

Importance of Early Reading Strategies for Teaching English Language as a Foreign Language in Early Grades

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Abstract:

Pupils at Sudanese Basic level schools have a lot of problems in learning English language, but here in this study the researcher is going to investigate some of the most important problems facing pupils in the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3), which are the early reading problems. The study aimed to identify some of early reading problems encountered by the First circle's pupils in English language. To investigate these problems the study adopted descriptive and analytical statistical methods as well as two tests (one is written and the other is oral) which were conducted for pupils of the 3rd grade at Basic level schools to assess their reading comprehension and to discover some of problematic areas of early reading problems. In addition to that, a Questionnaire for English supervisors and teachers of the First Circle was designed and conducted to discover more problematic areas as well to find out whether the First circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) is suitable for teaching English language as a foreign language or not. The results of the analysis showed that the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) regards the best important stage for teaching English language as a foreign language. And pupils of the 3rd grade at Sudanese Basic level schools have really problems in reading English texts.

Key words: early reading strategies, teaching English language, early grades

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential process in learning languages. A considerable number of researchers such as: Alderson, J.C. (1984), Bruch, W. (1991) and Badrawi, N. (1994) agree that reading is the main route to the command of languages.

The pupils who have problems in reading skills, particularly in English language, are likely to have problems in the other skills. So, reading skills should be developed in this early stage of education. According to Alderson, (1984) and Carrell, (1983) the focus on developing reading ability in the early stage of education in learning a foreign language, particularly English language, increases motivation of the pupils to learn more about it and prevents many difficulties that might hinder their learning of English language. Panel, (2003) made a research on early reading difficulties; he found out that children who continue to experience difficulties in Grade 3 seldom catch up in later grades.

THE STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

Despite the importance of early identification of early reading problems in English language this phenomenon spreads among the pupils at Sudanese Basic Level schools particularly in the First Circle (grades 1, 2 and 3). Most of the pupils in this stage find difficulties in reading English texts. The pupils who study English language as a foreign language (FL) are expected to face difficulties in developing reading skills. These difficulties might hinder reading ability among them. Poor reading skills lead to low level in overall academic achievement. So, the First

Circle seems to be a critical developmental period for these skills.

THE STUDY QUESTIONS

The study is expected to answer the following questions:

- 1 – To what extent does the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) regard the best stage for teaching English language as a foreign language?
- 2 – To what extent does the First Circle's syllabus cope sufficiently with early reading problems?

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to identify:

- Some of early reading problems encountered by the First circle's pupils in English language.
- Whether the First Circle's syllabus copes sufficient with developing early reading strategies or not.
- Whether the teachers of the First Circle apply early reading strategies in English lessons or not.

LIMITS OF THE STUDY

This study will be done in Karary Locality, Omdurman for pupils of the 3rd grade at two different Basic level schools (boys and girls) to investigate some of early reading problems among the pupils in this grade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Reading?

Reading is not a hobby as some people think. It's a skill which feeds the mind with information. Everyone has this skill so; it's

not as acquisition skills. It is differ from them, but at the same time it is difficult to develop because it requires much effort and continuity.

Although it is more important for readers of all ages in all languages to have knowledge about how letters and sounds relate, reading in English language (EL) is much more complex process. It is complex because EL has 26 letters but 44 different sounds (phonemes).

Reading is a complex cognitive process. It is more than decoding individual words. Letters and words are, of course, required for understanding a text. These words: Understanding, knowledge and comprehension are often used to describe what the reader wants to achieve through the act of reading. Ruth Schoenbach et al. (1999, p. 17) defines reading as: (Reading is not a straightforward process of lifting the words off the page. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences). Sometimes reading is a *receptive* skill through it the reader receives information. But the complex process of reading also requires the skill of speaking, so that the reader can pronounce the words that he/she reads. In this case, reading is also a *productive* skill. Therefore, during reading process the reader is both receiving information and transmitting it even only to him or herself. So, reading is a complex process that requires ability to read the text and at the same time ability to understand what is in it. Thus, reading without understanding the meaning is not really reading. According to Marie Clay (1991) and Patricia L. Scharer (2012) reading is a message – getting process through which the reader should read and understand the message that the text carries.

