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**EFL Reading Comprehension Difficulties That Face Palestinian
Students at the Secondary Stage and their Causes from
Teachers' Perspective**

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M.A. Thesis

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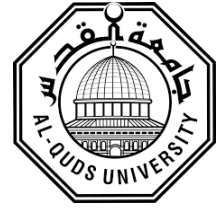
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Thesis Approval

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Jerusalem -Palestine

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Dedication

To the souls of the martyrs in Palestine;

To my caring father and dear mother;

To my beloved brothers and sisters;

To my great friends and colleagues;

To all of them I dedicate this work.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis submitted for the Degree of Master is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signature: 

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Date: 28 – 08- 2024

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and its causes from teacher's perspective. The researcher employed the descriptive method. A questionnaire was distributed to (150) English Language teachers across secondary schools in Hebron Governorate. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The researcher arrived at some results that justified the hypotheses. The results showed that the extent to which English Language teachers have perceptions concerning EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage was high in general, and the most recurring among reading comprehension difficulties was the difficulty of learning certain vocabulary. Also, the study showed that there were no significant differences in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to gender, educational degree and years of experience. However, there was a significant difference relating to Directorate: teachers in the Directorate of Yatta reported more difficulties than did their colleagues in (North, South and Hebron) directorates. Moreover, the results also indicated that the degree of perceptions of English Language teachers regarding the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage was high in general. However, no significant differences were noticed in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to gender, educational degree, years of experience and Directorate. Based on the study's main findings, the researcher offered several recommendations the most important of them is: working on intensifying English curricula for secondary school students to improve their abilities and increase their acquisition of English vocabulary and related concept,

Keywords: EFL, Reading Comprehension Difficulties, Palestinian Students, Secondary

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Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1. Background:

English is becoming increasingly important as an international language. Today, it is the primary language in many countries around the world and the second language in many other countries as well. Therefore, English has become an essential requirement for advancing modern society on various levels.

In order to master the English language, students first need to acquire proficiency in four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Each skill demands specific requirements and faces students with a set of difficulties. However, according to many English learners, reading is seen as one of the most important and yet difficult skills to master (Trang, 2021). Reading, as one of the four skills of language learning in general and in the English language in particular, is a mixed implementation of an intellectual process. It forms a language method deemed as one of the most notable and important language systems. With other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing, individuals rely on this system to gain language use within the classroom and in life (Al-Mawajda & Al-Towesi, 2020).

also, In Islam Reading is the most important skill which is firstly recommended by the Holy Qur'an as it is cited in Surah Al 'Alaq, (96).

Clearly, reading is a pivotal skill for students which enables them to acquire knowledge and develop their academic areas. The essential goal of teaching reading is to train students to read efficiently and quickly so as to get information and meaning from the written material rapidly with full understanding and enjoyment (Keshta, 2012)

By this vision, Saraswati et al. (2021) reveal the main reading problems that students whose mother language is not English often face. These problems include difficulty understanding and deriving meaning from a text, making inferences, identifying and understanding vocabulary and sentence structure, and understanding words contextually. The respective study also found that most students still have difficulties in reading, especially in terms of identifying the topic, main idea, vocabulary meaning, reference and inference, communicative purpose, language feature, and generic structures of texts.

As a result, many learners approach reading texts expecting to read them thoroughly and to stop only when they have fully understood the meaning behind every word. In order to make students better readers, we need first of all to raise their awareness that, first of all, it is not always essential to understand the text word for word, and that practicing some different reading techniques in English may prove very useful in terms of reading comprehension (Scrivener, 2011).

Also, According to Abdulmumini (2023), the aim of reading certainly includes the fact that students read and comprehend what they read and that they find reading as a source of furthering their knowledge. However, comprehension will not occur until reading is free of decoding errors and a certain degree of fluency is obtained.

Comprehending a given text is a complex interaction between the reader and the written text. In an effort to derive meaning from a particular text, the reader employs a number of psychological processes, such as perception, attention, memory, learning, and motivation.

Reading in a foreign language is one of the most central skills that second language literacy evolves around, so reading comprehension, strategies, and their role in reading at various ability levels in a second language have gained momentum in the past two decades, where several studies were poured onto identifying reading strategies, their taxonomies, and issues affecting their use, further affirming the importance of reading, learning and understanding a foreign language (Al-Qahtani, 2021).

Reading comprehension is a complex process involving components, processes, and solutions for the problems faced to improve comprehension among learners. When reading, someone tries to understand the contents of the message of the author contained in the reading. Reading is said only to take place if there is an understanding of the reader. At a higher rank, reading is not just understanding written symbols but also understanding, accepting, rejecting, comparing, and believing in the opinions in the reading. Thus, if someone, after reading, has yet to be able to retrieve a message ordered by the author, then the process has not been successful (Sartika et al, 2020)

In Palestine, although English has been officially introduced as a compulsory subject starting from primary grades following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOHE) mandated that students start learning English at the first-grade level. However, students still face difficulties in dealing with the English language (Bianchi & Abdel Razeq, 2017).

Reading comprehension skills are important for students to become effective readers. These skills allow students to read proficiently and learn effectively. Most EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners may face comprehension problems while reading a text, but proficient readers would better tackle these problems to overcome comprehension challenges (Abu Abeeleh & Al-Sobh, 2021).

1.2. Statement of the Problem:

In light of the rapid developments witnessed in daily life, students encounter numerous challenges in acquiring fundamental skills crucial for their future success. Among these skills, reading comprehension stands out as essential for absorbing knowledge and engaging effectively with academic content across various subjects and fields.

Through the researcher's work as an English language teacher, she has observed significant challenges facing her students in reading comprehension proficiency at the secondary stage. These challenges pose a major obstacle to future academic success and adversely affect student's linguistic development. Having reviewed previous studies, the researcher has come to the realization that there is a pressing need for a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these difficulties and the provision of effective solutions for overcoming them.

This is consistent with a study conducted by Septia, et al. (2022) concerning student's difficulties in reading comprehension, and the study found that such difficulties faced by students can be divided into three types: first, the difficulty in understanding the main idea of a certain text; second, the difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary, and third, the difficulty in making inferences.

To the same effect, Aida et, al (2022) conducted a study focusing more on analyzing the factors that lead to reading comprehension difficulties among students of English as a second language. The study finally found that students faced a difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary used in given texts in addition to a difficulty in employing reading strategies, and a difficulty with regard to concentration.

Therefore, the researcher seeks to determine the level of difficulty in terms of reading comprehension, understanding the root causes of these challenges and implementing effective strategies to address them is vital for success in achieving learning outcomes.

Hence, the research problem stems from the need to address the following question:

What are the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and their causes from Teachers' Perspective?

1.3. Research Questions:

The First Question: What are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage?

The Second Question: Are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (gender, educational degree, years of experience and Directorate)?

The Third Question: What are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage?

The Fourth Question: Are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (gender, educational degree, years of experience and Directorate)?

1.4. Hypothesis of study:

The researcher converted the second and fourth questions into null hypotheses, as follows:

First null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the gender variable.

Second null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that

face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the educational degree variable.

Third null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the years of Experience variable.

Fourth null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the Directorate variable.

Fifth null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teachers' perspective due to the gender variable

Sixth null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teachers' perspective due to the educational degree variable.

Seventh null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teachers' perspective due to the years of Experience variable.

Eighth null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension

difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teachers' perspective due to the Directorate variable.

1.5.Objectives of the study:

This study was designed to:

- Investigate the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties faced by Palestinian students at the secondary stage, which refer to difficulty in understanding meaning, learning certain vocabulary, and making inferences. And identify the difference in teachers' perceptions about that, according to the personal variables of teachers.
- Investigate the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties faced by Palestinian students at the secondary Stage. And identify the difference in teachers' perceptions about that, according to the personal variables of teachers.
- To provide practical solutions and effective recommendations to overcome the reading comprehension difficulties faced by Palestinian secondary students in EFL, based on teachers' perceptions of these difficulties and their causes, according to the teachers' personal variables

1.6.Significance of the Study:

The study's significance is better represented by shedding light on the following aspects:

1. The subject of reading comprehension in English as a second language in Palestine is important, as the comprehension process reflects the ability to benefit from and deal with information presented through the English language, thus increasing knowledge and academic achievement among students.

2. English is a second language; therefore, students, at different educational levels, are expected to face some difficulties. Therefore, it is essential to eliminate those difficulties by way of identifying them.
3. The study expands already existing knowledge about the factors contributing to reading comprehension difficulties. Furthermore, it provides a new theoretical framework that can assist researchers and specialists in education and psychology in gaining a deeper understanding of developing reading skills.
4. The study is applied to secondary school teachers, as this stage is considered extremely important for students. Their transition to practical and university life requires more of the English language and its understanding, which gives this study its prime importance.
5. The study can offer practical, applicable recommendations, such as assisting teachers in enhancing their effectiveness in teaching reading skills. Additionally, it provides valuable information for educational policymakers to identify needs and develop educational policies and design programs with the aim of developing student's reading skills. Moreover, the study allows teachers and educational administrators to improve classroom management and provide academic support for students experiencing difficulties in reading comprehension.

1.7. Limitations of the study:

This study was limited by the following:

Locative limitations: This study covered all secondary schools in Hebron government directorates.

Temporal limitations: The researcher conducted this study during the second semester of the academic year (2023 – 2024)

Human limitations: All the male and female English language teachers at the secondary stage in Hebron Governorate directorates.

Topical limitation: difficulties in reading comprehension, causes of difficulties in reading comprehension

1.8. Definition of key terms:

Reading difficulty: The word 'difficult' implies something that is either hard to do or requires more effort (Saputri, 2023).

In this research, difficulties refer to all mistakes or problems encountered by students in their learning process, specifically in reading and comprehending English texts, and identified as so by the teachers.

Reading comprehension: the process of constructing meaning by connecting what is read to existing knowledge and thoughts until understanding is achieved (Safitri, 2023).

In this research, reading comprehension refers to student's ability to understand the meaning of certain vocabulary sentences.

Reading comprehension difficulties: situations or specific conditions in which students do not understand the meaning of the text, or something prevents the meaning of the text from being understood, such as students not receiving detailed information about the text (Aini, 2023).

In this research, reading comprehension difficulties refer to students' difficulty in understanding the meaning of specific vocabulary sentences and making inferences, which are identified as such by the teachers.

Causes of reading comprehension difficulties: underlying factors or reasons that make it challenging for individuals to understand and interpret written text. These causes can be varied and multifaceted (Zeriguet, 2022).

In this research, reading comprehension difficulties refer to causes that cause students to have trouble understanding what they read, and the teachers identify as such.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1.Introduction:

This chapter is divided into the theoretical framework and previous studies. It covers the concept of reading, difficulties in reading comprehension, and the causes of these difficulties. It also addresses previous studies on reading comprehension conducted in Arab and foreign communities.

2.2.Reading:

One of the means of language acquisition is communication, the exchange of information and ideas. The main practical goal of learning a foreign language for students is to improve their communicative competence. Irkinovich (2022) points out that in the process of reading, the text encoded by the author is recognized. This recognition occurs on the basis of auditory and graphic images of linguistic phenomena (words, phrases, sentences) created by the student in his speech memory (auditory, speech-motor, and visual), which carry a certain meaningful coloring.

Reading is an educational process in which word admission and understanding skills are alternately supportive. Learners must realize what they read in the reading action, mostly

in a paragraph. Students can't realize the implicit aim in a paragraph without comprehending the text (Al-Mawajda & Al-Towesi, 2020)

Identifying reading is often connected with the process of reading itself. The process is the interaction between a reader and a text, which is normally silent, internal, and private. It means that many things happen during reading. It is about how people interpret the written text in order to acquire knowledge or understand messages. Those processes involve three components: the writer, the text, and the reader.

Reading is also defined as a process. Reading with the communication process means getting out of the text as nearly as possible with the writer's messages. In other words, the writer, as an encoder, has something in mind that wants to be shared with other people during that process. The writer puts his ideas into words as a text to make it happen. The reader plays the role of the decoder, who may decode or construct the meaning of the text before the messages enter the reader's mind, and finally, communication is achieved (Erkaboyeva & Bektoshev, 2021)

In the same line, Addanan et al. (2023) point out that Reading is a cognitive process in which the reader engages in a mental exchange with the author through written text.

Scholars like Zare (2020) emphasize the significance of reading strategies in cognitive psychology, as they are vital for achieving effective comprehension. Also, reading strategies pertain to intentional cognitive processes employed by readers to enhance their reading performance.

Moreover, Janzen (2013) describes reading strategies as systematic approaches and actions used to overcome comprehension challenges while reading. These strategies can vary, ranging from foundational methods to more comprehensive ones or from higher-level strategies to more detailed ones. Zare (2020) elaborates that bottom-up strategies involve utilizing information from the text itself, analyzing words and sentences, or consulting a

dictionary for unfamiliar words. On the other hand, top-down approaches involve drawing on prior knowledge and connecting it with the text to aid comprehension (Janzen 2013). Additional tactics include assessing, inquiring, verifying, forecasting, synthesizing, restating, and interpreting. Overall, reading strategies are essential for facilitating the reading process and providing learners with explicit guidance to comprehend written texts, especially in the context of second language acquisition.

