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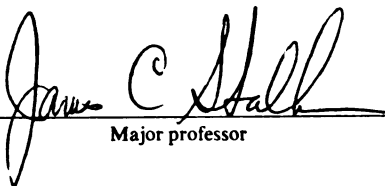
**FACTORS CAUSING READING DIFFICULTIES FOR
SAUDI BEGINNING STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FL**

presented by

NAJI IBRAHIM ALARFAJ

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

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**FACTORS CAUSING READING DIFFICULTIES FOR SAUDI BEGINNING
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**A SURVEY STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND VIEWS OF SAUDI MALE
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR EFL
READING DIFFICULTIES AND THE FACTORS CAUSING THEM**

By

Naji Ibrahim Al-Arfaj

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS CAUSING READING DIFFICULTIES FOR SAUDI BEGINNING STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

By

Naji Ibrahim Al-Arfaj

This study investigated the opinions and perceptions of Saudi beginning EFL students regarding the reading difficulties which they perceive that they encounter when reading English as a foreign language, and the factors which cause them these reading difficulties. In this study, the researcher focused on discussing cultural schematic, linguistic, and attitudinal factors that could cause reading difficulties for Saudi beginning EFL students.

The main objectives for carrying out this study are: (1) exploring the reading difficulties which Saudi male beginning EFL students perceive that they face when reading English as a foreign language, (2) investigating some of the cultural schematic, linguistic, and attitudinal factors that could cause reading difficulties for Saudi beginning EFL students, (3) helping ESL/EFL teachers, ESL/EFL textbook writers, and concerned educational establishments (e.g., the Saudi Ministry of Education and English language centers) understand some of the reading difficulties and factors which affect Saudi EFL students, (4) helping Saudi beginning EFL students understand some of the reading difficulties which they could face in reading English as FL, and to be aware of factors causing these reading difficulties, and (5) offering implications, applications, suggestions,

and recommendations that could help Saudi EFL students, teachers, and concerned educational establishments overcome or at least reduce these reading difficulties.

Methodologically, a survey questionnaire was developed, translated into Arabic, and piloted on a sample of Saudi students. Then, the revised Arabic version of the questionnaire was administered by the researcher to a randomly selected population of 140 Saudi middle and high school senior students in Saudi Arabia.

This study employed qualitative and quantitative statistical tools in analyzing and presenting the responses of the subjects of the study. More specifically, the frequencies and percentages of the subjects' responses to each item in the questionnaires were calculated. Then, the frequencies and/or percentages of the subjects' responses to each item in the first and second parts of the questionnaires were presented in various types of charts to be easily readable. At the third stage of analysis, other descriptive and comparative statistics were conducted. That is, the means of the subjects' responses to each item in the second part of the questionnaire were calculated. Additionally, a *t* test was conducted to determine if statistically significant differences were evident between the subjects' responses of the two sample groups of the study.

The findings reveal that a high percentage of the students reported that they face reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language. The findings also show that most of the reading difficulties reported by the students were attributed to linguistic factors. On the other hand, the results, unlike what the researcher hypothesized, indicate that a large majority of the students have positive attitudes toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general.

DEDICATION

*To my dear parents, Ibrahim and Mariam Al-Arfaj, for their support, patience, and prayers.
To my wife, Norah, for her continuous help, encouragement, and understanding.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Reading in English is a complex process for native speakers, let alone for non-native speakers (Haynes, 1989). Regarding native speakers, Taylor and Hiebert (1994) state that "substantial numbers of students in our elementary and secondary schools have difficulties with reading" (p. 3). With regard to non-native speakers (ESL/EFL learners), Alderson (1984) reports that reading in a language which is not the learner's first language is a source of considerable difficulty.

Attempting to address the difficulty which children encounter in reading, Henson (1969) interestingly and convincingly wrote:

Little research has been done which investigates what factors in a child's life significantly affect his attitude toward reading and his ability to read. Rather than ask 'where is he?' the question we should ask is 'what caused him to be where he is?' An answer to this question may give insights both into understanding the problem of the reluctant reader and in preventing the reluctant reader of tomorrow. (in Steltenkamp 1992: 26).

Similarly, Haynes (1989: 11) rightly suggested that "to help second language readers to comprehend English text quickly and accurately, language teachers need a good understanding of where reading difficulties are apt to occur and what can be done in the short and long run to help students overcome these difficulties."

Therefore, in our endeavors to understand ESL/EFL students' reading and help them overcome the reading difficulties which they could face, we should ask the question: **What are the factors which cause reading difficulties for EFL/ESL students?**

Based on research findings and personal experiences, the researcher of this study proposes that the reading difficulties which ESL/EFL students encounter could be attributed to many sources or factors, such as linguistic factors (e.g., differences between L1 and L2 in writing system, alphabet, directionality of reading, phonology) and content schematic factors (e.g., L1 and L2 readers, affected by their different cultures, beliefs, traditions, and their prior knowledge, could comprehend a certain text differently). Furthermore, this researcher, like Prabhu (1990), suggests that EFL reading difficulties can be attributed to other influencing factors, such as learner-related factors (e.g., age, motivation, previous learning experience, attitudes toward L2 learning and culture), teacher-related factors (e.g., status, training, belief, skill), and factors related to teaching/learning environments, methods, and materials.

With respect to Saudi beginning EFL students, the researcher, based on his experience as an EFL student for about 15 years and as an EFL teacher for about 3 years in his home country, speculates that Saudi beginning EFL students face serious EFL reading difficulties which could be caused by a considerable number of influencing factors such as those mentioned above. Nevertheless, the researcher, in this study, will focus on investigating only some

of the linguistic, cultural schematic, and attitudinal factors that could cause reading difficulties for Saudi EFL students.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia: Overview

English as a foreign language was first introduced to Saudi public schools in 1937 (Jan, 1984). In public schools, Saudi students are taught English from the first year of their three-year middle school until the last year of their three-year high school. In other words, Saudi students learn English for six years, starting in the 7th grade and ending in the 12th grade. Throughout each grade level students are taught English for four periods a week, and each period lasts for 45 minutes.

The system of teaching English in Saudi Arabia, like the whole educational system, is centralized and controlled by the Saudi Ministry of Education. As a result, English teachers at each grade level are given an identical syllabus with guidelines and deadlines and required to apply and follow it. To insure similar teaching, the same EFL textbooks for every grade level are also assigned and distributed by the Ministry of Education to Saudi middle and high students all over the country (Zaid, 1993).

Concerning EFL Teachers in Saudi public schools, Zaid (1993) reports that 68% of EFL teachers are non-Saudis recruited from Arab countries, such as Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan. Dhafar (1986) found that most EFL teachers were not adequately qualified to teach English. He recommended that they take advanced courses in English to improve their performance in EFL teaching. In

addition, most EFL teachers in middle and high schools extensively use their native language, Arabic, in EFL classes (Al-Ahaydib, 1986).

With respect to EFL teaching methods, Zaid (1993: 13) points out that "students tend to memorize grammatical rules, passages of written English, and vocabulary to cope with the requirements for passing the grade level." He concludes that "the English teaching methods in Saudi classes are traditional, mostly following the Audio-Lingual Method" (p. 15). To give a clear picture of the whole setting, classrooms in the public schools are usually crowded with students, ranging from 45 to 55 in each classroom. On the other hand, English language labs (available in some schools) are rarely used by EFL teachers (Jan, 1984).

In conclusion, it might be worth noting that English is a required subject matter in some Saudi universities and optional in others. Also it is used as a main medium of instruction in most university departments of science and medicine. Furthermore, English is taught in most police and military academies as well as most technical and vocational institutes. In the end of this section, it might be also worth mentioning that co-education, for cultural reasons, is not allowed after the kindergarten stage in the Saudi educational system. As a result, there are separate governmental administrative offices and school buildings for males and females.

Statement of the Problem

The primary dimension of the problem is that many Saudi students persistently complain about the many problems and difficulties which they face in learning English as a foreign language. Confirming this complaint, several research studies (e.g., Jan, 1984; Al-Bassam, 1986; Zaid, 1993) reported problems relating to teaching and learning English in Saudi Arabia. These studies, which were conducted on Saudi students, also reported the weakness and low achievement of Saudi students in English. For instance, Jan (1984: 4) concluded that "the English proficiency and achievement of the majority of Saudi students is completely unsatisfactory and disproportionately low."

In a more recent study, The University Mirror (April 17, 1995), a newspaper published by Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, the Capital City of Saudi Arabia, presented a report entitled "Students' weakness in English-Why?"