For children, reading isn't a simple process as some people think. It begins with identification of the letters and

their sounds then learning how to make sense of words and sentences, and finally understanding the meaning of the text that they read. Patricia L. Scharer (2012, p.3) says: "Children need to know that it's their job to figure out unknown words based on what they know about letters, sounds, words, language, and texts."

To sum up, reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. It starts with many steps which form at the end what is called Reading. When the reader reads, he/she uses his/her eyes to receive written symbols (letters) and he/she uses his/her brain to convert them into words and sentences with full of meaning. So, reading is a complex interaction process between the text and the reader.

Importance of Reading in Early Stages

Reading is regarded an important skill even in our own language (Arabic language), because it can be entertaining and educational. It opens up new worlds and enriches our life's culture, and can improve some social skills.

Learning to read in childhood is more important and easier than to read in adulthood. Children who experience difficulty in learning to read often remain poor readers in later years. Torgeson, J. (2004) mentions "Children who fall seriously behind in the growth of critical early reading skills (ERSs) have fewer opportunities to practice reading. This evidence suggests that these lots of opportunities make it extremely difficult for children who remain poor readers during the first three years of elementary school to ever acquire average levels of reading fluency." Therefore, the pupils who experience early reading difficulty often continue to experience failure in later grades and later in life. In a report about: Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, Catherine Snow (1998) says: "The majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents

and adults could have been avoided or resolved in the early years of childhood." So, concerning with reading in the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) is the main key and first step to solve all problems of reading in both child and adulthoods.

Educational researchers have found that there is a strong relation between reading in early stages and academic success. In other words, the pupil who is a good reader is more likely to do well in school and pass exams than the pupil who is a weak reader. Therefore, pupils who have successfully learned to read at Basic Level School have mastered three skills: They understand that letters of the alphabet represent word sounds, they are able to read for meaning, and they read fluently. Any disruption in these components can throw off a child's development, and could lead to difficulties that ultimately will reduce the chances that the child will finish high school or get a job. So, if we want children to be successful at school we must encourage them to read in an effective way which is essential for academic achievement.

THEORIES OF READING IN EARLY STAGES

There are many theories of reading acquisition in early stages of education. These theories focus on how children develop their reading skills while reading in English language. Perfetti (1998 p.10) says "The child in these theories is described as moving from a non-reading stage through successive stages of reading skill." The most important and famous of these theories are:

Causal's Theory:

Although some causes of early reading difficulties (ERDs) among children have a genetic origin and environmental factors, the same factors lead to develop some children's cognitive level. So, it's very important to understand the cognitive difficulties that underpin reading problems in early

stages, regardless of whether their origin is constitutional or environmental. It is essential to state clearly the Causal Theory at basic level schools that forms the basis of any given educational intervention for children in this stage. Any intervention for children who have ERDs to improve their educational skills should 'make sense' in terms how children typically learn a reading skill, and to identify the nature of the obstacles that may impede learning to read in some children in this early stage of education.

Gough's Theory:

Gough and his colleagues (Gough & Hillingers, 1980; Gough & Juel, 1991; Gough & Walsh, 1991) have described two stages of reading, "an early visual association stage and a second stage of decoding- based learning." In the first stage the child absent any knowledge of decoding. He/she just uses any conceivable source of information in order to discriminate one word from another. In doing this, the child builds up a visually accessible lexicon. Gough &Juel (1991) name the first stage as "Selective association".

The second stage of teaching reading is what Gough called "prior context" or decoding. In that, words are learned and understood in the context of sentences. He found that the primary memory holds so much data. Gough (1972 p. 669) mentions: "In the primary memory, the meaning from a sentence is more easily retrieved from the memory than lists of words from the place where sentences go when they are understood." He describes the children's minds with fascinating. He says:

"The child's mind has to perform amazing feats when learning to read with character recognition, orthography problems in mixing letters up, decoding, and connecting the print with speech."

