له کاتی خوێندنەوه و دوای خوێندنەوه. کورتکردنه وه ی بیروکه سەرەکییەکان و لێکدانەوەی مانا له بەستنەوه (سیاقەوه) زیاتر تێگەیشتن و هێشتنەوەی زانیارییەکان له هیز بەهێز دەکات. ئەم توێژینەوەیه نیمچه تاقیکاری لێکۆڵینەوه له کاریگەرییەکانی فێرکردنی ڕوونی ستراتیژییه کاراکانی خوێندنەوه دەکات لەسەر تێگەیشتن له خوێندنەوەی خوێندکارانی کۆلێژی زمانی ئینگلیزی وه کو زمانێکی بیانی. ئەمەش به بەکارهێنانی دیزاینێکی یەک گروپی پێش تاقیکردنەوه-دوا تاقیکردنەوه ئەنجام دراوه، لەم توێژینەوەیەدا، ٢١ خوێندکاری کۆلێژ له پۆلێکدا وەک گروپی تاقیکاری به شداریان تێیدا کرد. ئەم لێکۆڵینەوه ئەوه دەخاته روو که ئایا فێرکردنی ڕوون لەم ستراتیژیانەدا دەبیته هۆی باشتربوونی ئەدای تێگەیشتن له خوێندنەوەدا. دەرئەنجامەکان گرنگی بەکارهێنانی ستراتیژییەکانی خوێندنەوەی پراکتیکی له فێرکردنی زمانی ئینگلیزی وه کو زمانی بیانی دەردەخەن، چونکه ئەم ستراتیژییانه