2.2.1. Concept of reading comprehension:

Mastering reading skills requires interaction between the reader and the text. The reader has to decode the meaning of the written words to be able to understand the writer's point of view; as Mohammed and Rashid (2017), reading is the most critical activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's which are knowledge of the language. So, readers have to use their prior knowledge to construct meaning. The learner interacts with a message encoded by the writer. He concentrates on his total prior experience, concepts he has attained, and his language competence.

Sari (2015) states that reading comprehension is a process of making meaning from text. The goal, therefore, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. In understanding text information students develop mental models, or representations of meaning of the text ideas during the reading process. Thus, reading is an important skill that enables readers to find some information for knowledge and it can share the information with everyone when they need it.

Reading comprehension is fully achieved when the reader goes beyond the literal level and reaches at least the inferential level. Understanding involves approaching different text types, grasping the author's intention, having a reading goal, perceiving the text structure,

and self-regulation. Acquiring new knowledge, ideas, and judgments from reading comprehension leads to personal development. This is why developing the skills and abilities to form high-level readers is essential. According to, whenever one reads, one thinks, refines criteria, contrasts and questions ideas, and learns to learn, think, and enjoy (Morales, et al, 2023)

Reading comprehension is a crucial aspect of reading skills, which is defined differently depending on the source. According to Chandran and Shah (2019), comprehension is the primary objective of reading skills. Readers need to utilize syntactic, graphic, and semantic information, as these are the focal points of reading comprehension. Therefore, reading comprehension involves making connections between unknown and known information.

Also, Ergen and Batmaz (2017), acceptable with that, defined Reading comprehension as a process in which reading, and comprehension processes supplement each other with cause-effect relation because a reading performed without making sense is not defined as a whole reading activity when the reading process ends with comprehension.

Spencer and Wagner (2018) defined it as one of the forms of learning difficulties in children, it was defined as a 12-month discrepancy between comprehension age and chronological age and their reading accuracy age and comprehension age.

However, Sartika, et al (2020) defined Reading comprehension as the activities of extracting and constructing meaning through written language. By a mental process, the text is transformed into meaningful information stored in the mind and new information while the reader is reading.

The same line, Satriani (2018) states that reading comprehension refers to understanding of text that has been read, that is a complex skill that requires the use of various strategies to activate one's prior knowledge, monitor understanding, self-question, distinguish between the main idea and supporting details, and summarize.

by This vision is also defined as A mental process where the student interacts with the written text using their previous experiences in recognizing the reading text content, explaining, and evaluating it (Khasawneh, & Al-Rub, 2020)

Importance of reading comprehension:

The importance of reading comprehension is highlighted because it is the basic structure through which the student learns and comprehends language topics. As well as the topics of other school subjects to varying degrees according to the degree of their saturation with the linguistic factor, so developing reading comprehension skills remains one of the basic goals which educators, linguists, and psychologists always seek to achieve among students with learning difficulties at all educational levels (Al-Rimawi, 2022).

Reading comprehension is essential for academic and personal success. It is the foundation for understanding academic content and performing assignments. Mastering reading skills before third grade is critical for long-term academic success. Engaging in reading activities allows students to understand, analyze, and apply information (Balgoma, 2024).

Reading comprehension also plays a significant role in daily life, enabling individuals to understand utility bills, housing contracts, job applications, and more. It is crucial for maintaining employment and engaging in various activities safely and effectively (Hoeh, 2015)

Auta et al. (2023) also mentioned the importance of reading comprehension in English. Reading and understanding the English language is a “must attain” for all senior secondary school students if they succeed academically. Reading comprehension is believed to be the bedrock for understanding complex parts of all school subjects.

Auta et al (2023) itemized reasons why students must attain the ability to read and understand:

- 1) In science and arts subjects, reading comprehension is a prerequisite for performing different tasks, as instructions for carrying out experiments must be read and understood by students before they can perform such experiments.
- 2) Information from textbooks and reading passages can be useful to students only when they are read and comprehended. Therefore, if a student cannot read and understand, he/she will find it difficult to succeed in performing tasks required of him/her at school.

2.3.Models of Reading Comprehension

In discussions about reading and comprehension, experts generally mention the bottom-up and top-down processes. Both are processes of reading comprehension, and according to recent research, there is one more kind of processing reading comprehension called interactive reading. Balgoma (2024); Sari (2017) mentioned that Three models facilitate the comprehension process:

1. Interactive Model:

Emphasizes the interaction between the text and the reader's prior knowledge and between different reading strategies (Balgoma, 2024). Also Interactive reading is a combination of top-down and bottom up processing. It is almost always a primary ingredient in successful teaching methodology because both processes are important (Sari, 2017).

2. Bottom-Up Model:

Focuses on decoding text from letters to words, sentences, and overall meaning (Balgoma, 2024). also, In bottom-up processing, readers must first recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers) and use their linguistic data processing mechanism to impose some sort of order on these signals. These data-driven operations obviously require knowledge of the

language itself. From among all the perceived data, the reader selects the signals that make some sense to what is called —meaning (Sari, 2017).

3. Top-Down Model:

Involves using prior knowledge and context to understand the text (Balgoma, 2024). Also, Top down, is a process in which the readers draw their own intelligence and experience to understand a text (Sari, 2017).

Types of Reading comprehension:

Reading comprehension, according to Wahyuni (2020), is classified into four levels, namely literal, interpretive, critical, and creative understanding. Literal understanding is understanding the meaning as it is, in accordance with the meaning of the language symbols in the reading. Interpretive understanding is being able to capture the implicit message of a reading. Critical understanding is a higher level of understanding than interpretive understanding. Meanwhile, in critical understanding, the reader is able to criticize a reading. Furthermore, an even higher stage is creative understanding; in creative understanding, the reader can try or experiment to make something new based on the content of a reading. Reading comprehension skills cannot be owned directly by students. These skills can be obtained from a lot of practice, habituation, and the use of appropriate methods. The teacher can teach the use of appropriate methods in reading comprehension. This is in line with my opinion.

The works of Suwanaroa, (2021) stated that readers' comprehension requires the following components:

1. **Understand the meaning of the word** -understanding the meaning of the vocabulary will help to interpret the sentence well.

2. **Understand each unit by reading word by word.** That will not be an obstacle to understanding because of the lack of continuity; therefore, the students must be trained to read the text as a unit of their thoughts.
3. **Understand sentences** (sentence comprehension) -when readers can relate the sub-concepts to the sentence, they can see the relationship between words in the sentence as well.
4. **Understand the paragraph**—The reader must be able to identify the main points of each sentence and then connect the critical points. Therefore, readers should learn the genre.
5. **Understand all content** (comprehension of larger units) -to understand the whole story, readers must know the relationship between essential section in each text and the order of the ideas of the story and must know that each type of script has a different text structure.

However, the reading comprehension skills were classified according to what was reported by Al-Rimawi (2022) as follows:

1. **Literal comprehension:** Identify lexical and idiomatic terms, identify and remember details, recognize ideas declared in the text, and follow instructions.
2. **Inferential understanding:** By deducing similarities and differences, deducing cause-effect relationships, inferring implicit meanings in the text, and deducing the writer's purposes and motives.
3. **Creative understanding:** It means responding to the topic, trying to simulate it, adding and supplementing (providing suggestions and alternative solutions that can lead to better results) and solving similar problems based on the readable material, adding a comment, completing a text, and build a creative opinion.

2.4.Process of reading comprehension:

Reading is a process of decoding text and then receiving information. From this, reading activity involves more than one process. The reading process itself still involves other language processes like listening and reading (receptive process), speaking and writing (productive process), and thinking process; those processes are the main processes that happen in reading. They occur when readers read the text, clarify the text, and declare the information of the text (Babu, 2020)

The process of reading is the interaction between a reader and the text. During the process, many things happen in the reader's mind when they read. While looking at the print text, readers are decoding it, deciding what it means, how parts relate to each other or to things they know, predicting what to come next, and expecting which purpose to read for. Many things occur when a reader reads: the process is dynamic, variable, and different for the same reader on the same text at a different time or with a different purpose of reading. It is very important to understand the process of reading nature. However, it is not easy to do so because the reading process is normally silent, internal, and private(Melandita, 2019)

The process of reading comprehension is based on the order in which the readers decode the language, which can be divided into three categories: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive reading. In the bottom-up process, readers have to identify and decode the language features of the text, including the letter, the form of the words, and the discourse of the words. In this process, readers must be able to decode the text first to comprehend the text. Then, in the top-down process, readers must use their background knowledge to understand the text, i.e., look at the title and relate it to their knowledge to guess what the text is about. Lastly, in interactive reading, readers try to combine bottom-up and top-down processing. Readers not only identify and decode the language feature of the text but also use their background knowledge and experience to comprehend the text (Babu, 2020)

2.5. Reading comprehension Skills:

In reading comprehension, Nurjanah (2018) stated that there are six skills considered essentials, they are:

1. **Decoding:** Decoding is related to an early language skill called phonemic awareness, part of a broader skill called phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness enables kids to hear individual sounds in words (phonemes). It also allows them to “play” with sounds at the word and syllable level.
2. **Fluency:** To read fluently, students need to recognize words instantly. Fluency speeds up when they can read and understand text. It is also essential when students find irregular words, like of and the, which cannot be sounded out.
3. **Vocabulary:** To understand what is stated in the text, people need to understand most of the words in the text. Having a strong vocabulary is a critical component of reading comprehension. Students can learn vocabulary through instruction, but they typically learn the meaning of words through everyday experience and also by reading.
4. **Sentence Construction and Cohesion:** Understanding how sentences are constructed may appear to be a writing skill. Connecting ideas within and between sentences is referred to as cohesion. However, these skills are crucial for reading comprehension. Recognizing how ideas relate to each other at the sentence level aids students in grasping the meaning of passages and entire texts. Furthermore, this comprehension leads to coherence, which is the capacity to connect ideas within a piece of writing to other ideas.
5. **Reasoning and Background Knowledge:** Most readers relate what they read to what they know. So, students need background knowledge about the world when they read. They also need to be able to “read between the lines” and extract meaning even when it is not written.

6. **Working Memory and Attention:** These two skills are part of a group of abilities known as executive function. They are different but closely related. When kids read, attention allows them to take in information from the text. Working memory allows them to hold on to that information and use it to gain meaning and build knowledge from what they read. Working memory and attention are part of executive function.

2.6.Principles in Teaching Reading Comprehension:

There are some principles behind the teaching of reading proposed by Harmer (2001). They are:

Principle 1: Reading is not a passive skill. Understanding the meaning of words, understanding arguments, and working out the agreement of statements are all active occupations in reading.

Principle 2: Students need to be engaged with what they are reading. Harmer (2001) considers that students can get more benefit from reading if they are engaged and interested in reading text.

Principle 3: Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language. This principle states that students should have opportunities to respond to the message of the text, thus provoking personal engagement.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor in reading. The fourth principle concerns the student's expectations, and the active process of reading is ready to begin when they can read the text hints and predict what's coming in the next segment of a particular text.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic. Choosing good tasks for students in reading is important since it can undermine boring and inappropriate questions, making the reading activity more exciting and challenging for the students.

The five principles behind teaching reading propose some important points that need to be considered by the teacher. For example, it is important to engage the students and give

them the ability to respond to the texts. The principles also highlight that predicting is crucial in reading since it is related to the student's active process of reading. In addition, choosing good tasks is one of the considerations to make the reading activity more exciting and challenging. By referring to those principles, the teacher and students can be facilitated to attain a good-quality reading process (Sari, 2017).

2.7.Challenges of Measuring Reading Comprehension

Perhaps the biggest challenge with assessing reading comprehension is that student performance can vary widely, depending on the assessment (Collins & Lindström, 2021).

For instance, when students between the ages of (8 and 18) were given four different comprehension assessments, fewer than half were consistently identified with LD in reading on two or more assessments. Because of the complexities of reading comprehension, performance can vary based on a student's foundational skills, such as prior knowledge, vocabulary, decoding, working memory, and writing (Keenan & Meenan, 2014)

The text used to measure comprehension also plays a key role. The genre of the text (e.g., narrative, expository), the length, and the reading level all contribute to student's ability to demonstrate their comprehension. Finally, assessment formats vary as well. Assessment might ask students to complete multiple-choice items, to fill in missing words or phrases using cloze procedures, or to respond to comprehension questions verbally or in writing. And to complicate matters further, some assessments are timed, while others allow students to work at their own pace. For students with LD, limits on time often result in many unanswered assessment questions. Would students have demonstrated their comprehension with more time? Or would the assessment have revealed additional difficulties? (Vaughn, et al, 2024)

Given these complexities, it can be difficult to determine how much students really know and what they are thinking. so educators need to be clear on what a comprehension assessment is measuring and how other factors contribute to student performance

Reading Comprehension Difficulties:

Aunola & Nurmi (2008) found that vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in understanding complex reading materials like textbooks, especially those containing technical expressions. This is because students with poor vocabulary knowledge encounter difficulties in understanding technical words such as superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, and words with multiple connotations.

Also Text complexity impacts reading comprehension. This implies that a person's proficiency in the language allows for a deeper understanding of the text. Consequently, oral skills play a significant role in determining a reader's level of proficiency, as students learn new vocabulary through listening. A good vocabulary helps students understand unfamiliar words by connecting them with the context in which they are used (Dennis, 2008).