In this report a number of English teachers and students were interviewed and asked about the difficulties which Saudi students encounter in learning English and how to find solutions for these language problems and difficulties. Some of the problems reported by the interviewees were: (1) the English curriculum mainly concentrates on teaching and learning a number of grammatical rules and a list of words just to pass the exam, (2) lack of English labs, and even if there are any labs they are not usually used by the teachers, (3) the English curriculum does not give the student the courage to practice English inside or outside the classroom, (4) most English teachers use Arabic

on a large scale in the English classes, (5) focusing on teaching English grammar or vocabulary and neglecting the other aspects of the language: speaking, listening, writing, and reading, and (6) the English textbooks do not concern about or relate to the students' needs and interests.

In summary, the interviewed English teachers and students agreed with the newspaper's premise that Saudi students are considerably weak in English and suggested some solutions for the issue at hand.

The other dimension of the problem is the fact that these studies discussed the difficulties and problems which Saudi students generally encounter in learning English including all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The problem is that such a general and broad discussion of the difficulties and problems which Saudi students face in learning English might not be adequately precise since each language skill has its own related problems and factors and circumstances affecting it. Consequently, the researcher felt that there is a strong need for investigating and discussing the difficulties and problems which Saudi students encounter in learning English in a specific but thorough way. So, the researcher decided to investigate difficulties related to learning one language skill, that is reading.

Significance of the Study

This study is a pioneering attempt to investigate and explore the Saudi male beginning EFL students' views and perceptions of the reading difficulties they encounter when reading English and the factors causing them. More

significantly, the study elicits its data concerning this issue (i.e., Saudi EFL students' reading difficulties) from the students themselves whom are rarely consulted or asked about how they view their own EFL learning and what worries or concerns them in learning English in general and EFL reading in particular.

Goals of the Study

The primary short- and long-term goals of the study are:

- Exploring the views and perceptions of Saudi male beginning EFL students concerning their English reading difficulties and the factors that could cause them reading difficulties.
- Investigating some of the cultural schematic, linguistic, and attitudinal factors which might cause reading difficulties for Saudi beginning students of English as a foreign language.
- Helping ESL/EFL teachers and institutions (e.g., English language centers, concerned educational organizations) understand some of the reading difficulties and factors which affect this type of EFL learners.
- Helping Saudi beginning EFL learners understand some of the reading difficulties which they could face in reading English as foreign language and to be aware of factors causing these reading difficulties.
- Offering implications, applications, suggestions, and recommendations that could help Saudi EFL students, ESL/EFL teachers, and concerned institutions overcome or at least reduce these reading difficulties.

Questions of the Study

Departing from the assumption, suggested by a great body of ESL/EFL reading research, that ESL/EFL readers encounter considerable difficulties in reading English as a second or foreign language, this study will try to answer the following questions:

1. Do Saudi male beginning EFL students think that they encounter EFL reading difficulties?
2. What are the views/perceptions of Saudi male beginning EFL students about the factors reported in this study that could cause reading difficulties for them?
3. What are the attitudes of Saudi male beginning EFL students toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general?
4. Are Saudi male beginning EFL students encouraged by their families and friends to read and learn English?
5. How do Saudi male beginning EFL students perceive their comprehension and speed when reading English?
6. According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the reading difficulties which they face when reading English as a foreign language?
7. According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the factors that may cause them reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language?

8. What are the suggestions and recommendations of the Saudi male beginning EFL students for improving their EFL reading?

Hypotheses of the Study

- H₀ :** There is no significant difference between the means of the responses of the middle school senior students and the high school senior students to the questionnaire items of this study.
- H₁ :** The middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study
- H₂ :** The middle school senior students encounter more English reading difficulties than the high school senior students.
- H₃ :** The middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study learning English in general.

Limitations of the Study

- This study was conducted on just Saudi male students due to the fact that co-education, for cultural reasons, is not generally allowed after kindergarten in the Saudi educational system. As a result, there are separate governmental administrative offices and school buildings for males and females. Thus, to conduct this study on Saudi female students, the researcher would have to hire and train female teachers (or helpers), which would be culturally difficult and financially expensive.

- This study was conducted on Saudi male middle and high school senior students in the **Al-Ahsa Educational District**. The reasons for selecting this district are:
 1. The researcher thought that carrying out his study on students in his own area would be more convenient, more accessible, and more relevant to him particularly after going back home and starting teaching in the area he belongs to.
 2. Due to the highly centralized nature of the Saudi educational system in which the same textbooks, teacher's manuals, teaching aids, amount of time of EFL teaching (four periods a week), and same teaching methods are used and applied in all Saudi male middle and high schools, the researcher assumed that students in the **AL-Ahsa Educational District** could be highly likely representative of students in the other districts of Saudi Arabia. In line with this assumption, Zaid (1993: 25) stated that Ministry of Education officials reported that the **Abha Educational District** is representative of the rest of the educational districts in Saudi Arabia.

Definitions of Terms and Abbreviations

◆ Terms:

- **Attitude:** is defined as a combination of feelings and behaviors related to a specific learning situation which serves as a major factor in the learner's receptivity to activities related to the learning situation (Thames and Reeves, 1994: 293).
- **Linguistic factors:** this cover term "**linguistic factors**" is used in this study to allude to linguistic or linguistic-related factors to which EFL reading difficulties might be attributed. More specifically, the researcher of this study, for organizational purposes, uses this term "**linguistic factors**" to cover the following aspects: L1 and L2 orthographic differences, directionality of reading, subvocalization, letter and word identification, and differences between L1 and L2 in terms of phonology.
- **Motivation:** is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to do a certain action or task (Brown, 1987).
- **Orthography:** is the writing system used in a certain language.
- **Schema:** is the background knowledge or information which the reader brings to a text (Barnett, 1989).
- **Subvocalization:** is the process of moving lips when reading a written text silently (Smith, 1988).

♦ **Abbreviations:**

- **EFL:** Stands for English as a Foreign Language.
- **ESL:** Stands for English as a Second Language.
- **FL:** Stands for Foreign Language.
- **HSS:** Stands for High School Students.
- **L1:** Stands for Native Language.
- **L2:** Stands for Target Language.
- **MSS:** Stands for Middle School Students.
- **SL:** Stands for Second Language.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

After an exhausting and long journey of search and investigation in Saudi and U. S. libraries and academic institutions, the researcher found no single study exploring the Saudi EFL students' reading difficulties, or their views about the reading difficulties they face and the factors that could cause them these reading difficulties. Thus, the researcher tried his best to review some studies that relate, directly or indirectly, to the scope of his study and that show the reader that there is research relevant to the questions and hypotheses stated in the first chapter. Generally, having reviewed a good deal of literature on L2 reading, the researcher thinks that there are few studies on the impact of attitudinal factors on EFL reading in particular.

At any rate, according to the literature on ESL/EFL reading, comprehension difficulties (poor or incomplete comprehension), reading speed difficulties (slow reading), and lack of motivation and interest in reading English as a FL/SL are assumed to be major problems affecting ESL/EFL students' reading. These problems or difficulties which EFL/ESL students may encounter in reading English could be caused by cultural schematic, linguistic, and/or attitudinal/motivational factors.

In this chapter, the researcher will review and discuss the literature concerning the following:

- Cultural schematic factors.
- Linguistic factors.
- Attitudinal/Motivational factors.
- Implications, applications, and recommendations.

Cultural Schematic Factors

A great deal of ESL/EFL reading research indicates that the reading comprehension difficulties, which most beginning ESL/EFL students face, can be basically attributed to schematic factors. Moreover, the literature proposes that the schematic factors have fundamental and essential effects not only on ESL/EFL students' reading comprehension, but also on their rate of reading speed since most ESL/EFL beginning students tend to slow down and re-read what they do not comprehend.

Schema or prior knowledge (that is already stored in memory) "is considered in current reading research as a crucial and significant factor in ESL reading comprehension" (Nelson, 1987: 404). Similarly, Barnett (1989) points out that "schema theory presently guides much second and foreign language reading research; it is the probably the most thoroughly explored theory" (p. 35). Furthermore, in a more recent work, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) stress that "... lack of schemata or the failure to activate an appropriate schema can significantly impair comprehension" (p. 96).

Types of Schema

One type of schema, or background knowledge, a reader brings to a text is called a content schema, which is the reader's prior background knowledge of the content area of the text. The other type is a formal schema, which is the reader's prior background knowledge of the structure or form of the text (Carrell, 1992; Barnett, 1989).

However, a large body of ESL reading research on both types of schema (content and formal) has shown that content schema is more important in affecting ESL reading comprehension than formal schema (Carrell, 1987; Floyd and Carrell, 1987). In a more recent article, Grabe (1991) reports that "content background knowledge has a major influence on reading comprehension" (p. 381). One of the components of the content schema is the part shaped by the students' background culture, that is, **cultural content schema**.