According to Gough most children learn to read before 3rd grade. Although some children learn to read words, but they have problems in understanding them. Gough (1972 p. 681) notes: "solving the decoding problems does not automatically make a child a Reader."

Gough's theory describes reading process as a sequential mental process. This theory focuses on how children learn to read efficiently, so Gough concentrates on the second type which is decoding. Children, according to, Gough begin by translating letters into speech sounds, and then they collect these sounds together to individual words. After that, they link the words to form a sentence, and thus reading go on. In this theory reading process hypothesizes that the child's mind functions like a computer and that visual input (letters and words) is sequentially entered in the mind of the child. What is surprising is that the child's mind has ability to perform more than one task at a time, which means it is faster than the computer.

To sum up, Gough's theory regards one of the important theories of reading that can be used in the First circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) to improve early reading in English.

Ehri's Theory

Ehri's theory is one of the theories that concern with reading process no children when they learn English language. This theory focuses on learning children the names and sounds of the letters.

Ehri's theory (1980, 1991) is another alternative model that pushes the child through the acquisition of reading process. In this account, there is no truly visual stage as there is in Gough's theory. According to Ehri (1991) "Children use the names of the sounds of the letters as cues to words." So, this theory will be beneficial at the first step of teaching English language in other words in kindergarten or first class.

Perfetti's Theory

Charles A. Perfetti's theory focuses on the cognitive science of language and reading processes. It includes lower and higher level processes and the nature of reading ability on children.

According to this theory, identification of writing system in English language is one of reading components and it's essential in learning to read in early stages. Perfetti (1991) says: "The identification of universal and writing-system in English language is specific components of reading."

To sum up, according to Perfetti's theory, increasing specificity and redundancy on children help them in reading words easily, which in turn make them read a sentence or a text in a good way.

Piaget's Theory

Piaget was the first psychologist to make a systematic study of cognitive development. His contributions include a theory of cognitive child development (CCD), detailed observational studies of cognition in children, and a series of ingenious tests to reveal different cognitive abilities.

Before Piaget's work, the common assumption in psychology was that children are merely less competent thinkers than adults. Piaget showed that young children think in strikingly different ways compared to adults.

According to Piaget children are born with a very basic mental structure (genetically inherited and evolved) on which all subsequent learning and knowledge is based.

Piaget's theory of cognitive child development (CCD) is a comprehensive theory about the nature and development of the child's intelligence. Piaget claims that "one's childhood plays a vital and active role in a person's development." Piaget's idea is mainly known as a developmental stage theory. The theory deals with the nature of knowledge itself and how children gradually come to acquire, construct, and use it.

Piaget believes that children think differently than adults and states them through 4 universal stages of cognitive development. Development is therefore biologically based on changes as the child matures; and cognition develops in all children in the same sequence of stages.

Each child goes through these stages in the same order, and no stage can be missed out although some individuals may never attain the later stages. There are individual differences in the rate at which children progress through stages.

Piaget (1952) believes that "these stages are universal i.e. that the same sequence of development occurs in children all over the world, whatever their culture."

Cognitive child development (CCD) is Jean Piaget's theory. Through a series of stages, Piaget proposed four stages of CCD. They are: the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational period. The most important stages that relevant to this study, which concern with early reading, are the second and the third stages. They are Pre-operational stage and Concrete Operational Stage.

SOME OF EARLY READING STRATEGIES (ERSS)

Many young children experience some kinds of difficulties in learning to read. For many children, reading difficulties (RDs) can be identified in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and can be prevented or substantially reduced, but often they do not. Therefore, children who continue to experience RDs in the First Circle certainly in Grade 3 seldom catch up in later grades. These children are at risk of failing at school might have limited career opportunities in adulthood. So, it is important to have the conditions, early interventions and resources that enable teachers in early grades to face the challenges of ensuring that all children learn to read.