EFL learners often struggle with comprehending complex sentences in reading. These are sentences with multiple clauses and conjunctions like "although," "because," "furthermore," and "however." Other challenges in reading for EFL learners include coordinating conjunctions, prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and nominalizations. These elements make the writing more complicated and harder to understand (Safitri, 2023).

The environmental conditions have a significant impact on the reading comprehension of learners. Students may struggle to understand reading materials in a disorganized environment. Conversely, those in a peaceful and controlled environment tend to have better reading comprehension. Students living in an unstable environment may find it

challenging to concentrate on their reading, whereas those in safe environments tend to have improved reading comprehension. Research has shown that learners lose focus in noisy environments, such as those with high volumes of televisions or radios (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018).

According to Anmarkrud & Braten (2009), comprehension difficulties can stem from language or cognitive deficiencies. In addition, factors such as motivation and concentration may also impact comprehension. Some readers may understand individual words or expressions but struggle with longer sentences.

According to Fadiliah (2019), when students exhibit difficulty understanding and deriving meaning from text, explicit instruction on comprehension needs to be provided. Difficulties in understanding text can be derived from not knowing the meanings of words or concepts, not capturing factual information, not inferring about content, and not forming relationships among content presented in the text. Therefore, the students have difficulties understanding the meaning of words or concepts and inferring information; one general problem that less-skilled students seem to have is making inferences from the text.

These difficulties include:

1. Understanding meaning

In understanding the meaning of words, noticed that vocabulary is another major component of reading ability with which language learners will experience difficulty. Most students find it difficult when they are required to understand the meaning of an English text. The students also feel confused if the teacher asks them to read and respond to an English text, in this case (Sachran et, al, 2022)

2. learning certain vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is essential for comprehending complicated reading materials such as textbooks, particularly those containing technical terms. This is due to the difficulty

students with low vocabulary knowledge have understanding technical phrases such as superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, or words with various connotations (Safitri, 2023).

The students are expected to understand every word in the text. When reading the students develop their knowledge in reading a text such as by looking for the meaning of new words in the dictionary and guessing the meaning of the context. The students make general predictions about its meaning, by making predictions from the context; it help the students understand the meaning of a passage endlessly looking for each new word in the dictionary. In fact, understanding vocabulary becomes one of the obstacles for readers in understanding the material (Mairanda, 2023).

Asani (2022) found that when students have inadequate prior information, the text has an unfamiliar cultural context, or there are differences between cultural and vocabulary knowledge, this will influence their difficulties in comprehending the text.

3. Difficulty in making inference

the students are expected to comprehend the text to find the conclusion of the statements in the text. Students sometimes find it difficult to conclude the text because the meaning of the statement is not written in the text sometimes. It is even more difficult when students have to write and rearrange the conclusion of the text, as seen in the interviews that have been conducted (Sachran et, al, 2022).

Making inference means that the students are expected to be able to understand the text to find conclusions from the statements in the text. The students as readers need to practice combining instructions from the text with their background knowledge to make conclusions from the text. This means that the instructions in the text help the students to build assumptions and draw d. Detail Information conclusions from the text being read. So the students are able to answer questions in the text. But in its application, the students have difficulty finding conclusions in the text (Mairanda, 2023)

2.8. Causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension:

According to Kasvia, (2017); Nazilla,(2022) students who have difficulty understanding what they are reading may experience a factor of different problems. Thus, from these factors arise some difficulties in reading comprehension.

The following section will discuss the seven areas of reading comprehension difficulties; difficulty in understanding long sentence and passage, grammatical complexity of sentence and vocabulary of that used in the text, difficulty that cause by limited background knowledge, difficulty in using reading strategies and difficulty in concentration:

1. Difficulty in Understanding Long Sentences and Text:

It is a common problem that students find difficulty in understanding long sentences or sentences with complex structures.

2. Difficulty in Understanding Grammatical Complexity of Sentence:

Grammatical complexity of sentences such as using compound and complex sentences in the text are considered to contribute in improving readability text. It might be worse if this kind of sentence contains an element like upside down sequence or many modifiers, which makes it too difficult for students.

3. Difficulty in Knowing Certain Vocabulary Used in the Text:

The most important aspect of reading comprehension is word knowledge because readers cannot understand a sentence without knowing what a word means. Understanding a passage with lots of unfamiliar words is challenging.

4. Difficulty in Understanding Unfamiliar Content or Topic of the Text:

A student's prior knowledge of the world, including their cultural knowledge, is referred to as background knowledge. Readers integrate new information from a text with previous information using prior knowledge.

5. Difficulty in Concentration:

Difficulty concentrating when reading can be caused by psychological factors such as anxiety, worry and nervousness. Students who feel anxious while reading may not be able to understand well because anxiety can affect students. concentrate on understanding the text. Poor concentration will make students fail to understand the text. This can be worse when students take a reading test.

6. Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies:

Another problem that makes reading comprehension difficult is a lack of reading strategies. Readers can process text effectively if they have learned reading strategies or skills. Moreover, strategies as learning rules, problem-solving techniques, or study skills, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of learning.

However, Fadillah (2019) classification causes difficulties in reading comprehension to two factors, which include Internal and external factors, as follows:

A. Internal Factors

Internal factors include physics, intellectual, and psychological. These factors can influence the student's complete comprehension of text during reading, such as difficulty understanding long sentences and text, difficulty caused by limited background knowledge, difficulty using reading strategies, and difficulty in concentration.

B. External Factors

External factors influencing the student's reading comprehension are the reader's environment. Environmental factors can also influence student's mastery and learning of English. Home and school are the two kinds of learning environments that can influence their learning and reading achievement. The external factors include family and school environments.

2.9.Related Studies:

2.9.1. Studies conducted in the Arabian community

Fadlalla and Ahmed (2024) performed a study aimed to investigate reading comprehension problems encountered by 3rd-year secondary school students in the Port Sudan locality. The study aimed to develop learners' ability to understand reading comprehension text. The study followed the descriptive analytical method by used questioner which was distributed to (40) students. The research resulted in many findings, mentioning that most of the students have difficulties in reading comprehension, and these difficulties are vocabulary and sentence structure. There is no gradation for the lessons of reading comprehension texts in the syllabus from easy to difficult.

Al-Saadawi (2023) carried out a study to classify the levels of reading comprehension difficulties and identify the differences among students in the first intermediate grade based on gender. The researcher prepared a list for this purpose and applied it to a sample of 400 male and female students in a center in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate. After ensuring the tool's validity through indicators of reliability and stability, using the Pearson correlation coefficient, Chi-square test for goodness of fit and independence, and independent samples t-test, the results showed that the reading comprehension difficulties were ranked as evaluative, inferential, and literal. Furthermore, there were no differences in these levels based on gender among first-intermediate-grade students.

However, **Abdelkarim (2022)** performed a study to investigate Jordanian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student's attitudes toward learning reading comprehension lessons via ClassDojo. The study participants consisted of thirty-five male students from grade six. They were from one intact section and were chosen purposefully from a school in Jordan. They learnt lessons in reading comprehension via the ClassDojo application for only eight weeks. The researcher built a questionnaire to gather the data. Findings revealed

that the sixth-grade student's attitudes were positive toward learning reading comprehension lessons via ClassDojo.

Abu Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021) made study aimed at investigating the reading comprehension problems encountered by students of Ajloun National University in Jordan, the study also aimed to provide more insight into the factors affecting the student's reading comprehension. For this purpose, the researchers used a questionnaire that includes general statements about the main problems that face students in reading comprehension. The participants of this study were 20 EFL students (10 males & 10 females) from the Department of English Language and Literature at Ajloun National University. The study results indicate that students have high estimation to certain problems they encounter in reading comprehension as a result of the complexity of the texts, anxiety, and word recognition (decoding). The findings of the study also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between male and female students in their reading comprehension challenges in favor of female student.

Ibrahim and Ahmed (2020) performed a study aimed to investigate the impact of the depth of vocabulary knowledge in improving reading skills; the study took place at the Sudan University of Science and Technology, in the Faculty of Languages, English Department. The study adopted the analytical descriptive method; the researcher collected data by using a diagnostic test for (30) EFL second-year university students. To analyze the data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study revealed that depth of vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in enhancing reading skills.

Alhameem and Taha (2019) intend to investigate the reading problems encountered by Sudanese EFL secondary school learners in reading texts and comprehension. The researchers prepared a questionnaire for EFL teachers and a test for EFL students as tools

for data collection. The sample includes 20 teachers and 20 students randomly selected from El Hasahisa secondary schools in Gezira State, Sudan. The researchers used an analytical-descriptive method to collect data, which were further calculated and analyzed with the SPSS Program. The findings indicate that Sudanese secondary school students face problems in reading and answering reading comprehension questions. Student's lack of vocabulary, motivation, inadequate understanding of the relationship and functions of words within sentences, idioms and figurative meanings, insufficient study material, lack of teacher's training, and traditional teaching methods contribute to the main barriers to reading and comprehending texts.

In same line, **Alzahrani et al. (2021)** carried out a study on *Invested Reading Comprehension Difficulties: A Case Study on Saudi High School EFL Learners*. To gather data, a sample of twenty (n= 20) Saudi high school EFL learners completed two research instruments: (i) an adapted reading comprehension test and (ii) a focus group discussion ('FGD'). The results showed that for students in Saudi Arabia, the reading comprehension levels were quite low. However, the findings did indicate that motivated students were willing to learn and needed help understanding the need for English language acquisition. However, there are several issues affecting their reading comprehension ability. For example, the roadblocks include the school environment, textbooks, English teachers, English teachers, and learners.

Also, **Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018)** performed a study to investigate reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners in higher education institutions. The study used a quantitative method and involved (100) out of (281) Arab students from University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The findings indicated that the main difficulty faced by Arab EFL learners was the inability to recognize different types of texts. The study concluded that these reading comprehension difficulties

could impact the English language proficiency and academic performance of Arab EFL learners at the selected institutions.

Ahmed and Gardia (2016) aimed to investigate the effect of depth of vocabulary knowledge on the reading comprehension performance of EFL learners. The study also tries to find out whether gender has any effect on learners' reading comprehension. The study participants were 103 third-year students majoring in English at the University of Nyala and Comboni College of Science and Technology In Sudan. Two tests measuring vocabulary depth and reading comprehension were administered to the participants to collect the relevant data. The results obtained from the data analysis have not indicated any significant effect of vocabulary depth on EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. The study also found no significant difference in the performance of male and female participants in vocabulary tests, and consequently, there was no difference in their reading comprehension ability. Vocabulary knowledge has no statistically significant effect in predicting the reading comprehension proficiency of the participants. Based on these findings, several suggestions and recommendations have been made.

2.9.2. Studies conducted in foreign communities:

Ramadhianti and Somba (2023) performed study aimed to analyze the student's difficulties in reading comprehension skills. Descriptive qualitative method is used in this study, and by using purposive sampling, 98 students of Basic Reading Class at English Education Program in University of Indraprasta PGRI in Indonesia were engaged. The data collected by administering the questionnaires, then it was analyzed to find out what kind of the difficulties faced by EFL students in reading comprehension. The questionnaires were administered in collecting the data, and it was analyzed descriptively to know what kind of reading comprehension difficulties faced by EFL students. According to the results, the most reading difficulty faced by the students are distinguishing between main ideas and

supporting details, getting main idea between paragraphs, the topic of the texts from other culture, relating topic and background knowledge, understanding vocabulary and inferring the text.

Also Saputri (2023) made study that aimed to analyze student's reading comprehension difficulties, factors causing student's reading comprehension difficulties in reading texts or paragraphs, and strategies used by students in solving reading comprehension difficulties for eighth grade students at the MTs Abu Darda in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. This study used qualitative research with a qualitative descriptive design involving 25 students at eighth grade. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the main reading comprehension difficulties for students are vocabulary difficulties, text structure. Vocabulary is an important part of comprehension instruction because text is significantly influenced by vocabulary development. Text structure refers to the way text is arranged to guide the reader or students in identifying the main information in the text. Most students have difficulty understanding long sentences with complex structures. Students who lack a reading strategy often fail to understand the text, difficulty concentrating while reading can be caused by psychological factors. Poor concentration is used causing students to fail to understand the text.

also, **Safitri (2023)** carried out study aimed to analyze the aspect of difficulties faced by the students in reading comprehension and factors causing. This study was used descriptive qualitative method. the sample of study consisting with (30) students at eighth grade students of SMP N 2 Weru, Sukoharjo in Indonesia, The data were collected by using reading test, questionnaires and interviews. the study showed that the difficulties faced by the students are difficulty in answering main idea questions (43.33%), locating reference questions (48%), understanding vocabulary (56%), making inferences questions (49.33%),

and finding detailed information (44%). Therefore, the most difficult aspect faced by the students is reading for understanding vocabulary (56%). For the factors causing student's difficulty in reading comprehension there are five factors namely, learners' background, limited vocabulary knowledge, inadequate material presented by the teacher/teaching method, inadequate use of effective reading strategies and student's environment.

On the other hand, **Nazilla (2022)** performed a study aimed at discovering student's difficulties and strategies in reading intermediate comprehension classes. A qualitative approach was used to complete this research, and purposive sampling was used to minimize the number of participants. The participants in this research were ten students of English Language Education at Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-urinary Banda Aceh, the site of this study, in Indonesia, who had taken the intermediate reading class, and the data were gathered by interview. The findings of this research showed that the student's difficulties with reading comprehension, which included limited English vocabulary, the length of text, lack of background knowledge, and lack of concentration. Besides, Students use various strategies such as scanning, summarizing, and reading at home to overcome these difficulties.