Abu-Rabia (1993) conducted a study on attitudes and cultural background and their relationship to reading comprehension in L2. This study addressed two questions regarding second language learning: (1) what attitudes do L1 students have toward L2 language and L2 culture; and (2) how do their attitudes and cultural background affect their L2 reading comprehension? The subjects of the study were Arab and Israeli ESL students. The study found that the instrumental motivation and the cultural content of texts were the strongest factors affecting reading comprehension in second language learning.

Steffensen, Joag-Dev, and Anderson (1979) demonstrate "that implicit cultural knowledge presupposed by the text and the reader's own cultural

background interact to make texts based on one's own culture easier to read and understand than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent text based on less familiar, more distant cultures" (in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1988: 80).

Carrell (1981) compared advanced Japanese and Chinese ESL students on recall of folktales from three different cultural sources: native culture (Japanese and Chinese), second culture (Western European/English), and completely unfamiliar culture (American Apache Indian). The findings of this study showed that the cultural origin of the text and the subject's prior familiarity or lack of familiarity with it affected the ESL subjects' judgments of the level of difficulty of the texts as well as their recall of information from the text.

In other studies on cultural schemata and their effects on ESL reading comprehension, Johnson (1981, 1982) reported that prior background knowledge of culture, specific information presupposed by a text affects reading comprehension of that text. More specifically, in Johnson's (1981) study, the results indicated that the cultural origin of a text has a greater effect on ESL reading comprehension than does linguistic complexity.

In the study (Johnson, 1981), Iranian intermediate to advanced level ESL students and American students read Iranian and American folktales in English. Subjects were tested on their reading comprehension through use of multiple choice questions on explicit and implicit information in the texts. The findings indicated that the Iranians performed better on the text from their native culture than on a text from American culture.

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In the same vein, Floyd and Carrell (1987) state:

...similar to Johnson's (1981) findings with more advanced ESL subjects, our results with these intermediate-level ESL subjects show that cultural background knowledge is more of a determining component of reading comprehension than is syntactic complexity (p. 103).

In a study conducted on Egyptian (Arab) students, Nelson (1987) found that students recall significantly more when reading passages from their own culture and that they usually prefer the articles and stories from their culture. She concluded that "culture as a component of knowledge and experience is a crucial factor in reading comprehension" (p. 424).

Interestingly, Nelson suggested that humor is cultural. In one of the stories students were asked to read, a young boy is repeatedly admonished by his mother for continually making mistakes while trying to buy the morning's breakfast beans. The Egyptian students said the mistakes of the dull-witted boy were humorous, and several pointed out that because there are numerous Egyptian jokes about beans, the beans signaled humor to them.

The American audience, on the other hand, felt sympathy for the boy and were unaware of the humorous significance of the beans. The reverse applied to the American folktale. Although the American evaluators reported laughing out loud at Pecos Bill's tale, the Egyptian students did not find the tale's style of humor funny at all.

In another study, a psycholinguistic analysis of the reading behavior of EFL proficient readers using culturally familiar and culturally unfamiliar expository texts was conducted (Malik, 1990). Malik proposes that whereas all

readers share some knowledge, it is culturally specific knowledge that differentiates cultural groups. He adds that:

In the process of reading, the textual information interacts with the reader's personal knowledge of the world, which in turn is conditioned by age, sex, race, religion, nationality, occupation - in short, his or her culture (Malik, 1990: 207).

After reviewing research studies on cultural schemata, LeSourd (1988: 13) convincingly argues that "such studies provide consistent indication that readers understand, remember, and enjoy their reading more when they possess relevant cultural knowledge." In addition, Carrell and Eisterhold (1988) indicate that one of the most obvious reasons why a particular content schema may fail to exist for a reader is that the schema is culturally specific and is not part of a particular reader's cultural background.

According to Barnett (1989), students facing unfamiliar cultural content may mistranslate or misinterpret it according to their own cultural perspective. Barnett also notes that for both second and foreign language readers, the cultural differences and distance inherent in any target language text can make the activation of appropriate schemata difficult.

Carrell, Devine, and Eskey (1988) included an article by Goodman in which he stated that "the common experience, concepts, interests, views, and life styles of readers with common social and cultural backgrounds will be reflected by how and what people read and what they take from their reading" (p. 13). Furthermore, Coady (1979) argues "that background knowledge becomes an important variable; we notice that students with a Western

background of some kind learn English faster, on the average, than those without such a background" (in Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, p. 84).

Kitao (1989) found a positive correlation between prior knowledge (schema) and reading comprehension. She points out that lack of an appropriate schema for a text hampers accurate comprehension. Kitao convincingly concludes that lack of appropriate schemata related to a text and/or inability to make use of the schemata "can be sources of serious problems in comprehension" (p. 17). Similarly, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) argue that ESL students may find a text uninteresting and difficult because it is based on "unfamiliar, culturally-determined assumptions." They add that "...lack of schemata or the failure to activate an appropriate schema can significantly impair comprehension" (p. 96).

Based on these cited studies, one might recognize the greatly influential role of the cultural content schema and its essential effect on reading comprehension in particular. Additionally, these studies show that lack of or unfamiliarity with the cultural content schema of a certain ESL/EFL text could cause reading comprehension difficulties.

Linguistic Factors

In this section, the researcher will shed some light on some possibly influential linguistic aspects, such as L1 and L2 orthographic differences (different L1 and L2 writing systems and alphabets), directionality of reading, subvocalization, letter and word identification, and differences between L1 and L2 in terms of phonology.

L1 and L2 Different Orthography

Arabic and English have different orthographic and alphabetic systems. These different writing systems could cause reading speed difficulty for the Arabic beginning readers of English as a foreign language, since they need more time than the native speakers or the Roman alphabet readers (i.e., Spanish) just to familiarize their eyes and brains with the new symbols.

According to the literature, Corcos and Willows (1993) report that "orthographic knowledge is highly correlated with reading ability" (p. 181). Haynes (1989) argues that one of the basic tasks for learners from different writing system backgrounds is learning to recognize the shapes of symbols in the new writing system. She adds that "this can be surprisingly difficult, even when there are only a few new symbols to be learned"(p. 19).

In reference to other studies done by Crothers, Suppes, and Weir (1964), Haynes notes that the correspondence between familiar letters and new sounds is mastered more quickly and leads to greater fluency than the correspondence

between visually confusable symbols and their sounds. She concludes that "writing system difficulties have a significant influence on the reading success of WS2 learners" (1989: 21).

Henderson (1984) conducted an empirical study with Arabic-speaking students. He began by comparing L2 readers of English – college-age native speakers of Arabic and Spanish – with native English-speaking American college students. Interestingly, Henderson found the Arabic group to read only half as fast as the Spanish group, with poorer comprehension, while the Spanish group also read significantly slower than the American readers. However, Henderson acknowledges that the performance differences between the groups could be due to other factors besides writing system interferences, since the Arabic readers were not only less familiar with the Roman alphabet and English orthographic system, but also less experienced with English in general and with academic study than the Spanish group.

Koda (1990) conducted a cross-linguistic experiment involving L2 learners of English with contrasting L1 orthographic backgrounds (Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, and English for native control). Some of her findings which are more closely related to this study demonstrate that L2 reading is "seriously impaired when essential phonological information is inaccessible" (p. 393). Koda concludes that "the study provides strong empirical evidence of L1 orthographic influence on cognitive strategies used in L2 reading" (p. 404).

In a related study, Haynes and Carr (1990) suggest that:

the three groups (Arabic, Spanish, and English) allow a comparison between readers for whom English orthography is brand new and readers for whom it is already familiar. That is, while Arabic L1 readers must learn a new writing system when mastering English, Spanish L1 readers are already experienced with the Roman alphabet and an orthographic system that is quite similar to English (p. 379).

To have an idea about what the literature on this area is talking about, let us take a look at the following table:

Table 1**Arabic, English, and Spanish alphabets**

Arabic Alphabet	English Alphabet	Spanish Alphabet*
ض ا	a p	a n
ط ب	b q	b n
ظ ت	c r	c o
ع ث	d s	ch p
غ ج	e t	d q
ف ح	f u	e r
ق خ	g v	f rr
ك د	h w	g s
ل ذ	i x	h t
م ر	j y	i u
ن ز	k z	j v
ه س	l	k w
و ش	m	l x
ي ص	n	ll y
	o	m z

*The Spanish alphabet is taken from the American Heritage Larousse Spanish Dictionary.

Without extensive thinking and by merely a quick look at the above table, one can easily tell that the Arabic alphabet is completely different from both the English and Spanish alphabets, which appear to be similar to a great extent. So this similarity and familiarity could quite likely facilitate the reading task of Spanish readers of English as a foreign or second language. Also, Spanish readers of English would not, presumably, spend much time in recognizing or familiarizing themselves with the English symbols (letters), since they are already familiar with an alphabet (Spanish) that is similar to the English alphabet. In contrast, this big difference between Arabic and English alphabets could hinder the reading speed of the Arabic beginning learners who have to learn the English alphabet from scratch.

