

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension by Applying the Interactive Reading Model to the First Level Students in the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Toor Albaaha, University of Lahj

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Abstract: This study investigates the *Effectiveness of the Interactive Reading Model (IRM) in Improving Reading Comprehension Among First-Level English Students in Yemen*. The sample consisted of 30 first-year students in the Department of English at the Faculty of Education- Tor Al Baha, with 15 students in the experimental group and 15 students in the control group using convenience sampling technique, and 10 teachers were the participants who responded to the questionnaire. Test and questionnaire were the two tools used to collect the required data. Applying a Quasi-Experimental Pretest-Posttest Design, the study compared the performance of an Experimental Group (EG) taught with the Interactive Model (IM) and a Control Group (CG) taught using Traditional Methods (TMs). Results vividly showed significant improvement in the EG's Reading Comprehension (RC) ($p = 0.000$), while the CG's improvement was minimal ($p = 0.004$). Teachers identified vocabulary knowledge (60%) and motivation (30%) as key factors influencing comprehension. The findings highlight the value of Interactive Teaching Methods (ITMs) and provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers. The study contributes to the growing body of research on reading strategies and underscores the need for innovative approaches in contexts where students face significant reading challenges.

Key words: IRM Interactive Reading Model -EG Experimental Group-IM Interactive Model -CG Control Group -TMS Traditional Method-RC reading comprehension - ITMS interactive Teaching Methods -IRMS Interactive Reading Model -RTA Reading Test Analysis - TQA Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis.

1. Introduction: Reading Comprehension (RC) is defined as a foundational subskill for language learners, enabling them to access, interpret, and engage with written texts effectively. However, First-Level English students in Yemen face significant challenges in this area, as evidenced by their consistently low performance in reading examinations compared to other language skills (Mohammad, Aljaberi, & Anmary, 2022). These difficulties are compounded by limited reading practice, lack of interest, and reading anxiety, which hinder students' ability to develop critical comprehension skills (Fu Bo, 2015).

By definition, reading comprehension can be generally understood as the ability to understand texts of different kinds. Liu (2010) states that reading is the way learners deal with written or printed language messages which involves processing to understand them.

Urquhart and Weir (1998, as cited in Liu, 2010) may have a broader way of defining reading as "the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print." Brown (2007) even has a broader one when identifying comprehension as "the process of receiving language, listening or reading; input". According to (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p.11), reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language".

The Interactive Reading Model (IRM), which emphasizes active engagement, critical thinking, and collaborative learning, has been widely recognized internationally as an effective approach to

improving Reading Comprehension (RC) (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). However, this model has not been systematically implemented in Yemeni classrooms, leaving a significant gap in pedagogical practices. This is known in terms of students' academic achievement and through educational outcomes, including the first level students who were applied to the experiment. This study addresses this gap by investigating the effectiveness of the IRM in improving RC among First-Level English Students in Yemen. The study also explores teachers' perspectives on the factors affecting and enhancing RC, providing valuable insights for curriculum development and teaching practices.

2. Research Questions: This study is guided by the following Research Questions:

1. What is the significant difference in Reading Comprehension (RC) between students taught using the Interactive Model (IM) and those taught using Traditional Methods (TMs)?
2. What are the factors affecting Reading Comprehension (RC) from teachers' perspectives?
3. What are the factors that enhance Reading Comprehension (RC) from teachers' perspectives?

3. Statement of the Problem: The study is an attempted to improve students' reading comprehension by applying the interactive reading model. First-level students in the Department of English at the Faculty of Education, Tor Al-Baha, face significant challenges in reading, as reflected in their consistently low scores in reading examinations compared to other skills and subjects. So Yemeni students consistently perform poorly in reading examinations, highlighting a critical gap in their ability to comprehend written texts. This problem has significant implications for their academic success and language proficiency, as Reading Comprehension (RC) is essential for accessing and understanding academic content (Liu, 2010). Factors such as limited reading practice, lack of interest, and reading anxiety further exacerbate these challenges (Fu Bo, 2015).

By structuring reading activities in this manner, IRM enhances students' capacity to engage with and critically analyze texts, which contributes significantly to improving reading proficiency and comprehension (Sandy et al., 2020). However, to the best of my knowledge, this model has not been widely implemented in Yemeni classrooms, leaving a significant gap in pedagogical practices. This study addresses this gap by investigating the effectiveness of the IRM and exploring teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence and enhance Reading Comprehension (RC).

4. Literature Review

4.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Catherine, 2002, p. 11). Comprehension involves three key elements: the reader, the text, and the activity in which comprehension occurs. The reading process encompasses all the capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences a person brings to the act of reading.

Reading Comprehension (RC) is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding, interpreting, and integrating linguistic information (Brown, 2007). Research has consistently highlighted the importance of vocabulary knowledge as a key determinant of reading success (Nagy, 1988; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Vocabulary enables readers to decode words meaningfully and infer meaning from context, which are essential skills for both academic and general reading tasks.

Motivation and engagement are also critical factors in Reading Comprehension (RC). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argue that motivated students are more likely to engage actively with texts, leading to deeper comprehension and better retention of information. The Interactive Reading Model (IRM), which fosters active engagement through questioning, predicting, and summarizing, has been shown to enhance comprehension by encouraging students to interact with texts in meaningful ways (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

Despite the proven effectiveness of Interactive Reading Models (IRMs), to the best of my knowledge, there is a lack of empirical research on their application in the Yemeni context. This

study fills this gap by investigating the impact of the IRMs on Reading Comprehension (RC) and exploring teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence and enhance comprehension.