Asani (2022) aimed to analyze the difficulties the students faced when comprehending an English reading text, to determine why the students are having problems with those difficulties, and to examine how a teacher can help the students overcome these difficulties. This research used a mixed method and was classified as descriptive research. The participants of this research consisted of second-grade students and an EFL teacher of MTs, Nurul Ikhlas Ambon. The researcher used reading comprehension tests, questionnaires, and interviews to collect the data. Then, the data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis, which calculated the result of student's reading comprehension test and the questionnaire scale. Moreover, the qualitative data was

collected by describing the interview results. The research revealed three findings: The difficulty faced by the students when comprehending an English reading text was identifying vocabulary. The students completely agreed that the reading process, background knowledge, language knowledge, and motivation influenced them to have problems with those difficulties. The teacher can use the following strategies to overcome difficulties: memorizing, reciprocal teaching, a question-answer relationship, and a fun learning strategy.

Trang (2021) study investigates what difficulties in reading comprehension that the first-year English majored students encounter and what the most common difficulties they face. To handle the issues, 126 first-year English majors at a public university in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam were selected to become the participants in this study. The study results revealed that lacking background knowledge, inadequate vocabulary, time pressure and inappropriate use of strategies are the four most popular factors causing reading comprehension difficulties. By contrast, the findings reveal that the participants could deal with grammatical structures of the reading texts and have no problem in understanding them.

Melandita (2019) performed a study investigating the causes of difficulties that eighth-grade students at SMP Darul Falah Bandar Lampung (in Indonesia) in comprehending English and reading descriptive text. In this research, the researcher used a Survey design. In this design, the researcher used a quantitative method. The sample of this study is the eighth-grade students of SMP Darul Falah Bandar Lampung. The researcher was taking three classes consisting of 74 students. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data. Based on the statistical data, the overall result revealed that most respondents perceived that they were unsure whether they had difficulties in reading comprehension. Moreover, on average, the respondents completely understood that motivation may be the first

obstacle affecting reading comprehension. Background knowledge and the lack of reading strategies were perceived as the second and third problems.

Also, **Trydia (2019)** carried out study aimed to know the student's perception about the cause of reading comprehension difficulties in reading text. The study was conducted in SMAN 1 Kesamben, Blitar, on the 11th grades IPS class. The participants of this study was 100 students of IPS class. This research used survey as the research design and questionnaire about problem related to reading comprehension as the instrument. A descriptive statistic was used to analyze the mean score and standard deviation score of the data. Based on the result of the student's perception about the cause of reading comprehension difficulties, it showed that most of students have reading comprehension difficulties in the problem related to the lack of reading strategies. Where students still often search for difficult vocabulary in a dictionary and problem related to motivation, where the students feel difficult when the reading text are too boring, difficult, and uninteresting. The researcher hope, the teacher provides more interesting reading materials that can motivate students to read.

Also, **Satriani (2018)** performed a study to discover the difficulties of reading comprehension faced by first-semester students in FKIP UIR Pekanbaru In Indonesia. The qualitative research design used in this case study uses the instruments of a questionnaire and interview guide. Based on the data analysis from the questionnaire and interview, the researcher found that most students have difficulties in reading comprehension because they have no motivation in reading habits; they read little or nothing. It is considered a problem for the students to comprehend a reading text. Another student's difficulties in reading comprehension was low reading skills. The students complained that they must study hard to remember the information they just read. They also need much time to read the text to overcome their problem. Reading material that is too difficult is also a problem

for students. The reading material is unfamiliar, and grammatical complexity is also why the students fail to comprehend the text correctly. The sentences in reading text are too long or have complicated sentences. Related to this problem, the students see students see new words and long texts as major obstacles to comprehending a reading text.

Putri (2018) focuses his research on finding out the student's difficulties in reading comprehension of narrative text in the tenth grade of state senior high school 5 Pekanbaru, In Indonesia, The researcher selected all 11 classes by using a simple random sampling technique. There are 40 students as a sample. In collecting the data, the researcher has distributed questionnaires. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the students mostly have difficulties in reading comprehension in identifying information (21.97%), the second is to identify in making inferences (21.85%), the third is to find out the main idea (19.55%), the fourth is to identify the generic structures (18.37%), and last is to identify the language features (18.26%). The factors of these difficulties are. First, students need more fluency (14.92%); second, the students need help recalling information (13.22%); and third, the students have a level of the text (readability) (13.09%).

2.10. Comment on Related studies:

The researcher reviewed several studies conducted in Arab and foreign communities. The studies were diverse, and the review revealed the following:

This study agrees with Fadlalla & Ahmed (2024), Alhameem & Taha (2019), Alzahrani et al. (2021), Ramadhianti & Somba (2023), Safitri (2023), Nazilla (2022), Trang (2021), Trydia (2019), Satriani (2018) and Putri (2018) studies, which aimed to determined reading comprehension difficulties that faced students.

Also agreed with Saputri (2023) and Asani (2022) studies, which aimed to explore reading comprehension difficulties and the factors causing them.

However, this study disagreed with Al-Saadawi (2023), who aimed to classify the levels of reading comprehension difficulties, Abdelkarim (2022), who aimed to discover students' attitudes toward learning reading comprehension, and Ahmed & Gardia (2016), which aimed to investigate the effect of depth of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension performance.

On the other hand, this study applied on teachers to collect data, which agrees with Alhameem and Taha's (2019) and Asani's (2022) studies. And disagreed with Fadlalla & Ahmed (2024), Al-Saadawi (2023), Alzahrani et al. (2021), Saputri (2023), Safitri (2023), Trang (2021), Trydia (2019), Satriani (2018) and Putri (2018) which applied on school students, also disagreed with Abdelkarim (2022), Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021), Alzahrani et al. (2021) Ahmed and Gardia (2016), Ramadhianti & Somba (2023), Nazilla (2022) Trang (2021), which applied with college students.

The study employed the descriptive-analytical method, thereby aligning with the following studies :Fadlalla and Ahmed (2024), Al-Saadawi (2023), Alhameem and Taha (2019), Alzahrani et al. (2021), Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), Nazilla (2022), Trang (2021), Trydia (2019), Satriani (2018) and Putri (2018) in using descriptive analytical.

Previous studies have generally focused on the difficulties facing students in reading comprehension. Nevertheless, these studies were diverse and applied to school students across different educational stages, as well as, to university students. Given the importance of the secondary stage, the present study is distinguished by its focus on high school students, on one hand. On the other hand, the study at hand aligns with previous studies in identifying and examining the dimensions of these difficulties. Based on previous studies, the most suitable research tool was the application of a questionnaire inquiring about the difficulties in reading comprehension, aiming to obtain direct results.

Moreover, this study, as such, stands out from previous ones by its exploration of the causes underlying these difficulties and evaluating them from the teacher's own perspective, as teachers are often in direct contact with their students and can, therefore, assess them, based on their knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Procedures

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's methodology and design. It provides details about the population and sample of subjects from whom data was collected, the research instruments used for data collection, including the questionnaire, the reliability and validity of the instruments, the pilot study data, and the collection procedures. Finally, it introduces the study's variables.

3.2. Methodology of the study

The current study utilized the descriptive method to gather necessary data and describe the study phenomena. The descriptive approach is well-suited for this type of research and study objectives. It examines the case as it truly is, analyzes information, and draws out results.

3.3. Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of all high school English language teachers in Hebron Governorate. The total number was (285) male and female teachers, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Education during the second semester of the year 2023-

2024. Table (3.1) shows the distribution of the study population according to gender and directorate.

Table (3.1): Teachers population distribution according to gender and directorate

Directorate Gender	Male	Female	Total
North Hebron	27	30	57
Hebron	40	60	100
Southern Hebron	38	42	80
Yatta	22	26	48
Total	127	158	285

3.4. Sample of the study

In this research, the study sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique based on the gender and directorate of teachers. The sample size was determined according to the scientific principles set by Kerjcie and Morgan (1970) to ensure that it adequately represented the study population. The appropriate study sample size was determined using the following equation:

$$n = \frac{X^2NP(1-p)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times (285) \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{(0.05^2) \times (284) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)} = 164$$

n = sample size

X = is the z score = 1.96 (Confidence Level 0.95)

D = is the margin of error =0.05

N is the population size =285

P= is the population proportion 0.5 (this provide minimum sample size)

This equation selected the minimum sample for the study, and the researcher distributed (165) questionnaires to a sample of English language teachers for secondary schools in Hebron Governorate, representing (57.9%) of the study community as a whole; the total

number of questionnaires returned correctly and ultimately was (150). Table (3.2) shows the distribution of sample according to the study variables:

Table (3.2): Teachers sample distribution according to the independent variables (Gender, Educational degree, Years of Experience, Directorate)

variables	Level	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	66	44%
	Female	84	56%
Total		150	100%
Educational degree	Bachelor's	116	77.3%
	Post Graduate Studies	34	22.7%
Total		150	100%
Years of Experience	1-5 years	32	21.3%
	6- 10 years	36	24%
	more than 10 years	82	54.7%
Total		150	100%
Directorate	North Hebron	30	%20
	Hebron	53	%35.3
	South Hebron	43	%28.7
	Yatta	24	%16
Total		150	%100

3.5. Instrument of the study

The researcher used the following instrument to achieve the purpose of the study:

Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was structured as the following:

Section One: Demographic information on four of the teachers variables: gender, educational degree, years of experience, directorate.

Section Two: Data on the first dependent variable which was developed to investigate student's difficulties on reading comprehension. This section consists of three domains:

The first domain is difficulty in understanding meaning which contains 7 sections. The

second one is difficulty in learning certain vocabulary items which contains 6 sections, and the last domain is difficulty in making inference which contains 8 sections.

Section three: Data on the second dependent variable which was developed to investigate causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension. This section consists of three domains: The first domain is related to difficulty in using reading strategies which contains 6 sections. The second one is difficulty in concentration which contains 4 sections and the last domain is difficulty in understanding vocabulary which contains 5 sections.

The first phase in the questionnaire construction process was to produce a list of items explaining the information type that would be collected. As a result, the researcher compiled a list of connected themes and issues that were important in reading comprehension. To compile this list, the researcher reviewed relevant literature on student's difficulties with reading comprehension, including previously published studies. Then, the researcher discussed all points with the supervisor and organized all of the possible domains that were relevant to reading comprehension.

Thus, questionnaires were finally constructed on the basis of information gathered from instructions of my supervisor as well as on the basis of questionnaires used in previous studies, such as (Ramadhianti & Somba, 2023) .

Section II: Questionnaire items were intended to elicit the information by using Likert scale with five-points, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (strongly disagree, disagree, don't know, agree, strongly agree).

3.6. Validity of the instrument

3.6.1. External Validity:

To check questionnaire validity, the panel of experts (which consisting of professional respondents, who are experts in the field from Palestinian Universities, as appendix A) was asked to estimate the appropriateness of the instrument for the study purpose. They gave

feedback and asked the researcher to make some modifications. The researcher did what was best for the study and finally used it with English teachers.

The questionnaire was handed to several concerned experts, including English professors, for evaluation. These referees kindly presented their views on the questionnaire regarding its content, clarity of items' meaning, and suitability. They also proposed what they deem necessary to modify the formulation of items to ensure that the questionnaire meets the study's aims. They suggested that some words be changed the final copy of the questionnaire was modified according to the experts' recommendations.

3.6.2. Internal Validity:

Internal validity of the questionnaire is the first statistical test used to test the validity of the test by measuring the correlation coefficients between each item and the whole field. The correlation coefficient between each with total degree.

■ Validity of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension

Table (3.3-a): Results of Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation) matrix link each paragraph of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension with the total degree of the field.

No.	Paragraphs	R	Sig
Difficulty in Understanding meaning			
1.	Most students find it difficult to understand the meaning of some English text.	0.686**	0.000
2.	Most students feel confused when they are asked to read and respond to an English text.	0.689**	0.000
3.	Most Students find it difficult to summarize texts using their own words.	0.723**	0.000
4.	It's difficult for most students to write a conclusion of a text.	0.682**	0.000
5.	Most Students face difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text.	0.658**	0.000
6.	Most Students find difficulty to distinguish between important and unimportant information in the text.	0.722**	0.000
7.	Most Students are unable to find specific details of information in long passages.	0.742**	0.000

Table (3.3-b): Results of Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation) matrix link each paragraph of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension with the total degree of the field.

Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary			
8.	Most Students have trouble with word recognition.	0.756**	0.000
9.	Most Students face difficulty in memorizing complex vocabulary items.	0.750**	0.000
10.	An excessive vocabulary burden leads most students to skip many important words.	0.597**	0.000
11.	Lack of vocabulary repertoire makes most students face difficulty in predicting events.	0.670**	0.000
12.	Most Students face difficulty in understanding non-literal or figurative language, such as (look/looking for)	0.663**	0.000
13.	Most Students face difficulty in distinguishing (the kinds of text) they read.	0.689**	0.000
Difficulty in making inference			
14.	Most Students face difficulties in recognizing the author's digression from an English text.	0.776**	0.001
15.	Most Students face difficulty in making inferences and drawing conclusions.	0.724**	0.000
16.	Most Students find it difficult to figure out cause-effect (the reason and result) information.	0.773**	0.000
17.	Most Students are unable to predict the upcoming events in a text.	0.756**	0.000
18.	Most Students face difficulty in anticipating a solution to a problem presented in a text.	0.767**	0.000
19.	Most Students face difficulties in using context clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words.	0.783**	0.000
20.	It's difficult for most students to understand the grammatical function as a result of misunderstanding the meaning of certain words	0.767**	0.000
21.	Most Students face difficulties in explaining events and ideas in a text.	0.669**	0.000

As table (3.3) shows, the correlation coefficients are significant at the level of 0.05, where the probability value of each paragraph is less than (0.05). Therefore, it can be said that paragraphs of the test are consistent and valid to measure what they were set for.