ERSs for children can help them become prepared for academic challenges they will face or already face. Being a proficient reader in the early years of school is enormously important. Many things that children learn depend on being able to read efficiently. Good readers use different strategies naturally, but not everybody is familiar with the ways that work best for them individually. There are many strategies can be incorporated by both parents and teachers alike. Here are some ERSs that can help children become better readers:

Visualization

Visualization means to form a mental picture of someone or something. Giving children, in the First Circle particularly Grade1, images or drawing pictures on the board or blackboard with verbally explanation make them link easily between the pictures and the words. This is one of the best ways of understanding the meaning of the words in early stages of education. Many children think visually while others have difficulty, but by practicing it will be easy. So this method can be helpful for both types of kids.

Summation

Summation or Summarization means to give brief information about what has been read. Asking children to retell the text or the story that they read or hear increase their abilities to read or listen and understand by using their own words. Summarization allows them to differentiate between the main thoughts and details. Therefore, after finishing each text or story teacher should ask the pupils to retell what they have just read to develop their reading effectively. So, summation is very important for pupils in the First Circle to develop their reading skill.

Prediction

Prediction means expecting what will happen next. Teaching pupils in the First Circle to predict what will happen next in a text or story help in developing both their reading and understanding abilities. Because children in this stage should read and listen with more concentration for any word is said or read. This method helps in encourage active reading and helps them stay engaged with the text. It can also give signal for misunderstanding of the text that needs revision. So, prediction is an effective method in improving early reading.

Asking Questions

Learning children come up with questions about the text, steer them away from the questions about minor details and have them focus on questions about the meaning or morals. This helps them develop their reading and understanding abilities.

Finding Connections

Most of the First Circle's syllabus contains stories and morels; therefore, finding connections make the pupils link between a characters in the text and themselves or someone else they know. They connect some similarities between the character they make and the character in the text. This will help them understand the text from a new perspective and encourages deeper thought.

So, early reading strategies are important for young children who have difficulty with different aspects of reading. Whether they have difficulty in remembering what was read, have a hard time sounding out words or just want to be ahead of the pack, early reading strategies are necessary component to tackle or do that.

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN EARLY STAGES

Early reading problems (ERPs) in English spread widely among the pupils at Sudanese Basic Level Schools particularly in the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3). Most of the pupils in the First Circle their reading are below grade level. The importance of early reading in English comes from that poor readers in early grades are very likely to remain poor readers through high grades. Thus early reading strategies (ERSs) don't appear effectively or as corrective tool for struggling readers. So, focusing on ERSs to identify the strength and weak cognitive skills is very effective in tackling early reading problems in early stages.

For children who are learning English as a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL), reading is the most crucial skill to master due to several reasons. First, students can usually perform at a higher level in reading than in any other skills. They can quite accurately understand written materials that they could not discuss orally or in writing with equivalent accuracy. So, this condition will undoubtedly enhance their motivation to learn. Second, reading necessitates every minimum requirement. It is different from speaking which requires opportunities to interact with other one, or from writing which needs a lot of guidance and time to practice. Therefore, reading necessitates only a text and motivation. Third, reading is a service skill. After learning how to read effectively, students will be able to learn effectively by reading.

There is a research has been done by Rashad Ibrahim about learning EL for children in early age. The research's findings proved that learning EL for children in early age will make them more success in the coming stages of education than those who study EL late. It will also develop their understanding ability. Moreover, it will enable them from

understanding their first language well. Ladevie (1990) and Petrovic (1997), agree that the best age for learning a foreign language is the early age between (4 - 8) years, which is regarded the age of the First Circle (Grades 1,2 and 3), because children regard as a white page or an empty cup we can fill it with what we want. Also, in this age the ability of acquiring a new language is so high.

To sum up, after realizing how crucial early reading is for children who are learning English as L2, it's so importance to develop their reading ability. To achieve that, reading lessons should be improved by implementing the best method and techniques provided by theories of early reading.

HOW TO TRAIN THE PUPILS ON SPEED READING

Here are some guides that might help the pupils in the First Circle to read fast:

- Don't stop a long on words while reading.
- Do regular exercises on reading to be routine in their daily life, because much exercises lead to fluency in reading. So, as the pupil becomes professional in reading he/she has to practice reading routinely. Therefore, repetition is the main cause for proficiency.
- Concentration on reading and avoid reading in noisy places. This way prevents committing mistakes during reading and helps in understanding. So, if concentration is less, the speed of reading will be less.
- Stop moving their head while reading, because it causes stress and boring.
- Avoid regression, which is return back to the previous word/s. This method doesn't help the pupils to acquire skill of speed reading.