5. Methods

5.1 Research Design

A Quasi-Experimental Pretest-Posttest Design was employed to compare the Reading Comprehension (RC) abilities of an Experimental Group (EG) taught using the Interactive Reading Model (IRM) and a Control Group (CG) taught using Traditional Methods (TMs). The study involved (30) **First-Level English Students** at the **Faculty of Education, Toor Albaaha**, divided equally into Experimental and Control Groups. Data were collected through **reading test** and the teachers' **questionnaire**. The Experimental Group (EG) was exposed to the Interactive Reading Model (IRM), which included activities, such as: questioning, predicting, and summarizing. The Control Group (CG) received traditional instruction, focusing on rote memorization and passive reading. Data were analyzed using paired and independent sample t-tests to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

6. Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to reading comprehension and its findings cannot be generalized to other English language skills (i.e., Writing, Listening, and Speaking).

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Results

- **Reading Test Analysis (RTA):** The Experimental Group's mean Posttest Score (81.20) was significantly higher than the Pretest Score (40.46, $p = 0.000$), while the Control Group's improvement was minimal (Pretest: 44.06, Posttest: 54.73, $p = 0.004$).
- **Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis (TQA):** Teachers identified vocabulary knowledge (60%) and motivation (30%) as key factors influencing comprehension. They also emphasized the importance of Interactive Reading strategies and authentic materials in enhancing comprehension.

7.2 Discussion: The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of the Interactive Reading Model (IRM) in improving Reading Comprehension (RC). The Experimental Group's significant improvement aligns with previous research on the importance of active engagement and critical thinking in reading instruction (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Teachers' perspectives underscore the critical role of vocabulary and motivation in fostering comprehension, consistent with the findings of Nagy (1988) and Guthrie and Wigfield (2000). Comparing the mean scores of posttests of experimental and control groups before conducting the study one can find that both groups have the same abilities of reading comprehension. However, the ability to use the strategies of reading in the experimental group improved after implementing the treatment. The findings revealed a significant change from the mean score of pre-tests (40.46) to the mean score of the posttest (81.20). On the other hand, there was not any statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pretest and the posttest in the control group after conducting the study. It means that there was not significant improvement in the abilities in reading.

8. Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve reading comprehension among first-year students in the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Tor Al Baha at the University of Lahej:

1. **Implement Interactive Teaching Models:** Since the interactive teaching model significantly improved reading comprehension, it is recommended that this approach be integrated into the curriculum.
2. **Focus on Vocabulary Development:** it is recommended that educators focus on explicit vocabulary instruction. Incorporating vocabulary-building exercises into lessons will help students better understand and interpret texts.

3. **Utilize Authentic Materials:** Teachers should integrate authentic reading materials (e.g., real-world texts, news articles, literature) into their lessons to enhance students' motivation and contextual understanding. Authentic materials are more engaging and relatable, which may improve comprehension.
4. **Promote Active Student-Teacher Interaction:** As interaction with the teacher has been shown to foster reading comprehension, it is recommended to create more opportunities for one-on-one or small group interactions during reading activities. Teachers should provide personalized feedback and encourage dialogue about the reading material.

9. Conclusion: The study confirms that the interactive reading model significantly enhances Reading Comprehension (RC) among **First-Level English Students** in Yemen. The findings highlight the importance of vocabulary development, active engagement, and motivation in improving reading outcomes. These results have important implications for curriculum design and teaching practices, particularly in contexts where students face significant reading challenges.

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تحسين مهارات فهم القراءة لدى طلاب السنة الأولى من خلال تطبيق النموذج التفاعلي

للقراءة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية، طور الباحثة، جامعة لحج

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الملخص: تُركّز هذه الدراسة على فعالية نموذج القراءة التفاعلي (IRM) في تحسين فهم القراءة لدى طلاب المستوى الأول في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في اليمن. تكونت العينة من 30 طالبًا في السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية – طور الباحثة، حيث ضُمّت المجموعة التجريبية 15 طالبًا، والمجموعة الضابطة 15 طالبًا، باستخدام تقنية العينة المتيسرة. كما شارك 10 معلمين في الاستبيان. وتمثلت أدوات جمع البيانات في الاختبار والاستبيان. ومن خلال تطبيق تصميم شبه تجريبي مع اختبارات ذات (قياس قبلي – وقياس بعدي)، وقد قارنت الدراسة أداء مجموعة تجريبية تعلّمت باستخدام نموذج القراءة التفاعلي (IM) ومجموعة ضابطة (CG) تعلّمت باستخدام الطرق التقليدية (TMS). وأظهرت النتائج تحسّنًا كبيرًا في أداء المجموعة التجريبية (EG) في فهم قراءة (P = 0.000) (RC)، في حين كان التحسّن لدى المجموعة الضابطة (CG) محدوداً (P = 0.004). وقد حدّد المعلمون معرفة المفردات بنسبة (60%) والدافع التعليمي بنسبة (30%) كعوامل مؤثرة بشكل كبير على فهم النصوص. وتسلّط هذه النتائج الضوء على أهمية الأساليب التعليمية التفاعلية (ITMS) وتقديم توصيات بناءً للمعلمين والمسؤولين عن السياسات التعليمية. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء البحث العلمي حول استراتيجيات تعليم القراءة وتؤكد على أهمية تبني أساليب تعليمية مبتكرة في السياقات التعليمية التي يواجه فيها الطلاب تحديات كبيرة في تعلّم القراءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: IRM نموذج القراءة التفاعلية - EG مجموعة تجريبية - IM النموذج التفاعلي - CG مجموعة ضابطة

- TMS طريقة تقليدية - RC فهم القراءة - ITMS الأساليب التعليمية التفاعلية - IRMS نموذج القراءة التفاعلي -

RTA تحليل اختبار القراءة - TQA تحليل استبيان المعلمين.