■ **Validity of causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension**

Table (3.4): Results of Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation) matrix link each paragraph of causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension with the total degree of the field.

No.	Paragraphs	R	Sig
Causes Related to difficulty in using reading strategies			
1.	Most students fail to understand the text due to the weakness. weakness in reading strategies.	0.702**	0.000
2.	Unfamiliarity of reading strategies make it difficult for students to read a text.	0.735**	0.000
3.	Reading the text 'word by word' may impede student's comprehension.	0.796**	0.000
4.	Spending much time in focusing on details may confuse student's in understanding the main idea of the text.	0.812**	0.000
5.	When a text is very difficult in general, students will not pay closer attention to the new vocabulary.	0.754**	0.000
6.	incoherence paragraphs makes it difficult for students to understand what is read.	0.544**	0.000
Causes Related to difficulty in Concentration			
7.	Students lack concentration leads to lack of perception and understanding the text.	0.690**	0.000
8.	Poor attention negatively affects concentration while reading.	0.660**	0.000
9.	Classroom environment (hot/closed/friends noisy) demotivate most students to concentrate.	0.673**	0.000
10.	Lack of real-life examples for verbal concepts in reading activities causes difficulty in concentration.	0.782**	0.000
Causes Related to difficulty in understanding vocabulary			
11.	Limited vocabulary repertoire hinders comprehension.	0.518**	0.001
12.	Lack of phonemic awareness affects word recognition.	0.657**	0.000
13.	Insufficient reading fluency impacts overall understanding.	0.751**	0.000
14.	Limited background knowledge of the topic affects text comprehension.	0.655**	0.000
15.	Challenges in understanding and interpreting figurative language, like (He has a heart of gold)	0.648**	0.000

As table (3.4) shows, the correlation coefficients are significant at the level of 0.05, where the probability value of each paragraph is less than (0.05). Therefore, it can be said that paragraphs of the test are consistent and valid to measure what they were set for.

3.7. Reliability of the instrument

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of 25 questionnaires, also to identify the clarity or ambiguity of survey items to reduce ambiguity and problems that may occur during data collection. Identify all areas and their components.

The researcher verified the reliability of the questionnaire by calculating the reliability of the total degree for the items of the study according to the reliability equation Cronbach alpha. The reliability statistics for the total score of the items of the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face English language Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective was based on this finding the questionnaire developed was considered to be a reliable instrument. Thus, it consistently meets the purposes of study. The following tables (3.5-3.6) shows the reliability degree for the sections of the questionnaire

■ Student's difficulties on reading comprehension

Table (3.5): Reliability of study instrument measure student's difficulties on reading comprehension

Domain	Items	Reliability
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	7	0.824
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	6	0.779
Difficulty in making inference	8	0.889
Total Degree	21	0.905

it can be noticed from table (3.5) that there is a good and acceptable statistical percentage of the total items related to Student's difficulties on reading comprehension where the reliability of the total degree is (0.905), and a good percentage of the total items related to difficulty in understanding meaning, learning certain vocabulary, making inference the reliability of the total degree between (0.779-0.889).

■ causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension

Table (3.6): Reliability of study instrument measure causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension

Domain	Items	Reliability
difficulty in using reading strategies	6	0.816
difficulty in Concentration	4	0.753
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	5	0.752
Total Degree	15	0.823

it can be noticed from table (3.6) that there is a good and acceptable statistical percentage of the total items related to causes of student's difficulties on reading comprehension where the reliability of the total degree is (0.823), and a good percentage of the total items related to difficulty in using reading strategies, concentration, understanding vocabulary the reliability of the total degree between (0.752-0.816).

3.8. Study Design:

The study employed the descriptive method by quantitative research instrument which was one questionnaire which provides a concise and logical process for established research question(s) through data collection, interpretation, analysis, and discussion. as well as data gathering procedures and a statistical analysis. This method is adopted due to its relevance and suitability to the purpose of the study.

3.9. Variables of the study

The study consisted of the following variables:

3.8.1 Independent variables

a/ **Gender**: which has two categories: (male, female)

b/ **Educational degree**: which has two levels: (Bachelor's, Master and more)

c/ **Years of Experience**: which has three levels: (1-5 years, 6-10 years, more than 10 years).

d/ **Directorate**: which has four levels: (North Hebron, Hebron, South Hebron, Yatta).

3.8.2 Dependent variables

- EFL Reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective.
- Causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective.

3.10. Procedures of the study

The researcher implemented the following procedures to carry out this study.

1. After determining the problem statement, the population, and the study sample, the researcher prepared the study instruments, which included a questionnaire to elicit the responses to EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective.
2. The instrument was presented to a group of expert arbitrators to take their observations and suggestions into consideration in terms of content and construction of instruments so that the researcher can reach the final form of the questionnaire (see Appendix B).
3. The researcher obtained permission to conduct this research from Al-Quds University. As a result, she contacted the education directorate in the Hebron Government and explained the study and its goals to them, and they were very cooperative.
4. Verify the validity of the questionnaire by displaying it to several academic staff and experts in the field (see appendix B) and testing the reliability of the questionnaire using the equation Cronbach Alph.
5. The questionnaire was computed and analyzed using SPSS.
6. The results were gathered and analyzed by using the descriptive and inferential statistics. Simple tables with numbers and title were used for each result.

7. Explain the information to reveal whether the results agree or not with previous studies.
8. Give recommendations for the researchers to carry on more studies.
9. Using APA (American Psychological Association) style in writing the reference.

3.11. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, collecting the questionnaires of the study, they were coded by giving certain numbers to prepare them for statistical analysis. The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) using descriptive and analytical statistics (means, frequencies, and percentage, Standard Deviation, Independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, Cronbach Alpha and LSD).

3.12. The correction of the test:

The researcher gives each level of degree of approval was given a certain degree, strongly agree (5), agree (4), don't know (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1).

The Likert scale was used as a method of measuring behavior, and used in questionnaires, particularly in the field of statistics. The scale depends on responses to the degree of impact or non-impact.

Correction key:

Table (3.7) correction key

Mean	Arithmetic mean	Degree
$1.00 \leq X < 2.34$	$20\% \leq X < 46.8$	Low
$2.34 \leq X < 3.68$	$46.8\% \leq X < 73.6\%$	Moderate
$3.68 \leq X \leq 5.00$	$73.6\% \leq X \leq 100\%$	High

The following equation was used to judge the results and determine the rating degree:

$$\text{Interval Length} = \frac{(\text{Maximum Response Limit} - \text{Minimum Response Limit})}{\text{Number of Intervals}}$$

Since the scale was according to the five-point Likert scale:

$$\text{Interval Length} = \frac{(5 - 1)}{3} = 1.33$$

The percentage was also calculated using the following equation:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{(\textit{Arithmetic Mean})}{\textit{Number of Alternatives}} \times 100\%$$

Chapter Four

Data Analysis & Findings

4.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective and the underlying causes. The results of this study are presented in this chapter by discussing research questions in light of teacher's survey questionnaire.

Results of the Study Questions

4.2. Results Related to the First Question:

What are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage?

To answer the first question the researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage, as shown in Table (4.1).

Table (4.1): Means and standard deviations of the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage.

Domain		Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of extent
1	Difficulty in Understanding meaning	4.129	0.579	High
2	Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	4.154	0.527	High
3	Difficulty in making inference	4.006	0.741	High
Total Degree		4.089	0.515	High

It is clear from table (4.1) that the degree of extent of the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage was high in general (m=4.089), where the averages ranged between (4.006-4.154).

The highest mean of difficulties as shown in table (4.1) is for the difficulty in learning certain vocabulary domain (M= 4.154), then followed by difficulty in understanding meaning domain (M=4.129), However difficulty in making inference domain have the lowest mean (M= 4.006)

As for the results related to the items of each domain of the difficulties, they were as follow:

First: Difficulty in Understanding meaning

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in understanding meaning domain, as shown in Table (4.2).

Table (4.2-a): Means and standard deviations of difficulty in understanding meaning domain.

Questions	Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent	
4	It's difficult for most students to write a conclusion of a text.	4.267	0.774	85.3%	High
2	Most students feel confused when they are asked to read and respond to an English text.	4.240	0.721	84.8%	High
3	Most Students find it difficult to summarize texts using their own words.	4.240	0.872	84.8%	High

Table (4.2-b): Means and standard deviations of difficulty in understanding meaning domain.

1	Most students find it difficult to understand the meaning of some English text.	4.200	0.676	84.0%	High
7	Most Students are unable to find specific details of information in long passages.	4.000	0.955	80.0%	High
6	Most Students find difficulty to distinguish between important and unimportant information in the text.	3.993	0.901	79.9%	High
5	Most Students face difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text.	3.960	0.874	79.2%	High
Total Degree		4.129	0.579	82.6%	High

Table (4.2) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage related to difficulty in understanding meaning domain was high (M= 4.129, St=0.579). The highest responses were for items number (4, 2 and 3) Which were in order: (It's difficult for most students to write a conclusion of a text) (M= 4.267, St=0.774), Most students feel confused when they are asked to read and respond to an English text) (M= 4.240, St=0.721), and Most Students find it difficult to summarize texts using their own words (M= 4.240, St=0.872).

The lowest one was item (5): Most Students face difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text (M= 3.960, St=0.874) and its high degree, and the next one paragraph was (6): Most Students find difficulty to distinguish between important and unimportant information in the text (M= 3.993, St=0.901).

Second: Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in learning certain vocabulary domain, as shown in Table (4.3).

Table (4.3): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of difficulty in learning certain vocabulary Domain.

Questions	Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent
4 Lack of vocabulary repertoire makes most students face difficulty in predicting events.	4.253	0.734	85.1%	High
5 Most Students face difficulty in understanding non-literal or figurative language, such as (look/looking for)	4.253	0.761	85.1%	High
2 Most Students face difficulty in memorizing complex vocabulary items.	4.133	0.825	82.7%	High
3 An excessive vocabulary burden leads most students to skip many important words.	4.127	0.698	82.5%	High
6 Most Students face difficulty in distinguishing (the kids of text) they read.	4.100	0.740	82.0%	High
1 Most Students have trouble with word recognition.	4.060	0.821	81.2%	High
Total Degree	4.154	0.527	83.1%	High

Table (4.3) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage related to difficulty in learning certain vocabulary domain was high (M= 4.154, St=0.527). The highest responses were for items number (4, 5 and 2) Which were in order: (Lack of vocabulary repertoire makes most students face difficulty in predicting events) (M= 4.253, St=0.734), Most Students face difficulty in understanding non-literal or figurative language, such as (look/looking for)) (M= 4.253, St=0.761), and Most Students face difficulty in memorizing complex vocabulary items (M= 4.133, St=0.825).

The lowest one was items (1): Most students have trouble with word recognition (M= 4.060, St=0.821) and its high degree, and the next one paragraph was (6): Most Students face difficulty in distinguishing (the kids of text) they read (M= 4.100, St=0.740).

Third: Difficulty in making inference

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in making inference domain, as shown in Table (4.4).

Table (4.4): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of difficulty in making inference domain.

Questions		Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent
1	Most Students face difficulties in recognizing the author's digression from an English text.	4.127	0.892	82.5%	High
7	It's difficult for most students to understand the grammatical function as a result of misunderstanding the meaning of certain words	4.107	0.984	82.1%	High
2	Most Students face difficulty in making inferences and drawing conclusions.	4.053	0.940	81.1%	High
4	Most Students are unable to predict the upcoming events in a text.	4.053	0.975	81.1%	High
5	Most Students face difficulty in anticipating a solution to a problem presented in a text.	3.987	0.990	79.7%	High
3	Most Students find it difficult to figure out cause-effect (the reason and result) information.	3.980	0.952	79.6%	High
8	Most Students face difficulties in explaining events and ideas in a text.	3.960	1.029	79.2%	High
6	Most Students face difficulties in using context clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words.	3.780	1.122	75.6%	High
Total Degree		4.006	0.741	80.1%	High

Table (4.4) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage related to difficulty in making inference domain was high (M= 4.006, St=0.741). The highest response were for items number (1, 7 and 2) Which were in order: (Most Students face difficulties in recognizing the author's digression from an English text) (M= 4.127, St=0.892), It's difficult for most students to understand the grammatical function as a result of misunderstanding the meaning of certain words) (M= 4.107, St=0.984), and Most Students face difficulty in making inferences and drawing conclusions (M= 4.053, St=0.940).

The lowest one was item (6): Most Students face difficulties in using context clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words (M= 3.780, St=1.122) and its high degree, and

the next one item was (8): Most Students face difficulties in explaining events and ideas in a text (M= 3.960, St=1.029).