- Avoid spelling because this way needs much time which makes reading process very slow. If the pupil follows this method he/she might face problems in reading later.

Early Identification and Intervention

Some researchers classified children who are experiencing early reading problems as "at-risk" or "high-risk" groups. In schools where there are a demonstrated high proportion of children who are at risk of early reading problems, qualified staff and material resources must be available both in the classroom and through support programs. It is important for teachers to realize that, with effective instruction, all children can learn to read. It is the school's responsibility to provide for each child the appropriate level of support to reach his/her potential in reading. There must be clear continuity between regular classroom instruction and any interventions provided by the teachers or the schools. Interventions should not differ in kind from effective regular classroom instruction, but should differ in frequency, intensity, and focus. So, efforts in these schools should first focus on supporting the improvement of existing instructional practices, then on implementing additional interventions.

Even with effective classroom instruction, some children will need additional supports or interventions. However, teachers should consider supplemental interventions only when effective and adapted instruction has failed to resolve a child's reading problems. Effective intervention requires that teachers recognize as early as possible those children who are experiencing reading difficulties and provide for supplementary instruction when necessary. If adequate screening and assessment procedures are in place, early intervention may begin even before formal instruction in reading. Therefore, interventions that are begun when children are very young have a much better chance of success than interventions are

begun later. While interventions begin at Grade 3 are much less likely to succeed than early interventions. It is essential to identify reading problems by Grade 1 and to put appropriate supplemental interventions in place immediately. By Grade 1, all schools should have in place for children a process that allows for the timely implementation of instruction following diagnostic assessment. Once a teacher recognizes that a child is experiencing reading problems, the teacher and the child must have access to diagnostic assessment services, specialized interventions, and appropriate instruction. The intensity or duration of the interventions should be based on comprehensive diagnostic assessment. There should be continuity between regular classroom instruction and interventions, and a high degree of cooperation among qualified staff who are teaching the same children. The staff should spend the vast majority of their time planning for and delivering instruction directly to children. In this way, reading problems can be tackled before they become late and before repeated failures affect children's motivation and compound their problems in learning to read. So, Early Identification and effective classroom instruction in early grades is the key for creating strong, competent readers and preventing reading problems. It will also enable all children to become fluent readers.

Who Teach in the First Circle?

All teachers at Sudanese Basic Level Schools particularly in the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) need to be well qualified and have opportunities for ongoing professional learning. Teaching reading to young children requires a highly specialized teacher of knowledge and expertise. The same knowledge and expertise that a teacher uses to help a child who is progressing well in reading will help a child who is struggling. Teachers who are equipped with the broad repertoire of assessment and instructional strategies described earlier are well positioned to

identify children with early reading difficulties. They also focus their instruction on individual children's needs, and identify and plan for children whose reading problems are severe enough to require specific instruction and support.

Effective classroom practices which support early identification and intervention might be encouraged professional development must be available for teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 3 and beyond, with a focus on:

- Maintaining high expectations for children with early reading problems.
- Understanding the nature of early reading problems and the impact on achievement.
- Understanding and applying interventions and other modifications.
- Helping children to capitalize on early gains.

So, qualified teachers with effective early identification and intervention will help prevent and significantly decrease early reading problems for many young children and improve their prospects for school success. However, even exemplary early intervention practices, which have been done by the qualified teachers, will not guarantee that severe reading problems are overcome. So, some children will continue to need additional reading instruction and supports to succeed in the later school grades.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach such as: descriptive and analytical statistical methods. These methods allow the research tools to complement each other. In addition to that, two tests (written and oral) for the 3rd grade pupils were conducted and a questionnaire for English supervisors and teachers was designed as well as a classroom observation

checklist. All these research tools were conducted to address the research questions and objectives.