L1 and L2 Different Directionality of Reading

Like Hebrew, Arabic is read from right to left (Haynes, 1989). This directionality of reading is completely the opposite of English which is read from left to right. These limitations on the eye-movements could be an affecting factor in slowing down the reading speed (Potter, 1984). Haynes (1989) suggests that unfamiliar writing systems may present difficulties with directionality. She adds that such differences between writing systems may have an impact on language learners.

Studies of Hebrew readers, who also read from right to left, have shown that "Hebrew readers show a large visual span to the left of eye fixation, while English readers perceive more letters to the right of the fixation point" (Pollatsek,

et al., 1981). Thus, directionality of reading could be a potential source of confusion for Hebrew and Arabic readers of ESL/EFL (Haynes, 1984). And this confusion may consequently result in slowing down the reading speed of these readers of ESL/EFL. To note the influence of the orthographic directionality on reading speed, look at the following Arabic, English, and Spanish paragraphs:

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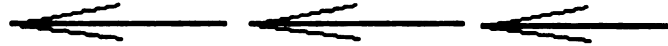
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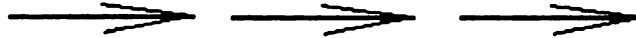
Right

**ARABIC**

النظام الصوتي للغة ما يحتاج الى تحليل دقيق كامل لخصائصها الصوتية وتشخيص واف لأهم مشكلات النطق والكتابة التي تواجه الدارس، مع تدريبه عليها. ومن ثم فإن هذه المرحلة هامة في دراسة اللغة، وإهمالها أو عدم إيفائها حقها يؤدي الى عيوب في النطق والقراءة، تتفاقم مع تقدم الدراسة وقد تؤثر على الكتابة ايضاً، ولا تنجح زيادة الساعات أو كثافة الدراسة في علاجها بعد ذلك.

Left

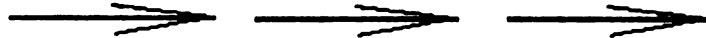
Right

**ENGLISH**

You're reading the advertisement: an offer like this isn't made every day. You read it and reread it. It seems to be addressed to you and nobody else. You don't even notice when the ash from your cigarette falls into the cup of tea you ordered in this cheap, dirty cafe. You read it again. "Wanted, young historian, conscientious, neat.

Left

Right

**SPANISH**

Lees ese anuncio: una oferta de esa naturaleza no se hace todos los dias. Lees y relees el aviso. Parece dirigido a ti, a nadie mas. Distruido, dejas que la ceniza del cigarro caiga dentro de la taza de te que has estado bebiendo en este cafetin sucioy barato. Tureleeras. Se solicita historiandor joven. Ordenado. Escrupuloso. Conocedor.

* English and Spanish paragraphs are taken from Feuntes (1988).

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From the above three paragraphs (Arabic, English, and Spanish) we can conclude that English and Spanish have the same directionality of reading and that Arabic explicitly has just the opposite directionality of reading. The similarity of directionality in English and Spanish would presumably facilitate the task of reading English as a foreign or second language for the Spanish-speaking learners. And this consequently could improve their reading speed. On the other hand, the dissimilarity of directionality between Arabic and English could negatively affect the task of reading English as a foreign or second language for Arabic-speaking learners. Consequently, this could hinder or slow down their reading speed.

Subvocalization

Subvocalization is saying the words to oneself while reading. This has been referred to by a list of different terms, such as silent speech, inner speech, inner articulation, internal talking, phonemic encoding, speech recording, silent reading, implicit pronunciation, and speech-reading parallelism (Carver, 1990). Smith (1988), Adams (1982), Agardy (1981), Ekwall (1981), and Fink (1982), all agree that subvocalization results in a slow rate of reading. In addition, Smith (1988: 143) indicates that "trying to sound out words without reference to meaning is a characteristic strategy of poor readers; it is not one that leads to fluency in reading." Adam (1982: 47) clarifies that:

It is believed that subvocalization is common at the grade school level because we are taught initially to read orally. But some readers do not lose this early practice as they progress through the grades.

Consequently, they continue throughout adulthood to move their lips while reading silently.

In addition, Smith (1988) suggests that subvocalization is an indicator of a reading difficulty affecting the reader. Furthermore, Smith (1988: 159) reports that "there is a general tendency to subvocalize when reading becomes difficult, when we can predict less." Thus, subvocalization can be another influencing factor in slowing down the English reading speed of Saudi EFL students.

Letter and Word Identification

Letter/word identification is another significant factor which could affect reading speed and comprehension as well. Smith (1988) and Weaver (1988) argue that fluent readers do not process words letter by letter. In addition, Stanovich (1986) points out that beginning readers may pay particular attention to the letters of the words they read. On the other hand, Weaver (1988) asserts that "the very poorest readers tend to read almost one word at a time" (p. 116). Similarly, Beattie (1994) reports that the goal of poor readers "is to complete reading all the words, not to understand the meaning of what they read" (p. 102).

At any rate, Agardy (1981), Carver (1990), and Ekwall (1981) consider this phenomenon as one of the bad habits which cause an individual's reading rate to slow down. It is assumed that "this habit is picked up in the first grade" (Agardy, 1981: 38). On the other hand, Corcos and Willows (1993) conclude that "orthographic knowledge applied to word recognition yields certain benefits: more accurate recall and faster lexical access" (p. 186).

L1 and L2 Different Phonology:

There are obvious differences between Arabic and English phonology. These differences could highly likely influence the reading speed of the Saudi beginning readers of English. For example, there is a number of sounds (phonemes) in English that do not exist in Arabic. As a result, it is clearly noticeable that many Arabic-speaking EFL/ESL learners of English have difficulty in reading or pronouncing some English sounds correctly, such as /p/, /r/, and /v/. This problem continues with many Arabic-speaking learners of English even at their advanced levels of English proficiency.

Barnett (1989) states that "unlike first language readers, most foreign/second language readers do not have a fully developed phonological system when they begin to read" (p. 27). In addition, Vellutino and Scanlon (1987) point out that phonological coding deficits constitute a major source of reading difficulty in beginning readers. They also add that semantic and syntactic deficits could cause such reading difficulty.

Furthermore, Corcos and Willows (1993) note that words which are easy to pronounce would positively affect the rate of reading. In a more recent study, Beattie (1994: 103) suggests that "the automatic ability to decode words allows the reader to focus attention on the meaning of the word/passage and not on the pronunciation of the word." The researcher also proposes that "an inability to decode will make comprehension much more difficult" (p. 103).

Haynes (1989:38) rightly concludes that:

Differences in Arabic and English phonology, such as difficulty of English vowels, lack of some English sounds, and lack of final consonant clusters in Arabic, could explain many misreadings by Arabic readers. These misreadings, in turn, could cause slow rate of reading, since these Arabic-speaking readers of ESL try to re-read and repronounce the letters (sounds) or words more accurately. And this obviously means taking more time in reading.

In conclusion, in addition to the above-mentioned linguistic factors that could cause reading difficulties for Saudi Beginning EFL students, the researcher – willing to offer as comprehensive and informative information as possible – would like to quickly draw the attention of those who are interested in studying linguistic factors and their possible effects on ESL and EFL readers that the literature suggests that differences between L1 and L2 morphology, syntax, and semantics could affect EFL readers. For example, Morphologically, Meara (1984) suggests that word length, frequency, and morphology may affect second and foreign language readers more than first language readers. Just and Carpenter (1987) propose that as words increase in length, they seem to take longer to encode. Furthermore, Kern (1988) notes that foreign and second language students repeatedly claim that lack of vocabulary knowledge is a major problem when reading.

Semantically, Barnett (1989) argues that second language readers tend to perceive target language text in terms of native language syntactic structure. She also adds "that knowledge of syntax appears to help readers predict and to read more quickly" (p. 55). Some of the main syntactical (grammatical) differences between Arabic and English are word order (in Arabic the word order

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is **VSO** while in English it is **SVO**), tenses, usage of prepositions and determiners (e.g., articles: *the, a, an*), and duality of pronouns (in Arabic).

Semantically, Gass and Selinker (1983) believe that differences between L1 and L2 in phonology, syntax, and semantics can interfere with L2 performances. Words can have different linguistic, social, and, most importantly, cultural dimensions in different languages. These dimensions can simply confuse EFL readers in trying to get the meaning of a word or a group of words. For instance, getting the meaning from some idioms (e.g., break out, take off) can be problematic for the Arabic-speaking beginning readers of EFL/ESL. Consequently, this confusion and uncertainty of meaning could make these Arabic readers slow in reading English.

At any rate, since this study has limits in terms of scope and time the researcher suggests that further research is needed to explore the effects of L1 and L2 different morphology, syntax, and semantics on EFL readers.