4.3. Results Related to the Second Question:

Are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (Gender, Educational degree, Years of Experience and Directorate)?

To answer the previous question the researcher, check every Hypothesis:

First hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the gender variable.

To make sure if these means are significant or not, a T.test was used, and the result show in (4.5) table.

Table (4.5): Arithmetic of Mean, standard Deviation and T. Value attributed to Gender.

Domain	Gender	No	Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of freedom	T Value	Sig
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	Male	66	4.067	0.637	148	1.154	0.250
	Female	84	4.177	0.528			
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	Male	66	4.139	0.554	148	0.319	0.750
	Female	84	4.167	0.508			
Difficulty in making inference	Male	66	4.013	0.825	148	0.108	0.914
	Female	84	4.000	0.672			
Total degree	Male	66	4.067	0.581	148	0.465	0.643
	Female	84	4.107	0.460			

Table (4.5) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the reading comprehension difficulties faced by English Language students in secondary stage in Palestine and can be attributed to gender, (sig=0.643) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the Difficulty in (Understanding meaning, learning certain vocabulary, making inference).

Second hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the educational degree variable (Bachelor's or Post Graduate Studies).

To make sure if these means are significant or not, T.test was used, and the result show in (4.6) table.

Table (4.6): Arithmetic of Mean, standard Deviation and T. Value attributed to educational degree.

Domain Difficulty	Educational degree	No	Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of freedom	T Value	Sig
Understanding meaning	Bachelor's	116	4.117	0.605	148	0.451	0.653
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.168	0.487			
learning certain vocabulary	Bachelor's	116	4.144	0.514	148	0.461	0.646
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.191	0.576			
making inference	Bachelor's	116	4.001	0.744	148	0.145	0.885
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.022	0.741			
Total degree	Bachelor's	116	4.080	0.519	148	0.383	0.702
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.119	0.510			

Table (4.6) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage and can be attributed to educational degree, (sig=0.702) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the Difficulty in (Understanding meaning, learning certain vocabulary, making inference).

Third hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face

Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the years of Experience variable (1-5 years, 6- 10 years, more than 10 years)

The researcher calculated the means and standard deviation for teachers answer about EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective attributed to their years of Experience, and the result show in (4.7) table

Table (4.7): Means and, standard Deviation of English teachers answers according to years of Experience

Domains	Years of Experience	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	1-5 years	32	3.978	0.677
	6- 10 years	36	4.079	0.580
	more than 10 years	82	4.209	0.528
Total		150	4.129	0.579
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	1-5 years	32	4.094	0.597
	6- 10 years	36	4.157	0.461
	more than 10 years	82	4.177	0.530
Total		150	4.154	0.527
Difficulty in making inference	1-5 years	32	4.039	0.548
	6- 10 years	36	3.913	0.867
	more than 10 years	82	4.034	0.751
Total		150	4.006	0.741
Total Degree	1-5 years	32	4.034	0.539
	6- 10 years	36	4.038	0.533
	more than 10 years	82	4.133	0.500
Total		150	4.089	0.515

The table (4.7) above shows differences in average means of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the years of experience. To check these differences, one way ANOVA was applied in using test data as shown in the table (4.8).

Table (4.8): Results of one-way ANOVA test for the scores of responses of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage due to the years of Experience.

Domains	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F value	Sig
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	Between Groups	1.347	2	0.673	2.037	0.134
	Within Groups	48.602	147	0.331		
	Total	49.949	149			
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	Between Groups	0.159	2	0.080	0.284	0.753
	Within Groups	41.235	147	0.281		
	Total	41.394	149			
Difficulty in making inference	Between Groups	0.407	2	0.204	0.368	0.693
	Within Groups	81.322	147	0.553		
	Total	81.729	149			
Total degree	Between Groups	0.347	2	0.173	0.651	0.523
	Within Groups	39.187	147	0.267		
	Total	39.534	149			

Table (4.8) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective and can be attributed to years of Experience, (sig=0.523) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the Difficulty in (understanding meaning, learning certain vocabulary, making inference).

Fourth hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the Directorate variable (North Hebron, Hebron, Southern Hebron, Yatta).

The researcher calculated the means and standard deviation for teachers answer about EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective attributed to their Directorate, and the result show in (4.9) table

Table (4.9): Means and, standard Deviation of English teachers answers according to Directorate

Domains	Directorate	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	North Hebron	30	4.143	0.536
	Hebron,	53	4.159	0.593
	Southern Hebron	43	4.309	0.547
	Yatta	24	3.720	0.479
Total		150	4.129	0.579
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	North Hebron	30	4.178	0.483
	Hebron,	53	4.148	0.609
	Southern Hebron	43	4.198	0.566
	Yatta	24	4.063	0.264
Total		150	4.154	0.527
Difficulty in making inference	North Hebron	30	4.121	0.473
	Hebron,	53	3.925	0.958
	Southern Hebron	43	4.151	0.563
	Yatta	24	3.781	0.703
Total		150	4.006	0.741
Total Degree	North Hebron	30	4.144	0.440
	Hebron,	53	4.066	0.623
	Southern Hebron	43	4.217	0.440
	Yatta	24	3.841	0.381
Total		150	4.089	0.515

The table (4.9) above shows differences in average means of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at

the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the Directorate. To check these differences, one way ANOVA was applied in using test data as shown in the table (4.10).

Table (4.10): Results of one-way ANOVA test for the scores of responses of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary stage due to the Directorate.

Domains	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F value	Sig
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	Between Groups	5.456	3	1.819	5.968	0.001
	Within Groups	44.493	146	0.305		
	Total	49.949	149			
Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	Between Groups	0.302	3	0.101	0.358	0.784
	Within Groups	41.092	146	0.281		
	Total	41.394	149			
Difficulty in making inference	Between Groups	2.866	3	0.955	1.768	0.156
	Within Groups	78.863	146	0.540		
	Total	81.729	149			
Total degree	Between Groups	2.297	3	0.766	3.002	0.033
	Within Groups	37.237	146	0.255		
	Total	39.534	149			

Results show that there was a significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in perceptions of English teachers about the reading comprehension difficulties in Understanding meaning Domain and total degree faced by English Language students in secondary stage in Palestine due to the Directorate, therefore this hypothesis is rejected.

However, for the difficulty in learning certain vocabulary and difficulty in making inference domains, no significant differences were found.

To find the source of the differences, the researcher used the LSD test for dimensional comparisons of differences, as shown in Table (4.11).

Table (4.11): Results of the (LSD) test for dimensional comparisons of the differences between the arithmetic averages according to the variable Directorate

Domains	Directorate	North Hebron	Hebron,	Southern Hebron	Yatta
Difficulty in Understanding meaning	North Hebron		0.0161	0.1661	0.4226
	Hebron,	0.0161		0.1499	0.4387
	Southern Hebron	0.1661	0.1499		0.5887
	Yatta	-0.4226*	-0.4387*	-0.5887*	
Domains	Directorate	North Hebron	Hebron,	Southern Hebron	Yatta
Total Degree	North Hebron		0.0779	0.0726	0.3031
	Hebron,	0.0779		0.1505	0.2252
	Southern Hebron	0.0726	0.1505		0.3757
	Yatta	-0.3031*	0.2252	-0.3757*	

The results of Table (4.11) indicate that there are significant differences between the arithmetic means of perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties in understanding meaning domain and total degree faced by English Language students in secondary stage in Palestine due to the Directorate.

The differences in difficulty in understanding meaning domain were between Directorate Yatta and Directorate of (North Hebron, Hebron and Southern) and in favor of (North Hebron) In front of Yatta with (0.4226) points, also in favor of (Hebron) In front of Yatta with (0.4387) points, and in favor of (Southern Hebron) In front of Yatta with (0.5887) points.

However, the differences in the total degree were between Directorate Yatta and Directorate of (North Hebron and Southern) and in favor of (North Hebron) In front of Yatta with (0.3031) points, and in favor of (Southern Hebron) In front of Yatta with (0.3757) points.

4.4. Results Related to the Third Question:

What are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage?

To answer the third question the researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the perceptions of English teachers about the Causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage, as shown in Table (4.12).

Table (4.12): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage.

Domain causes		Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of extent
1	difficulty in using reading strategies	3.930	0.702	High
2	difficulty in Concentration	4.248	0.559	High
3	difficulty in understanding vocabulary	4.092	0.530	High
Total Degree		4.069	0.472	High

It is clear from (4.12) table that the degree of the perceptions of English teachers about the Causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage was high in general ($m=4.069$), where the averages ranged between (3.930-4.248).

The highest mean of causes as shown in table 4.1 is for the difficulty in Concentration domain by ($M= 4.248$), then followed by difficulty in understanding vocabulary domain by ($M=4.092$), However difficulty in using reading strategies domain was have lowest mean by ($M= 3.930$)

As for the results related to the items of each domain of the causes, they were as follows:

First: difficulty in using reading strategies

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in using reading strategies domain, so as shown in Table (4.13).

Table (4.13): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of difficulty in using reading strategies.

Questions	Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent
1 Most students fail to understand the text due to the weakness. weakness in reading strategies.	4.127	0.735	82.5%	High
2 Unfamiliarity of reading strategies make it difficult for students to read a text.	4.047	0.797	80.9%	High
3 incoherence paragraphs makes it difficult for students to understand what is read.	4.033	0.855	80.7%	High
4 When a text is very difficult in general, students will not pay closer attention to the new vocabulary.	3.913	0.976	78.3%	High
5 Spending much time in focusing on details may confuse student's in understanding the main idea of the text.	3.760	1.185	75.2%	High
6 Reading the text 'word by word' may impede student's comprehension.	3.700	1.191	74.0%	High
Total Degree	3.930	0.702	78.6%	High

Table (4.13) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage related to difficulty in using reading strategies domain was high ($M= 3.930$, $St=0.702$). The highest response were for items number (1, 2 and 6) Which were in order: (Most students fail to understand the text due to the weakness. weakness in reading strategies) ($M= 4.127$, $St=0.735$), Unfamiliarity of reading strategies make it difficult for students to read a text) ($M= 4.047$, $St=0.797$), and incoherence paragraphs makes it difficult for students to understand what is read ($M= 4.033$, $St=0.855$).

The lowest one was (3): Reading the text 'word by word' may impede student's comprehension ($M= .3700$, $St=1.191$) and its high degree, and the next one was paragraph (4): Spending much time in focusing on details may confuse student's in understanding the main idea of the text ($M= 3.760$, $St=1.185$).

Second: difficulty in Concentration

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in Concentration domain, so as shown in Table (4.14).

Table (4.14): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of difficulty in concentration.

Questions	Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent
1 Students lack of concentration leads to lack of perception and understanding the text.	4.360	0.658	87.2%	High
2 Poor attention negatively affects concentration while reading.	4.360	0.780	87.2%	High
3 Classroom environment (hot/closed/friends noisy) demotivate most students to concentrate.	4.173	0.817	83.5%	High
4 Lack of real-life examples for verbal concepts in reading activities causes difficulty in concentration.	4.100	0.918	82.0%	High
Total Degree	4.248	0.559	85.0%	High

Table (4.14) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage related to difficulty in Concentration Domain was high (M= 4.248, St=0.559). The highest response were for items number (1, 2 and 3) Which were in order: (Students lack of concentration leads to lack of perception and understanding the text) (M= 4.360, St=0.658), Poor attention negatively affects concentration while reading (M= 4.360, St=0.780), and Classroom environment (hot/closed/friends noisy) demotivate most students to concentrate (M= 4.173, St=0.817).

The lowest one was paragraph (4): Lack of real-life examples for verbal concepts in reading activities causes difficulty in concentration (M=4.100, St=0.918).

Third: difficulty in understanding vocabulary

The researcher extracted means, standard deviation, of the extent of difficulty in understanding vocabulary domain, as shown in Table (4.15).

Table (4.15): Means and, standard deviations of the extent of difficulty in understanding vocabulary.

Questions	Mean	Std. deviation	Arithmetic mean	Degree of extent
1 Limited vocabulary repertoire hinders comprehension.	4.200	0.760	84.0%	High
5 Challenges in understanding and interpreting figurative language, like (He has a heart of gold)	4.147	0.754	82.9%	High
2 Lack of phonemic awareness affects word recognition.	4.100	0.825	82.0%	High
4 Limited background knowledge of the topic affects text comprehension.	4.020	0.916	80.4%	High
3 Insufficient reading fluency impacts overall understanding.	3.993	0.831	79.9%	High
Total Degree	4.092	0.530	81.8%	High

Table (4.15) shows that the degree of perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage related to difficulty in understanding vocabulary Domain was high (M= 4.092, St=0.530). The highest response were for items number (1, 5 and 2) Which were in order: (Limited vocabulary repertoire hinders comprehension) (M= 4.200, St=0.760), Challenges in understanding and interpreting figurative language, like (He has a heart of gold) (M= 4.147, St=0.754), and Lack of phonemic awareness affects word recognition (M= 4.100, St=0.825).

The lowest one was paragraph (3): Insufficient reading fluency impacts overall understanding (M=3.993, St=0.831).

4.5. Fourth Question:

Are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (gender, educational degree, years of experience and Directorate)?

To answer the previous question the researcher checks every Hypothesis:

Fifth hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from Teacher's Perspective due to the gender variable (male or female).