The Study Population and Sample

The study population was grade 3 pupils at Sudanese Basic level schools. This experiment was conducted at two Basic level schools in Karary locality in Omdurman. They were British Educational Schools (Elthowra branch) and Abdelmarouf Educational schools in Elmanara. A total number of 194 pupils from the 3rd grade in these two schools were participated in this study. Also, some of the First Circle's English teachers (males and females) participated in this study as well as many supervisors.

Validity and Reliability of the Tests

The two tests used to be the first tool to collect data of the study. The tasks required from the tests were comparable to those in grade 3 syllabus and practiced in the class. Furthermore, the tests were validated by a group of five experience English language teachers to check and evaluate them. Those experience teachers suggested some valuable points about the tests. They also recommended with removing two questions, because they thought those two questions will be difficult to grade 3 pupils. All the suggestions and recommendations of the jury were taken into consideration by the researcher in the last versions of the tests.

For reliability of the tests the researcher used the test-retest method to make sure that the two tests are reliable in terms of objectives and that they are in line with the aims of the study as well as to measure what the study is for. The test-retest method is designed for estimating tests'.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire of this study was validated by the same jury whom validated the two tests. They accepted that the items were appropriate to measure the purpose of the study. Although that, they made some remarks concerning with many items. The researcher responded to their suggestions and made the required modifications.

In statistic, reliability is the consistency of a set of measurements often used to describe a test. For reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used the spilt – half method which is a measure of consistency where a questionnaire is split into two and the score of each half is compared with one another.

The things that re-enforced reliability of the questionnaire were:

- 1 – The selection of the samples was randomly.
- 2 – The results of piloting questionnaire toward objectives and hypotheses of the study.
- 3 – Using (SPSS) program to analyze the data statically.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the data of the study, different techniques were used in the analysis. These techniques were: Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS), Alpha Cornapakh and Pearson Factor

RESULTS OF THE TESTS

Table (1) The T-test Results of the Written Test.

	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	P value
Q1	A.elmarouf schools	77	4.18	0.97	-0.144	0.175
	British schools	117	4.21	1.18		
Q2	A.elmarouf schools	77	3.27	1.26	-5.002	0.022
	British schools	117	4.12	1.08		

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Q3	A.elmarouf schools	77	3.12	1.65	-2.384	0.040
	British schools	117	3.64	1.39		
Q4	A.elmarouf schools	77	2.17	1.70	-4.147	0.02
	British schools	117	3.19	1.66		
Total	A.elmarouf schools	77	12.74	4.10	-3.926	0.03
	British schools	117	15.15	4.25		

As can be seen from Table (1), the T-test results showed that there were significant differences between the means degrees of the pupils in the test dimensions (Q2, Q3, Q4 and total of the dimensions). It was found that the means of the second question were (3.27) for A.elmarouf schools, (4.12) for British schools and the difference was (0.85). The standard deviations were (1.26) and (1.08). As for the third question the means were (3.12) and (3.64). The difference was (0. 52) whereas; the standard deviations were (1.65) and (1.39). For the fourth question the means were (2.17) and (3.19), the difference was (1.02) and the standard deviations were (1.70) and (1.66). The total dimensions of the test indicated that the means were (12.74) and (15.15); the difference was (2.41) while the standard deviations were (4.10) and (4.25). On the other hand no significant differences found between the two groups of the pupils in one dimension of the test which was question one. It was found that the means of the first question were (4.18) for A.elmarouf schools and (4.21) for British schools, the difference was (0.03) while the standard deviations were (0.97) and (1.18).

As it appeared in the table above that all the T values of the four questions were negative which means that British schools scored high marks in all the questions than A.elamrouf schools. So, the differences tended to the side of British schools. In conclusion, the results of table (1) confirmed validity of the test's questions and reinforced by the scores of standard deviations.