Attitudinal/Motivational Factors

The attitudinal/motivational dimension of second and foreign language learning has received considerable emphasis in the literature as a means of predicting language achievement and understanding the factors that influence second and foreign language learning (Ozkut, 1991). Stressing the importance of attitude, Baker (1992) reports that

For the moment, the suggestion is that, for over sixty years, attitude has repeatedly proven a valuable construct in theory and research, policy and practice. Topics from religion to race, sport to sex, languages to LSD have used attitudes as an important explanatory variable" (p. 10).

Relating attitude to language, Baker emphatically expressed that "In the life of a language, attitudes to that language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay or death" (1992: 10).

Research in this area shows a strong interrelationship between attitude and motivation, to the extent that both of them are sometimes used interchangeably (Al-Shammary, 1984). Al-Shammary pointed out that Hancock (1972) had drawn attention to the need and importance of clarifying the vague distinction between attitude and motivation. To further support his assertion that there is no clear-cut distinction between attitude and motivation, Al-Shammary cited Gardner and Lambert (1972) where they stated:

In the first place, our conception of attitude as an essential component of motivation is similar to that of Cook (1969) who, in an important theoretical paper, incorporates attitudes, values, and personal traits as motive-like constructs of major significance in determining behavior (p. 134).

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The Formation of Attitudes/Motivations

Rukspollmuang (1980) reports that attitudes/motivations are formed or influenced by a number of variables:

1. The attitudes expressed in the home, school, church, peer groups, and other places.
2. The ideas, facts, and attitudes expressed in books, movies, radio, and TV
3. Experiences, in terms of how pleasant or unpleasant they are.
4. A person's status in relation to others.
5. Self- or ego involvement.

Rukspollmuang also indicated that attitudes are dependent on a large variety of factors, such as age, sex, status, education, media, language, and cultural, social, economical, geographical, and climatic circumstances. Similarly, Baker (1992) suggests age, gender, school, ability, language background, and cultural background as possible determinants of language attitude.

Al-Shammary (1984: 55) points out that the achievement in second/foreign languages may contribute to the formation of positive or negative attitudes toward the language. Also, he suggests that positive or negative attitudes toward second/foreign language may affect achievement in the target language. In other words, Al-Shammary assumes that positive or negative attitudes toward the second/foreign language affect achievement, and achievement (whether good or poor) affects attitudes and can cause positive or negative ones. He concludes that "...achievement and attitudes can be the cause or the effect of one another" (p. 55). In line with this assumption that

achievement and attitudes can be the cause or effect of one another, Baker (1992) indicates that attitude can be an input or output. Giving an example, he suggests that a favorable attitude toward language learning could be a vital input in language achievement. Baker further explains that "In this sense, attitude is a predisposing factor, affecting the outcomes of education. Attitude can also be an outcome in itself" (p. 12). He concludes "Thus attitude serves a double function. It is an important concept as it provides a presage and a product variable, a predisposer and an outcome" (Baker, 1992: 12).

Attitudinal/Motivational Factors and Learning

A large amount of literature considers attitude/motivation to be an important factor in second and foreign language learning. For example, Hubbard (1975) argues that the affective domain (including attitude and motivation) "is moving into focus as a major component of the learning process, and in many instances the decisive factor." (in Surur, 1981: 35).

In a more recent study, Baker (1992: 37) notes that language attitude is a major factor in the learning and retention of second language skills. In addition, Ramage (1990) described language attitudes as "...the factors contributing to language loss and language retention" (in Baker, 1992: 36).

Brown (1987) suggests that negative attitudes can affect success in learning a language. He adds that "negative attitudes toward the people who speak the second language or toward the second language itself have been

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shown to affect the success of language learning in persons from school age on up" (1987: 51).

Similarly, Littlewood (1984) mentions that "if our attitude towards the foreign language and/or the foreign culture is negative, there may be strong internal barriers against learning" (p. 55). Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) report that attitudes have an important effect on second language acquisition (SLA). They also note that learners' attitudes can be affected by their parents, peers, the learning situation, teachers, and ethnicity. In conclusion, the authors quote Spolsky (1969) who states that:

In a typical language learning situation, there are a number of people whose attitudes to each other can be significant: the learner, the teacher, the learner's peers and parents, and the speakers of the language. Each relationship might well be shown to be a factor controlling the learner's motivation to acquire the language (p. 237).

With respect to motivation, Brown (1987) reports that " ... countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning" (p. 114). Similarly, Littlewood (1984) confirms that "in second language learning, as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres" (p. 53).

According to some researchers, motivation can be integrative or instrumental. An integrative motive is employed when learners wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves with and become a part of that society. Whereas, instrumental

motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as a means for attaining an instrumental goal, such as reading technical material, furthering a career, improving social status or meeting an educational requirement. They also propose that learners with integrative motivation are highly likely to achieve great language proficiency (Brown, 1987; Littlewood, 1984).

One of the pioneering and frequently cited studies in the literature is Gardner and Lambert (1972). The two researchers replicated their Canadian studies in two bicultural settings in the states of Maine and Louisiana and one monocultural setting in the state of Connecticut. The subjects were high school Anglophone students learning French as a second language. The researchers found that:

- 1) Students with a strong motivation and desire to learn French obtained high grades in French.
- 2) Students who expressed favorable attitudes relating to learning French were rated highly in their learning of French.
- 3) Integratively motivated students planned to continue studying French. Those who were not so motivated expressed their desire to withdraw from the program.
- 4) Parents' attitudes and encouragement had an influence on their children.

Hansen (1981) studied the attitudes of ninety-three SL students in three English programs at a college level. The findings of the study revealed that there was a relationship between the students' attitudes toward the second language community and their achievement in learning the English Language.

After reviewing the literature pertinent to attitudes and motivation in FL learning, Hancock (1972, in Susur, 1981: 13) reached the following conclusions:

- Various research studies have highlighted the central importance of attitudes as one of the factors contributing to success in mastering a foreign language.
- Attitude is a learned behavior, and consequently, can be changed from negative to positive by activities and experiences which are perceived to be meaningful by the learner.
- Many students have indicated a negative attitude or indifference to language study. A concerted effort will be necessary in the next few years to ascertain why students have negative reactions and to devise more effective means of fostering positive attitudes toward the study of foreign language and foreign cultures and peoples.

In connection with Hancock's conclusion concerning language attitude change, Baker (1992) suggests that: (a) attitudes change slowly and gradually over time, (b) "attitudes can change through activity which is self-directed and purposely planned, as well as through the need for security and status within a group and through societal demands" (p. 105), (c) "change may occur when it is felt to be voluntary" (p. 107), (d) change may occur when relationships between L1 and L2 individuals are close, warm, and friendly, and (e) change may occur when the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions are supportive. Moreover, in his conclusion, Baker (1992: 113) stated that "this chapter has spotlighted parents, community, peer groups, schools and mass media as examples of influencers of attitude change."

On the other hand, in a study conducted on Saudi high school female EFL students, Al-Bassam (1987: ix) stated that "... correlational analyses revealed that students' achievement in learning English significantly ($p < .025$) correlated with their attitudes, motivation, parental encouragement, and satisfaction with the English program." She found that the students with high attitudinal/motivational scores obtained higher achievement scores. Al-Bassam (1987) concluded that:

The findings of this study showed that attitude and motivation were major factors in language learning. Since attitude is learned behavior, and can be changed from negative to positive, the researcher proposed implementing a program to help create favorable attitudes toward learning English as a second language (ix).

Attitudinal/Motivational Factors and Reading

Since the previous section (Attitudinal/Motivational Factors and Learning) included talking about reading implicitly, this section reviews just some studies on attitude and reading specifically.

During the past 25 years, there has been increasing interest in the relationship between students' attitudes toward reading and their achievement in reading (Thames and Reeves, 1994). However, this increasing interest in investigating the relationship between students' attitudes toward reading and their achievement in reading does not seem to extend significantly to the ESL/EFL domain since there are few studies which have examined ESL/EFL students' attitudes toward reading and their achievement in ESL/EFL reading.

According to Thames and Reeves (1994), who conducted a study on readers' attitudes, the development of reading attitudes can be affected by major factors, such as self-concept, school achievement, school and home environment, socio-economic status, teacher attitudes and behaviors, parental attitudes, gender, individual interests, instructional strategies, age, and intelligence. Of these factors associated with reading attitude development, teacher and parental attitudes are relevant to this study.

In discussing the effects of teachers on their students' reading attitudes, the two researchers reported Brophy (1988), who found that teachers whose instructional delivery reflected holistic methods inevitably encouraged the development of independent interests which, in turn, produced positive attitudes toward learning (including reading). Thames and Reeves also report that "reading authorities agree that positive attitudinal changes are more likely to occur when reading selections are of interest to students" (p. 295).