To make sure if these means are significant or not, a T.test was used, and the result show in (4.16) table.

Table (4.16): arithmetic of mean, standard deviation and T. Value attributed to gender.

Domain of causes	Gender	No	Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of freedom	T Value	Sig
difficulty in using reading strategies	Male	66	3.847	0.798	148	1.844	0.065
	Female	84	3.973	0.583			
difficulty in Concentration	Male	66	4.170	0.603	148	1.519	0.131
	Female	84	4.310	0.517			
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	Male	66	4.188	0.422	148	1.974	0.059
	Female	84	4.017	0.592			
Total degree	Male	66	4.007	0.492	148	1.428	0.156
	Female	84	4.117	0.452			

Table (4.16) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and can be attributed to gender, (sig=0.156) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the causes related to (difficulty in using reading strategies, difficulty in Concentration, difficulty in understanding vocabulary).

Sixth hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from Teacher's Perspective due to the educational degree variable (Bachelor's or Post Graduate Studies)..

To make sure if these means are significant or not, a T.test was used, and the result show in (4.17) table.

Table (4.17): arithmetic of mean, standard deviation and T. Value attributed to educational degree.

Domain of causes	educational degree	No	Mean	Std. deviation	Degree of freedom	T Value	Sig
difficulty in using reading strategies	Bachelor's	116	3.920	0.663	148	0.336	0.737
	Post Graduate Studies	34	3.966	0.832			
difficulty in Concentration	Bachelor's	116	4.222	0.563	148	1.067	0.288
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.338	0.543			
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	Bachelor's	116	4.081	0.507	148	0.467	0.641
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.129	0.609			
Total degree	Bachelor's	116	4.054	0.443	148	0.712	0.478
	Post Graduate Studies	34	4.120	0.563			

Table (4.17) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and can be attributed to educational degree, (sig=0.478) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the causes related to (difficulty in using reading strategies, difficulty in Concentration, difficulty in understanding vocabulary).

Seventh hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from teacher's perspective due to the years of experience variable (1-5 years, 6- 10 years more than 10 years).

The researcher calculated the means and standard deviation for teachers answer about causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage attributed to their years of Experience, and the result show in (4.18) table

Table (4.18): Means and, standard deviation. English teachers answers according to years of experience

Domains	Years of Experience	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
difficulty in using reading strategies	1-5 years	32	3.792	0.751
	6- 10 years	36	3.773	0.561
	more than 10 years	82	4.053	0.722
Total		150	3.930	0.702
difficulty in Concentration	1-5 years	32	4.227	0.451
	6- 10 years	36	4.104	0.690
	more than 10 years	82	4.320	0.526
Total		150	4.248	0.559
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	1-5 years	32	4.206	0.475
	6- 10 years	36	4.017	0.434
	more than 10 years	82	4.080	0.584
Total		150	4.092	0.530
Total Degree	1-5 years	32	4.046	0.451
	6- 10 years	36	3.943	0.414
	more than 10 years	82	4.133	0.496
Total		150	4.069	0.472

The table (4.18) above shows virtual differences in average means of perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage due to the years of experience. To check these differences, one way ANOVA was applied in using test data as shown in the table (4.19).

Table (4.19): Results of one-way ANOVA test for the scores of responses of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage due to the years of Experience.

Domains	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F value	Sig
difficulty in using reading strategies	Between Groups	2.736	2	1.368	2.843	0.061
	Within Groups	70.724	147	0.481		
	Total	73.459	149			
difficulty in Concentration	Between Groups	1.186	2	0.593	1.921	0.150
	Within Groups	45.376	147	0.309		
	Total	46.562	149			
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	Between Groups	0.633	2	0.316	1.130	0.326
	Within Groups	41.178	147	0.280		
	Total	41.810	149			
Total degree	Between Groups	0.932	2	0.466	2.125	0.123
	Within Groups	32.227	147	0.219		
	Total	33.159	149			

Table (4.19) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and can be attributed to years of Experience, (sig=0.123) , therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the Difficulty in (difficulty in using reading strategies, difficulty in concentration, difficulty in understanding vocabulary).

Eighth hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at the significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic mean of causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage from Teacher's Perspective due to the Directorate variable (North Hebron, Hebron, Southern Hebron, Yatta).

The researcher calculate the means and standard deviation for teachers answer about Causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage attributed to their Directorate, and the result show in (4.20) table

Table (4.20): Means and, Standard Deviation. English teachers answers according to Directorate

Domains	Directorate	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
difficulty in using reading strategies	North Hebron	30	4.022	0.631
	Hebron	53	3.969	0.605
	Southern Hebron	43	3.942	0.687
	Yatta	24	3.708	0.967
Total		150	3.930	0.702
difficulty in Concentration	North Hebron	30	4.317	0.482
	Hebron	53	4.203	0.601
	Southern Hebron	43	4.390	0.467
	Yatta	24	4.010	0.640
Total		150	4.248	0.559
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	North Hebron	30	4.033	0.615
	Hebron	53	4.102	0.445
	Southern Hebron	43	4.205	0.537
	Yatta	24	3.942	0.561
Total		150	4.092	0.530
Total Degree	North Hebron	30	4.104	0.481
	Hebron	53	4.075	0.404
	Southern Hebron	43	4.149	0.465
	Yatta	24	3.867	0.573
Total		150	4.069	0.472

The table (4.20) above shows virtual differences in average means of perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face

Palestinian students at the secondary stage due to the Directorate. To check these differences, one way ANOVA was applied in using test data as shown in the table (4.21).

Table (4.21): Results of one-way ANOVA test for the scores of responses of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage due to the Directorate.

Domains	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F value	Sig
difficulty in using reading strategies	Between Groups	1.519	3	0.506	1.028	0.382
	Within Groups	71.940	146	0.493		
	Total	73.459	149			
difficulty in Concentration	Between Groups	2.466	3	0.822	2.521	0.057
	Within Groups	44.096	146	0.302		
	Total	46.562	149			
difficulty in understanding vocabulary	Between Groups	1.197	3	0.399	1.434	0.235
	Within Groups	40.614	146	0.278		
	Total	41.810	149			
Total degree	Between Groups	1.297	3	0.432	1.980	0.120
	Within Groups	31.863	146	0.218		
	Total	33.159	149			

Table (4.21) shows that there were no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage and can be attributed to Directorate, (sig=0.120), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

And it's the same for all domains with no significant differences in the (difficulty in using reading strategies, difficulty in concentration, difficulty in understanding vocabulary).

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction:

This chapter presents the findings obtained through the study, analyzes its questions, tests its hypotheses, and discusses these results to provide recommendations and suggestions that could contribute to solving the problem of reading comprehension difficulties among high school students in Palestine.

5.2. Discussion of the findings related to the first question:

What are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage?

The results showed that the degree of extent of English teacher's perceptions about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage was high in general. The highest mean of difficulties was for the difficulty in learning a certain vocabulary domain, followed by difficulty in understanding the meaning domain. However, the lowest difficulty was for making inferences.

This result can be interpreted by considering that reading comprehension requires students to possess many skills, including having a broad vocabulary. These words and concepts are necessary to increase the difficulties. In addition, the process of reading comprehension

requires student's skills and ability to connect parts of the text, enabling them to analyze, understand, and predict upcoming events.

The student's lack of such skills ultimately leads to a high degree of difficulty in achieving reading comprehension, primarily because English is considered a foreign language for students in Palestine. Consequently, its use and practice are extremely limited to the classroom, and, in that regard, they are applied in a restricted manner.

It is also worth noting that English is taught sequentially over the school years for students in Palestine as a foreign language. That means that English is learned in the first grade, and after completing that grade, new skills are learned in the second grade based on previous understanding. However, this approach is not effective if there are weaknesses or gaps in the earlier stages, particularly since this study addresses the secondary stage, which is the final educational stage.

This result agrees with Fadlalla and Ahmed (2024), Abu Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021) in evaluation of difficulty in reading comprehension by high level. Also agrees with Al Hameem & Taha (2019), Saputri (2023), Asani (2022) and Safitri (2023) which found that Student's lack of vocabulary was the highest difficulty.

However, these results disagree with Alzahrani et al. (2021), which found the level of difficulty in reading comprehension was low. This difference in the result compared to the previous study could be due to the difference in the nature of the study population and the location where it was applied because reading comprehension difficulties vary from one region to another and from one group of students to another.

First Domain: Difficulty in Understanding Meaning

The results showed that English Language teacher's perceptions of the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in understanding the meaning domain were high ($M= 4.129$, $St=0.579$). The

most prominent aspects relating to this specific difficulty highlighted difficulties in writing a conclusion of a given text and students feeling confused when asked to read and respond to an English text.

As such, the difficulty in understanding the meaning is one of the reasons paving the way to difficulties in reading comprehension. Reading is a multifaceted process that involves vision, attention, and a conscious memory of the words and letters that are being read so as to understand their meaning. Any disruption in this process results in a weak processing and comprehension of the content that is being read. This is due to the infrequent and limited use of English, whereby students require help with regards to storing new information in memory and recalling it once needed.

The researcher explains this result by noting that teaching English as a foreign language in Palestine is based on a cumulative approach, where teachers assume that students have already acquired the necessary previous skills and vocabulary to move on to new content. Therefore, any gaps in one of these stages can lead to increased reading comprehension difficulties, which heavily depend on the student's vocabulary knowledge and understanding.

This result agrees with Abu Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021), Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), Safitri (2023) which found that students faced difficulties in understanding meaning. Also agrees with Al-Jarrah & Ismail (2018), which found that student's faced difficulties in recognize different types of texts

Second Domain: Difficulty in Learning Certain Vocabulary

The results showed that English Language teacher's perceptions of the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in learning certain vocabulary were high ($M= 4.154$, $St=0.527$). The most prominent aspect regarding this specific difficulty was the lack of vocabulary, an

impoverished repertoire, with the effect being that most students face difficulties predicting upcoming events.

The researcher believes that this result can be explained by the infrequent and limited use of language and vocabulary outside the classroom environment. Additionally, the curricula contain many new concepts and vocabulary, making it difficult for students to learn them.

In addition to the above, a student's weak reading comprehension ability makes them less motivated and enthusiastic to exert the cognitive effort needed to predict upcoming events. Predicting future events requires strong inferencing skills, including reading between the lines and understanding implied meanings. So, if students can't do that, they will face difficulties in making predictions within the text.

This result Agrees with Fadlalla and Ahmed (2024), Alhameem and Taha (2019), Ramadhianti and Somba (2023), Saputri (2023), Asani (2022) and Nazilla (2022) which found that students faced difficulties in Learning Certain Vocabulary

However, these results disagree with Ahmed and Gardia (2016) which found that Vocabulary knowledge has no effect in predicting the reading comprehension.

Third Domain: Difficulty in Making Inferences

The results showed that English Language teacher's perceptions of the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in making inferences were high ($M= 4.006$, $St=0.741$). Here, the most visible aspect was the difficulty of recognizing the author's moments of digression in an English text.

The researcher believes that this result is inevitable based on the first and second domains findings. The process of inference cannot occur without continually understanding meaning and acquiring more vocabulary. Additionally, the process of inference involves a full comprehension of the meaning of the text, analyzing it, and predicting events, which

cannot be achieved without first possessing the ability to understand and grasp the vocabulary of the text.

This result Agrees with Ramadhianti and Somba (2023) which found that students faced difficulties in Making Inferences

5.3. Discussion of the Findings Related to the Second Question:

Are the perceptions of English teachers about the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (gender, educational degree, years of experience and directorate)?

Discussion of the Findings Related to the First Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to gender, (sig=0.643), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher explanation of this result is based on the nature of the curricula and the educational process which are uniform across all schools. Consequently, their impact on students is similar and consistent.

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Second Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to educational degree, (sig=0.702), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher attributes this result to the fact that teachers can easily notice and assess the difficulties that students face in understanding the text during the actual lesson, as it is evidently apparent through the student's inability to answer questions about or give complete ideas of the text. This depends on the assessment methods provided to teachers

and their participation in training courses on how to use them, with the aim of applying them to students. As a result, academic qualifications do not significantly affect teacher's evaluations of the reading comprehension difficulties students face, as they rely on similar assessment methods.

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Third Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to years of experience, (sig=0.523), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher believes that this result is due to professional qualifications. This is implemented through organizing training courses for teachers, where they are trained and prepared to apply similar teaching methods and strategies in teaching English to students and evaluating student's performance and learning. This explains why years of experience do not significantly impact the assessment of reading comprehension difficulties among students.

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Fourth Hypothesis:

The results showed that there was a significant difference, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage in understanding meaning, relating to Directorate, (sig=0.033), therefore this hypothesis is rejected. Yatta Directorate and the Directorates of (North, South and Hebron) in favor of (North, South and Hebron).

The researcher believes that this result may be due to differences in educational supervision and the nature of the schools' environment, being the only two elements that differ between the directorates mentioned above. The existence of a difference in one of the directorates may be the result of one of these reasons; teacher's assessment of greater

difficulties in Yatta directorate may be due to a lack of interest from students and their parents in learning English and acquiring its vocabulary, which increases the difficulties they face.

5.4. Discussion of the Findings Related to the Third Question:

What are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage?

The results showed that the degree of the perceptions of English Language teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage was high in general ($m=4.069$). The most reported difficulty cause was the difficulty in concentration, followed then by the difficulty in understanding vocabulary; however, the difficulty in using reading strategies had the lowest mean.