Table (2) The T-test Results of the Oral Test:

	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T value	P value
Q1.	A.elamrouf schools	77	0.83	0.99	-2.896	0.04
	British schools.	117	1.25	0.97		
Q2.	A.elamrouf schools	77	0.68	0.95	-3.153	0.006
	British schools.	117	1.13	1.00		
Q3.	A.elamrouf schools	77	0.42	0.82	-4.962	0.000
	British schools.	117	1.09	1.00		
Q4.	A.elamrouf schools	77	0.16	0.54	-8.977	0.000
	British schools.	117	1.25	0.97		
Q5.	A.elamrouf schools	77	1.53	0.85	0.223	0.654
	British schools.	117	1.50	0.87		
Total	A.elamrouf schools	77	3.61	2.72	-6.792	0.030
	British schools.	117	6.22	2.56		

As can be seen from Table (2), the T-test results showed that there were significant differences between the means degrees of the pupils in the test dimensions (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and total of the dimensions). It was found that the means of the first question were (0.83) for A.elmarouf schools and (1.25) for British schools, the difference was (0.42) while the standard deviations were (0.99) and (0.97). It was found that the means of the second question were (0.68) for A.elmarouf schools, (1.13) for British schools and the difference was (0.45). The standard deviations were (0.95) and (1.00). As for the third question the means were (0.42) for A.elmarouf schools and (1.09) for British schools, the difference was (0.67) whereas, the standard deviations were (0.82) and (1.00). For the fourth question the means were (0.16) for A.elmarouf schools and (1.25) for British schools, the difference was (1.09) and the standard deviations were (0.54) and (0.97). The total dimensions of the test indicated that the means were (3.61) for A.elmarouf schools and (6.22) for British schools, the difference was (2.61) while the standard deviations were (2.72) and (4.56). On the other hand no significant differences found between the two groups of the pupils in the fifth dimension of the test. It was found that the means of the fifth question were (1.53) for A.elmarouf schools

and (1.50) for British schools, the difference was (0.03) while the standard deviations were (0.85) and (0.87).

From the above table, it can be seen that all the T values of all the questions were negative except number 5. That means that British schools scored high marks in all the questions of the oral test than A.elamrouf schools, while in question number 5 the score was semi equal. So, the differences in total tended to the side of British schools.

In conclusion, the results of table (2) confirmed validity of the oral test's questions and reinforced by the scores of standard deviations.

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was divided into four dimensions. They were: importance of the First Circle particularly the 3rd grade for teaching English language as a foreign language, some problematic areas of early reading in English and some reasons behind these problems, the role of the syllabus in these early reading problems and the role of the teachers and family in these problems.

All the results of the four dimensions showed that the First Circle regards the most important stage for teaching English language as a foreign language. They also revealed that pupils of the 3rd grade at Sudanese Basic Level schools suffer from early reading problems. These problems differ from one to another, but they hinder the development of early reading among them. There were many causes behind these problems. Some problems cause by the pupils themselves, others cause by the syllabus, teachers of this stage and the family.

From the analysis of the tools it was found that the first question which was: (To what extent does the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) regard the best stage for teaching English language as a foreign language?) has been answered by the first

dimension of the questionnaire which was: importance of the First Circle particularly the 3rd grade for teaching English language as a foreign language.

For the second question which was: (To what extent does the First Circle's syllabus cope sufficiently with early reading problems?) It was confirmed and proved by the results of the two tests and the questionnaire. The results showed that pupils of the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) have really early reading problems as well as lack of early reading strategies. So, it was found that the First Circle's syllabus doesn't cope sufficiently with these early reading problems.

CONCLUSIONS:

The results calculate the following findings:

- 1 – Importance of the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) for teaching English language as a foreign language.
- 2 – (84.4%) of the 3rd grade pupils have problems in reading English texts.
- 3 – Pupils in grade 3 have problems in early reading in English, because the syllabus doesn't cope sufficiently with early reading problems.
- 4 – Nearly (70%) of the participants in the questionnaire agreed that Pupils in grade 3 find difficulties in early reading in English because of unqualified teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers of the First Circle (Grades 1, 2 and 3) should be supplied with effective early reading strategies for supporting reading achievement in this stage.
- Early reading strategies should be applied in these grades.

- Encourage the pupils to read in the classroom and have them take turns of reading aloud so as to exercise reading aloud with a classmate.
- Pupils who have problems in early reading should be provided with effective reading instructions from time to time to enable them become a successful reader.
- Problems of early reading should be identified in the First Circle so as not to get worse in the coming stages.

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