With respect to the parental effects on their children's reading attitudes, Steltenkamp (1992) indicates that "there is a strong correlation between the home reading environment and student reading interest and achievement. Several studies have shown that students who come from active home reading environments will be likely to become active readers themselves" (p. 22).

One of the most interesting and relevant studies that Steltenkamp cited was Lampert and Saunders (1976), who attempted to find the significant factors causing a difference between the categories of 'reader' and 'non-reader'. The two researchers found that students who were categorized as 'readers' in the

study reported being read to more when they were young and also reported more books being brought into the home by their families. Lampert and Saunders conclude that "the basic distinction between 'reader' and 'non-reader' exists in attitudes toward reading rather than in their skills or activities" (In Steltenkamp, 1992: 12).

In his own study conducted to investigate the reading habits, attitudes, and experiences of a group of high school students, Steltenkamp found that the high-achieving readers had a positive and consistent home influence toward reading. He also reported that these readers "have found a similarly supportive reading atmosphere among their friends". In the end of his study, Steltenkamp (1992) concluded:

Clearly, research must continue to bear out that students' attitudes toward reading have an important bearing on their reading behavior. This study demonstrates the importance of developing positive reading attitudes early, and maintaining a consistent emphasis toward lifelong enjoyment of reading (p. 158).

Yochum and Miller (1993) examined children's reading difficulties from the perspectives of the children, their parents and their teachers. Forty children, their parents and their teachers participated in the study. One of the findings, relevant to this study, revealed that word identification, comprehension, and attitude/behavior towards reading were the three major problem areas reported by the participants of the study. The authors concluded that:

Since children learn both at school and at home, parents, children, and teachers all share responsibility for the child's learning. If parents and children are to work collaboratively with teachers, then a shared vision of

the child's literacy learning would seem essential (Yochum and Miller, 1993: 71).

After providing "fundamental assumptions" about reading: (a) reading is a constructive process; (b) reading is a lifelong pursuit; (c) reading must be strategic; (d) reading must be fluent; and (e) reading requires motivation, Beattie (1994) comments that "there is little motivation to read if there is no success or enjoyment in reading" (p. 103).

Abu-Rabia (1993) conducted a study on attitudes and cultural background and their relationship to reading comprehension in L2. This study addressed two questions regarding second language learning: (1) what attitudes do L1 students have toward L2 language and L2 culture; and (2) how do their attitudes and cultural background affect their L2 reading comprehension? The subjects of the study were Arab and Israeli ESL students. The study found that the instrumental motivation and the cultural content of texts were the strongest factors affecting reading comprehension in second language learning.

Implications, Applications, and Recommendations

Throughout the process of reviewing the literature on the factors and issues causing reading difficulties discussed above, the researcher of this study came across a great body of research dealing with implications, applications, suggestions, and recommendations related to teaching and learning reading that could greatly benefit ESL/EFL readers, teachers, textbook writers, and concerned educational circles and institutions. And to make the picture of this

chapter more thorough and comprehensive, the researcher would like to offer some of those implications, applications, suggestions, and recommendations presented in the literature.

Scarcella and Oxford (1992: 97) comprehensively and interestingly suggest that the general objectives of any ESL/EFL reading class must include the following:

1. motivating learners and making reading an enjoyable experience for all students;
2. providing students with the culturally relevant information needed to understand texts;
3. promoting an interest in different types of texts;
4. enlarging the students' vocabulary and providing them with strategies for increasing their vocabulary;
5. developing the students' strategies for reading diverse genres of English for different purposes effectively; and
6. teaching specific skills that increase the students' reading comprehension.

On the other hand, pedagogically, ESL/EFL reading teachers should be aware of the reading difficulties that the Saudi Arabic-speaking beginning EFL students could face when reading English. They also should explore the factors that might directly or indirectly cause those reading difficulties. Relatedly, Haynes (1989: 11) rightly suggests:

To help second language readers to comprehend English text quickly and accurately, language teachers need a good understanding of where

reading difficulties are apt to occur and what can be done in the short and long run to help students overcome these difficulties.

Thus, when teachers realize these difficulties facing this type of ESL/EFL readers and factors causing them, they (teachers) should try to find ways of helping students develop better reading strategies. For instance, encouraging students to read more quickly (Haynes, 1989), build more tolerance for uncertainty, and get or guess the meanings of new words from the contexts in which they appear (Weaver, 1988), skip unfamiliar words, and try to work out what the word is from its spelling or what might be called "identification by analogy" (i.e., all or part of the unknown word is compared with all or part of words that are known, Smith 1988: 143).

Teachers should also teach and direct such readers to use other useful reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning (Carver, 1990), using the hand as a pacer (Agardy, 1981; Fink, 1982), and reading without subvocalization (Smith, 1988; Agardy, 1981; Ekwall, 1981).

Furthermore, ESL/EFL reading teachers should be aware of those orthographic and linguistic factors causing reading difficulties for Saudi beginning EFL learners. Teachers should dedicate more time and more effort to teaching skills and using activities, exercises, and assignments dealing with (or involving) the English orthography and directionality. In connection with this issue, Haynes recommends that "teachers of reading should seek ways to facilitate acquisition of lower-level processes as well as focus on comprehension" (p. 12).

Stressing the importance of introducing orthographic knowledge in early reading learning, Corcos and Willows (1993) state:

To understand the role played by OI (Orthographic Information) in the course of reading acquisition, it is important to determine when and how OI is utilized by the young reader. Readers, as early as the first grade, show sensitivity to OI, which increases rapidly to the third grade and develops further, possibly to the sixth grade. This increase in sensitivity to OI also appears to correlate with reading ability rather than other factors relating to school (p. 176).

ESL/EFL reading teachers should also help their students overcome the habit of subvocalization. They should tell their ESL/EFL students that subvocalization could slow down their reading and affect their comprehension negatively (Smith, 1988).

ESL/EFL students should be taught that the meaning of a text can be understood without identifying all the words and that words are easier to identify in context than in isolation (Weaver, 1988). In addition, to identify words, Weaver suggests teaching how to use preceding syntactic and semantic cues to predict what might be coming next and how to use following syntactic and semantic context to confirm or correct what has been predicted.

Similarly, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) recommend that teachers should help students guess at meanings first by using context and that teachers can also assure students that they do not have to understand every word to understand the main idea. Furthermore, the two authors suggest encouraging ESL students to use narrow reading and mapping which can improve their reading comprehension. Scarcella and Oxford conclude that ESL/EFL reading

teachers should also encourage their students to read intensively, extensively, and purposefully.

In a more recent work, Krashen (1993) argues that:

the research in second language reading strongly suggests that free voluntary reading in a second or foreign language is one of the best things an acquirer can do to bridge the gap from the beginning level to truly advanced levels of second language proficiency (x).

Moreover, Krashen emphatically claims that free reading is a "powerful means of developing literacy, of developing reading comprehension ability, writing style, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling." In addition, he suggests that using pictures helps make input [i.e., reading] "more comprehensible" (p. 66).

Given the influential role of cultural content schemata in reading comprehension, there are obviously relevant implications, applications, and recommendations for the EFL/ESL learners and teachers. In the EFL/ESL classroom, teachers must be particularly sensitive to reading problems that result from the implicit cultural knowledge presupposed by a text. And, as Carrell and Eisterhold (1988: 83) suggested, "our immediate goal as EFL/ESL reading teachers is to minimize reading difficulties and to maximize comprehension by providing culturally relevant information."

Thus, teachers of ESL/EFL reading need to be aware of the important role of cultural content schemata in ESL/EFL reading. Floyd and Carrell (1987) suggest that the teachers of ESL/EFL reading need to be teachers of cultural content schemata. They (the teachers) must provide the student with the appropriate cultural schema she/he is lacking, and must also teach the student

how to build bridges between existing knowledge and new knowledge (Floyd and Carrell, 1987).

Carrell (1984) suggests that we can improve students' reading by helping them build background knowledge on the topic prior to reading through appropriate prereading activities. Giving some examples of activities, Carrell proposes that prereading activities can be in the form of lectures, viewing movies, slides, pictures, field trips, demonstrations, real-life experiences, class discussions or debates, plays, skits, and other role-play activities, teacher-, text- or student-generated predictions about the text, text previewing, introduction and discussion of special vocabulary to be encountered in the text, key-word/key- concept association activities, and prior reading of related texts (p. 334).

Additionally, Johnson (1982) concludes that "familiarity with a foreign culturally related topic, knowledge obtained from real experiences in the foreign culture, is effective for reading comprehension of a passage on that topic (p. 524).

Having provided an advance organizer (with sample story) to set the schema for a multicultural lesson, LeSourd (1988) reports that the use of advance organizers to establish missing schemata is a rational design for multicultural instruction.