These reasons, in general, explain the lack of use of the English language among students and the weakness in understanding its meanings as a result of weaknesses related to vocabulary acquisition, in addition to the lack of concentration resulting from the lack of sufficient comprehension of what is being read. As for their high incidence, it can be attributed to the nature of the curriculum, the teachers, or the students themselves. For example, if the curriculum is not designed attractively and is not suitable for the student's level, it will not achieve its goals of enabling students to acquire, memorize, and use vocabulary.

Also, we cannot overlook the nature of political events in Palestinian society and the disruptions that have led to prolonged school closures or emergency operating systems. These situations have resulted in focusing on certain academic subjects, which ultimately led to weaknesses and gaps in students' vocabulary acquisition and understanding. Specifically, English language learning is limited to teachers and within the classroom. Any absence or disruption of this process is considered a direct and indirect cause

affecting students' levels of focus, motivation towards reading, and their acquisition of language skills and vocabulary

This result Agrees with Saputri (2023), Safitri (2023), Trang (2021) studies which found that student's faced difficulties in reading comprehension.

The First Domain: Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies

The results showed that the degree of perceptions of English Language teachers regarding the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in using reading strategies was high ($M= 3.930$, $St=0.702$). The highest difficulty was failing to understand the text due to a weakness in reading strategies.

Reading, in general, and reading in a foreign language, in particular, requires the use of strategies that align with the nature of the text being read and the student's abilities. Therefore, the lack of use of these strategies is due to student's inability to deal with English texts.

This result Agrees with Saputri (2023), Safitri (2023), Trang (2021) and Trydia (2019) which found difficulty in using reading strategies leads students to face difficulties in reading comprehension.

The Second Domain: Difficulty in Concentration

The results showed that the degree of perceptions of English Language teachers with regards to the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in concentration was high ($M= 4.248$, $St=0.559$). The highest difficulty was lacking concentration, leading, as such, to a lack of perception and understanding of the given text.

The researcher believes that this result is due to the presence of distractions both inside and outside the classroom that affect the student's ability to focus on the given text, which

is largely attributed to the teacher's inadequate ability to manage and control the classroom effectively, so as to reduce such distractions.

Additionally, the secondary stage has another issue: Students rely on private tutoring and external courses that focus solely on their exam success. This reliance causes them to neglect adequate focus and attention to their regular school classes.

This result Agrees with Saputri (2023) study, which found that students faced difficulties in Concentration. This result also agrees with Trydia (2019), who found that students feel difficult when the reading text is too boring, and agrees with Melandita (2019), who found that motivation may affect reading comprehension.

The Third Domain: Difficulty in Understanding Vocabulary

The results showed that the degree of perceptions of English Language teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to the difficulty in understanding vocabulary was high ($M= 4.092$, $St=0.530$). The highest difficulty was a limited vocabulary repertoire, hindering comprehension.

One crucial element in learning foreign languages is knowledge and understanding of vocabulary. A student can only comprehend a sentence by knowing the meanings of its words. Therefore, a lack of vocabulary leads to difficulties in reading comprehension.

This result Agrees with Saputri (2023), Safitri (2023), Trang (2021) studies which found that difficulty in understanding vocabulary leads students to face difficulties in reading comprehension.

5.5. Discussion of the Findings Related to the fourth Question:

Are the perceptions of English teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage different according to the variables (gender, educational degree, years of experience and directorate)?

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Fifth Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to gender, (sig=0.156), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher explains this result by pointing to the nature of the courses and educational curricula through which students are taught, which lead to similar causes of difficulties without significant differences. In addition, the nature of the student's age group can play a role in the factors related to focusing on studying English. Since all high school students are of the same age, teacher's assessments of the causes leading to reading comprehension difficulties are similar.

Discussion of the Findings Related to Sixth Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to educational degree, (sig=0.478), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher explains this result by pointing out that the reading comprehension difficulties students encounter are primarily related to challenges with vocabulary, as demonstrated by the results of the first question. Because English is a foreign language for the students, their limited vocabulary significantly hinders their understanding, which is

evident to all teachers. Consequently, these difficulties are not influenced by the student's academic abilities.

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Seventh Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers about the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to years of experience, (sig=0.123), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher explains this result by stating that the causes of reading comprehension difficulties among students are largely due to a weakness in vocabulary acquisition. This is because English is a foreign language that is not used outside the classroom. The evaluation of this and the identification of factors that increase these difficulties are not influenced by the teachers' years of experience, as these are things that teachers can easily observe and identify.

Discussion of the Findings Related to the Eighth Hypothesis:

The results showed that there were no significant differences, at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), in the perceptions of English Language teachers concerning the causes of EFL reading comprehension difficulties that face Palestinian students at the secondary stage relating to Directorate, (sig=0.120), therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

The researcher explains this result by noting that students in all directorates and schools are taught in the same way according to specific curricula. On the other hand, the obstacles and challenges that schools face in maintaining a consistent educational process are the same for everyone, which explains the lack of differences.

5.6.Recommendations:

After conducting the study, analyzing its results, and clarifying them, the researcher provides the following recommendations:

1. Working on intensifying English curricula for secondary school students to improve their abilities and increase their acquisition of English vocabulary and related concept.
2. Directing schools to hold English language competitions that would contribute to increasing learning outcomes culminating in better reading comprehension.
3. Urging teachers to use educational strategies that are compatible with their student's abilities and the skills they need to learn English reducing, thus, the difficulties they face in understanding English texts. The results showed that some of the causes are related to student's focus, which can be addressed by working to meet their needs and taking into account their differences
4. Establishing standardized and closely aligned criteria for educational supervision across all directorates whereby the mechanisms of supervision should be flexible to align with the nature of schools' environments, teacher's capabilities and student's needs. The study results showed that the degree of reading comprehension difficulties faced by students varied depending on the district.
5. Maintaining quiet and suitable classroom environments to maintain high levels of student's concentration during reading lessons, thus, nurturing their comprehension.
6. Conducting future studies investigating reading comprehension difficulties among students across different educational levels.
7. Conducting future studies examining the effectiveness of reading strategies in improving student's reading comprehension.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: List of Validation Experts

No.	Name	Workplace
1.	Dr. Mohsen Adas	Al-Quds University
2.	Dr. Mahmmoud Tomaizi	Palestine Ahliya university
3.	Dr. Hazem Bader	Hebron University
4.	Dr. Suad Al-Abed	Bethlehem University
5.	Dr. Nimer Abu Zahra	Hebron University
6.	Dr. Salah Shrouf	Hebron University
7.	Dr. Munjid Samouh	Polytechnic University
8.	Dr. Jaafar Abu Saa	Palestine Technical university
9.	Dr. Mahmoud Shriteh	Hebron University
10.	Mr. Iqab Sharawneh	Supervisor/ directorate of southern Hebron
11.	Mr. Nasser Maqboul	Supervisor/ directorate of southern Hebron
12.	Mr. Murad Shindi	Supervisor/ directorate of southern Hebron
13.	Dr. Majdi Abu Zahra	Birzeit University
14.	Mr. Maazouza Sweiti	English Language teacher

Appendix B: Questionnaire
Deanship of Graduate Studies
Al-Quds University



Questionnaire

Dear Teacher:

The researcher is conducting a study titled " **EFL Reading Comprehension Difficulties That Face Palestinian Students at the Secondary Stage from Teacher's Perspective**". Your insights into the challenges encounter students in reading are crucial to facilitate this study. A self-completed questionnaire has been enclosed to capture English language teacher's perspectives on reading difficulties among students in the context of secondary education in Palestine.

Please fill in the blanks with the appropriate information or tick (√) the appropriate box: Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The information received from this questionnaire will be used for research purpose only. If you need further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Thank you for your help and time.

Sincerely,

The Researcher: Nebal Sharawnah

Section I : General Information:

1. Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
2. Educational degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's	<input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate Studies	
3. Years of Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6- 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years
4. Directorate	<input type="checkbox"/> North Hebron	<input type="checkbox"/> Hebron	<input type="checkbox"/> South Hebron <input type="checkbox"/> Yatta

Section II: Questionnaire Items

Please put (✓) in the suitable choice

No	Paragraph	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A) Student's difficulties on reading comprehension						
A)-1	Difficulty in Understanding meaning	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Most students find it difficult to understand the meaning of some English text.	1.				
2.	Most students feel confused when they are asked to read and respond to an English text.	2.				
3.	Most Students find it difficult to summarize texts using their own words.	3.				
4.	It's difficult for most students to write a conclusion of a text.	4.				
5.	Most Students face difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text.	5.				
6.	Most Students find difficulty to distinguish between important and unimportant information in the text.	6.				
7.	Most Students are unable to find specific details of information in long passages.	7.				
A)-2	Difficulty in learning certain vocabulary	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Most Students have trouble with word recognition.	8.				
2.	Most Students face difficulty in memorizing complex vocabulary items.	9.				
3.	An excessive vocabulary burden leads most students to skip many important words.	10.				
4.	Lack of vocabulary repertoire makes most students face difficulty in predicting events.	11.				
5.	Most Students face difficulty in understanding non-literal or figurative language, such as (look/looking for)	12.				
6.	Most Students face difficulty in distinguishing (the kinds of text) they read.	13.				
A)-3	Difficulty in making inference	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Most Students face difficulties in recognizing the author's digression from an English text.	14.				
2.	Most Students face difficulty in making inferences and drawing conclusions.	15.				
3.	Most Students find it difficult to figure out cause-effect (the reason and result) information.	16.				
4.	Most Students are unable to predict the upcoming events in a text.	17.				

5.	Most Students face difficulty in anticipating a solution to a problem presented in a text.	18.				
6.	Most Students face difficulties in using context clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words.	19.				
7.	It's difficult for most students to understand the grammatical function as a result of misunderstanding the meaning of certain words	20.				
8.	Most Students face difficulties in explaining events and ideas in a text.	21.				

No	Paragraph	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B) causes of Student's difficulties on reading comprehension						
B)-1	Related to difficulty in using reading strategies	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Most students fail to understand the text due to the weakness. weakness in reading strategies.	1.				
2.	Unfamiliarity of reading strategies make it difficult for students to read a text.	2.				
3.	Reading the text 'word by word' may impede student's comprehension.	3.				
4.	Spending much time in focusing on details may confuse student's in understanding the main idea of the text.	4.				
5.	When a text is very difficult in general, students will not pay closer attention to the new vocabulary.	5.				
6.	incoherence paragraphs makes it difficult for students to understand what is read.	6.				

No	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B)-2	difficulty in Concentration	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Students lack of concentration leads to lack of perception and understanding the text.	7.				
2.	Poor attention negatively affects concentration while reading.	8.				
3.	Classroom environment (hot/closed/friends noisy) demotivate most students to concentrate.	9.				
4.	Lack of real-life examples for verbal concepts in reading activities causes difficulty in concentration.	10.				

B)-3	difficulty in understanding vocabulary	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1.	Limited vocabulary repertoire hinders comprehension.	11.				
2.	Lack of phonemic awareness affects word recognition.	12.				
3.	Insufficient reading fluency impacts overall understanding.	13.				
4.	Limited background knowledge of the topic affects text comprehension.	14.				
5.	Challenges in understanding and interpreting figurative language, like (He has a heart of gold)	15.				

Thank you!

صعوبات فهم القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التي يواجهها الطلبة الفلسطينيون

في المرحلة الثانوية وأسبابها من وجهة نظر المعلمين

إعداد الطالبة: نبال عقاب علي شراونة

بإشراف الدكتور: عدنان شحادة

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على صعوبات الفهم القرائي في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التي تواجه الطلبة الفلسطينيين في المرحلة الثانوية وأسبابها من وجهة نظر المعلمين.

واستخدمت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي. وتم توزيع استبانة على (150) معلماً ومعلمة لغة إنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية في محافظة الخليل. وتم استخدام الاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات.

وقد توصلت الباحثة إلى بعض النتائج التي بررت الفرضيات. أظهرت النتائج أن مدى تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية حول صعوبات الفهم القرائي التي يواجهها طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة

الثانوية في فلسطين كان مرتفعاً بشكل عام، وكانت أكثر صعوبات الفهم القرائي هي صعوبة تعلم مفردات معينة، كما أظهرت الدراسة أنه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تصورات معلمي اللغة

الإنجليزية تجاه صعوبات الفهم القرائي التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية في فلسطين تعزى للجنس والدرجة التعليمية وسنوات الخبرة، إلا أنه كانت هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية

تعزى للمديرية: مديرية يطا لصالح (شمال وجنوب ووسط الخليل). ومن ناحية أخرى أظهرت النتائج أن درجة تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية حول أسباب صعوبات الفهم القرائي لدى الطلبة في المرحلة

الثانوية في فلسطين كانت مرتفعة بشكل عام، كما توصلت الدراسة إلى عدم وجود فروق جوهرية في تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لأسباب صعوبات الفهم القرائي لدى طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في

فلسطين تعزى إلى الجنس والدرجة التعليمية وسنوات الخبرة والمديرية.

بناءً على أهم النتائج قدمت الباحثة عدة توصيات أهمها: العمل على تكثيف مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية

لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية لزيادة قدراتهم واكتسابهم لمفردات ومفاهيم اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، صعوبات فهم المقروء، المرحلة الثانوية.