When teaching readers from different cultural backgrounds, Carrell and Eisterhold (1988) recommended using the Language Experience Approach for the beginning readers. Also, they suggested using narrow reading, using texts

with local settings and specialized low-frequency vocabulary, and using Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). Carrell and Eisterhold, rightly, concluded that:

...a teacher who listens carefully and responds to a student's efforts will become aware of both the background knowledge and the cultural problems that students themselves bring to the text (p. 88).

Considering the strong effect that cultural schemata have on reading comprehension, special care should be given in selecting reading materials, particularly for foreign language readers with different cultural backgrounds. Teachers should be encouraged to develop their own reading materials using the students' background knowledge. In addition, writers of ESL/EFL materials and textbooks, as well as teachers, should focus on providing the ESL/EFL students with culturally relevant reading materials to facilitate their reading comprehension in particular and their learning in general (Kitao, 1989).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) convincingly argue that "when identifying appropriate reading materials, teachers need to consider whether they are authentic, attuned to their learners' second language proficiency levels, culturally relevant, and sensitive to their students' needs and interests" (p. 98). Additionally, Scarcella and Oxford recommend that ESL/EFL reading teachers choose authentic easy readings for their beginning ESL/EFL students.

After indicating that readings with unfamiliar cultural backgrounds (i.e., schemata) are more difficult to understand, Kitao proposes that in the ESL/EFL reading classes, teachers and materials developers should consider the findings related to reading and schema theory. Kitao (1989: 29) concludes that:

Familiarity of the background of materials should be a major factor in decisions about choices of reading materials, especially at lower levels of language proficiency.

In a similar vein, after indicating the need for materials related to the culture of the students learning the language, Nelson (1987) proposes that teachers working in non-English speaking countries can use materials from local English magazines and newspapers; English translations of short stories and folktales; Time, News Week, and ESL textbook articles on their host country, and Aramco World Magazine (for teachers in the Middle East).

Regarding language attitude and motivation, ESL/EFL teachers are recommended to be aware of and sensitive to their students' attitudes and motivation. They can help students develop positive attitudes toward reading through choosing reading materials that meet their students' specific needs and interests. And they also can implement an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) approach in which the language is taught according to the students' general academic fields. In this way, as Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) suggest, students' motives are attended to.

Thames and Reeves (1994) suggest that attitudes of poor readers may be positively influenced through instruction that includes trade books related to students' interests in an integrated language arts approach. They write that:

By using the student's interests to select reading materials and by providing holistic reading instruction which emphasizes the interrelationships between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, teachers may be able to change the attitudes of poor readers (p. 295).

Stressing the great effects of parents on their children's reading attitudes, Steltenkamp (1992) indicates that "there is a strong correlation between the home reading environment and student reading interest and achievement. Several studies have shown that students that come from active home reading environments will be likely to become active readers themselves" (p. 22). In his conclusion, Steltenkamp states that "this study demonstrates the importance of developing positive reading attitudes early, and maintaining a consistent emphasis toward lifelong enjoyment of reading" (p. 158).

Lampert and Saunders (1976), who attempted to find the significant factors causing a difference between the categories of 'reader' and 'non-reader', found that students who were categorized as 'readers' in the study reported being read to more when they were young and also reported more books being brought into the home by their families (In Steltenkamp, 1992: 12).

After examining children's reading difficulties from the perspectives of the children, their parents and their teachers, Yochum and Miller (1993) conclude that:

Since children learn both at school and at home, parents, children, and teachers all share responsibility for the child's learning. If parents and children are to work collaboratively with teachers, then a shared vision of the child's literacy learning would seem essential (1993, p. 71).

In a study conducted on Saudi female high school students, Al-Bassam (1987) found that parental encouragement and support significantly correlated with the students' achievement. That is, the students who received parental

encouragement and support had high achievement. As a result, the writer recommended that "parents should be involved in planning the extracurricular activities and asked to support and encourage their children to learn foreign languages" (p. 64). In addition, she suggested that making the objectives of studying a foreign language clear to students could help create a favorable attitude toward learning that language.

To improve the motivation of Saudi students in their EFL learning, Al-Ahaydib (1986) suggested that:

- Teachers should explain to their students the benefit and importance of learning English. He clarifies that "students who believe that foreign language study is important to their lives will work to achieve success" (p. 27).
- The EFL teacher should give students an opportunity to practice English in real life situations.
- The EFL teacher should avoid using monotonous and boring teaching methods.
- The EFL teacher should help students feel confident and appreciated through encouraging, praising, and respecting them in their learning process.
- The EFL teacher should make classroom and school bulletin boards and use them effectively and creatively. Posting articles and pictures of interest to students could stimulate them to read.

- **The EFL teacher should show that he is interested in the English language. Students tend to appreciate the teacher who likes and believes in what he teaches.**
- **The teacher should avoid giving difficult, dull homework that might intimidate students and make them lose interest in the subject matter as a whole.**

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methodological steps and procedures used in carrying out this study which was conducted to investigate the difficulties which the Saudi male EFL students think they face when reading English as a foreign language and factors causing their reading difficulties. This chapter includes the following sections:

- Development of the Questionnaire.
- Description of the Questionnaire.
- Description of the Items of the Questionnaire.
- Procedures For Conducting the Study/ Collecting the Data.
- Population of the Study.
- Questionnaire Administration.

Development of the Questionnaire

The primary stage:

Developing the questionnaire involved the following steps:

First, the researcher read some books and articles on research methods (e.g., Brown, 1988). Also, the researcher reviewed relevant studies which used questionnaires as instruments for collecting data. In designing the questionnaire, the researcher relied, to a great extent, on previously designed questionnaires . Of particular interest and relevance were those questionnaires used by Gardner and Lambert (1972), Jan (1986), Steltenkamp (1992), and Zaid (1993). From

these as well as other studies, the researcher chose several items to include in his questionnaire.

Second, after constructing the draft questionnaire for this study, copies of which were submitted to my advisor, doctoral committee members, and five Saudi graduate students majoring in English or education for their comments, suggestions, and feedback.

Third, the English draft of the questionnaire was translated into Arabic, the subjects' mother tongue. The main reason for this English-to-Arabic translation was basically to enable the Saudi Arabian sample population to clearly understand the content of the questionnaire and to answer the questionnaire items in Arabic more accurately and comfortably.

Fourth, the Arabic version of the questionnaire was reviewed by a Ph. D. Arab faculty member, who currently teaches Arabic classes in the Department of Linguistics at Michigan State University (MSU). Furthermore, this Arabic version of the questionnaire was given to the five graduate students mentioned above for their review and to make sure that the Arabic version accurately reflects the English draft of the questionnaire.

Fifth, the researcher tested the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire by administering it to 20 Saudi male middle and high school senior students. This pilot study was also intended to examine the face validity of the questionnaire.

Pilot study:

The Arabic version of the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 10 Saudi middle school students and 10 high school students. The subjects were requested to report on:

1. The time they needed to complete the questionnaire.
2. The clarity and comprehensibility of the items of the questionnaire.
3. Any comments on the questionnaire and/or any suggestions for improving it.

The results of the pilot study showed that the time which the students needed to complete the questionnaire was ranging from 30 to 50 minutes. Seven of the students reported that the questionnaire (consisting of 70 items) was long and that some of its items were not clear. And thirteen of the students reported that they clearly understood most of the questionnaire items. In response to the third request, eleven of the students gave their comments and suggestions. In general, this pilot study gave the researcher a good insight and good training on how to administer the questionnaire. Also, it gave him an idea about the approximate time needed for completing the questionnaire and the possible questions which could be raised by the real population of the study.

The final stage:

Based on the comments and suggestions of the main advisor, the committee members, the five graduate students, the Arabic professor, and the subjects of the pilot study and based on the researcher's close observation and follow up of all the above-mentioned steps, the English and Arabic versions of the questionnaire were remodeled. Here are the major suggested changes:

- 1) Writing and enclosing a letter to the student with the questionnaire.
- 2) Rewriting and adding to the questionnaire instructions.
- 3) Eliminating items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 19, 22, 31, 33, and 54 because they were unnecessary or they overlapped other items of the questionnaire.
- 4) Eliminating items 36, 59, 60, and 61 because they overlapped other items in the questionnaire and/or they were broadly stated.
- 5) Paraphrasing items 14, 18, 29, 42, and 67 to be clearer and more direct.

- 6) Replacing the statements of items 44, 50, and 53 with more relevant statements.

Description of the Questionnaire

The revised questionnaire (Appendix D) consists of three parts. The first part contains 5 items designed to collect demographic information relevant to the purposes of the study.

The second part of the questionnaire includes 46 statements and questions which are designed to elicit data about the subjects' opinions concerning EFL reading difficulties and some of the factors which might cause these reading difficulties. In this part, statements and questions are given and students are asked to select one answer from provided choices. More specifically, in items 6 through 40 students are asked to respond to each statement by selecting one of the following choices: 1) "Strongly agree", 2) "Agree", 3) "Disagree", and 4) "Strongly disagree." In items 41 through 46, students are asked to circle one answer from various multiple choices. In items 47 through 51, students are asked to respond to each question by choosing "Yes" or "No."

The third part of the questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first section includes three open-ended questions. In the first question, the subjects are asked about the reading difficulties which they believe they face in reading English. The second question asks the subjects to list the factors that, they think, causing reading difficulties for them. And in the third question the subjects are asked to write any suggestions or recommendations that they think could improve their EFL reading. The second section of the third part of the questionnaire gives the students a chance to comment on the study itself.

Description of the Items of the Questionnaire

The researcher designed and chose the items of the questionnaire to elicit information from the subjects. The purpose of this information is to answer the questions of the study and test its hypotheses. For example:

- ◆ Items 16 and 51 are intended to answer the first question of the study: Do Saudi male beginning EFL students think that they encounter EFL reading difficulties?
- ◆ Items 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 46, 47, and 49 are meant to answer the second question of the study: What are the views/perceptions of Saudi male beginning EFL students about the factors reported in this study that could cause reading difficulties for them?
- ◆ Items 6, 7, 20, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 43, 44, 45, 48, and 50 are meant to answer the third question of the study: What are the attitudes of Saudi male beginning EFL students toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general?
- ◆ Items 13, 14, 15, 23, 35, and 40 are meant to answer the fourth question of the study: Are Saudi male beginning EFL students encouraged by their families and friends to read and learn English?
- ◆ Items 21, 41, and 42 are meant to answer the fifth question of the study: How do Saudi male beginning EFL students perceive their comprehension and speed when reading English?

- ◆ Item 52 is meant to answer the sixth question of the study: According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the reading difficulties which they face when reading English as a foreign language?
- ◆ Item 53 is meant to answer the seventh question of the study: According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the factors that may cause them reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language?
- ◆ Item 54 is meant to answer the eighth question of the study: What are the suggestions and recommendations of the Saudi male beginning EFL students for improving their EFL reading?

Furthermore, the results of the students' responses to these items will be used to test the hypotheses of the study stated in the first chapter.

Procedures For Conducting the Study/ Collecting the Data

Since the major purpose of this study is to investigate Saudi middle and high senior students' perceptions concerning their EFL reading difficulties and factors causing them, the researcher decided to travel to the field of study in Saudi Arabia and collect data from there.

However, in order to go to Saudi Arabia and to conduct the study (i.e., to administer the questionnaire) there, certain official procedures were required to be done. For example:

- A UCRIHS form was completed and handed to the UCRIHS office. The approval for doing the study was granted (Appendix A).

- Two letters from the advisor and the researcher were sent to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington, D. C. explaining the nature of the study and seeking permission to carry it out in Saudi Arabia.
- The Saudi Cultural mission notified Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, the sponsor of the researcher in Saudi Arabia, about the researcher's intent of conducting the study in Saudi middle and high schools.
- Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University granted permission for the researcher to travel to the home country to conduct the study and collect the needed research data.
- Upon receipt of permission, the researcher and his family traveled to Saudi Arabia on January 15, 1995.
- An official letter from Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, requesting the Al-Ahsa Educational District Office to enable and help the researcher in conducting his study on middle and high senior students in Saudi public schools, was obtained and handed to the director of the Al-Ahsa Educational District Office. The Office informed the researcher that the final approval for conducting such a study in Saudi public schools must be attained from the Ministry of Education in Riyadh, the Capital City.
- To speed up the process of getting the approval for administering the questionnaire of the study to subjects in Saudi public schools, the researcher traveled himself to Riyadh and visited the Ministry of Education. After completing the required procedures, the researcher got the approval for doing his study in Saudi public schools (Appendix B).
- The letter of approval given by the Ministry of Education was handed by the researcher in person to the director of the Al-Ahsa Educational District Office. The director instructed the Department of Research and Evaluation at the Al-

Ahsa Educational Office to enable and help the researcher conduct his study in the Al-Ahsa District public schools:

- The Department of Research and Evaluation provided the researcher with lists of the middle and high schools belonging to the Al- Ahsa Educational District Office. After selecting seven middle schools and seven high schools randomly (through choosing at random from serial numbers on the schools' lists) by the researcher, the director of the Al- Ahsa Educational District Office gave the researcher official letters directing the principals of the randomly selected schools to enable and help the researcher to administer the questionnaire of his study to students in their schools.
- The researcher visited the selected schools, met and explained to the principal of each school the purpose of the study, and discussed and scheduled with them the appropriate time and place for administering the questionnaire to randomly selected junior students in their schools.

Population of the Study

The sample population of this study is composed of:

1. Seventy middle school senior students.
2. Seventy high school senior students.

Rationale for selecting the population of this study:

- a) The subjects at these two levels were selected to represent the two educational stages (middle and high school) at which English as a foreign language is officially taught in Saudi Arabia.
- b) Senior students at the middle and high school stages are assumed to be more mature and more aware of their EFL reading difficulties and factors causing them.

- c) In these two educational stages, the length of exposure to English is consistent (i.e., three years in middle school and three years in high school).

How subjects were selected:

When the researcher met the principals of the randomly selected schools, he asked them to provide him with the names of the senior students of their schools. After the principals provided him with the lists of the senior students' names, the researcher randomly selected ten students from serially numbered lists of 9th and 12th grade students enrolled in those selected schools. Furthermore, the researcher was arbitrarily choosing three to five students (e. g., student # 4, 9, 17, 26, etc.) from each 9th or 12th grade class in each school.

The total of the randomly selected subjects was 140 middle and high school senior students (70 students representing each selected grade). These seventy 9th grade and seventy 12th grade students were enrolled in 14 middle and high schools located in different cities, towns, and villages in Al-Ahsa District. The basic reasons for selecting 70 students to sample each group were:

- 1) Getting a large enough sample of population. Brown (1988) suggested that "...the samples are large..." when "N = 62 or more for each group" (p. 165).
- 2) Putting into consideration that some subjects would not be interested in participation or that some subjects would not respond to the questionnaire items fully.

Questionnaire Administration

To insure good questionnaire administration and to make sure that the subjects of the study would understand what was required of them, the researcher decided to administer the questionnaire in person. Additionally, attempting to make students psychologically content and secure when responding to the questionnaire items, the researcher told the principals of the selected schools that he alone would administer the questionnaire and that no teachers or staff should go to the place of the questionnaire administration.

After the random selection of subjects in each school, the researcher requested the principal of each school to allow him to use the school library or language lab for administering the questionnaire to the students. This request was granted in all selected schools. And the randomly selected students were sent to the school library or English language lab where the researcher was receiving and welcoming them. The researcher tried his best to create a friendly and an anxiety-free atmosphere for his subjects. He explained to the subjects that the major purpose of the study was to know the difficulties that they face when reading English as a foreign language and factors causing these difficulties. In addition, the researcher told the subjects that this study also aimed at helping them understand some of their EFL reading problems and reaching solutions and recommendations to overcome or at least reduce these reading problems encountered by them in particular and by Saudi EFL students in general.

Furthermore, the researcher told the students about the importance of their opinions and views. And the subjects were strongly encouraged to honestly and frankly express their opinions and views concerning their reading difficulties, factors causing them, and their suggestions for improving their EFL reading. To stimulate the subjects to express themselves honestly and frankly, the

researcher reminded them that their participation would have no effect whatsoever on their grades or standing in any class and that their responses and opinions would be kept confidential and be used by the researcher for his research only. And to further assure them, the researcher told the subjects not to write their names on the questionnaires given to them. Finally, after the researcher informed the subjects that they had the choice whether to participate or not in this study, he motivated them to participate by noting that their participation would contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning of English in Saudi Arabia.

The Arabic version of the questionnaire (Appendix C) was administered to a randomly selected sample population of 70 middle school senior students and 70 high school senior students. Each student was given a copy of the questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and how to complete it. For the sake of clarity, the researcher wrote the example given in the questionnaire on the board and explained to the students how to answer it by circling one of the choices which best expressed his opinion. The time that the students needed to complete the questionnaire ranged from 25 to 40 minutes during which the students turned in their copies of the questionnaire after they completed it and then were asked to go back to their classrooms.

In conclusion, it might be worth mentioning that the researcher's presence and conduct of his own study did not only put spirit in the process of the questionnaire administration and help clarify what the students did not understand, but also guaranteed the return of the questionnaires in good time (i.e., by the end of each questionnaire administration session). At any rate, the questionnaire administrations to the randomly selected students were completed on April 12, 1995.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS : PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter will present, analyze, and discuss the data collected from the questionnaires administered to a randomly selected population of middle and high school senior students. The main purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results of the analyses in a simple, clear, and meaningful way. To fulfill this purpose, the organization of this chapter will be as follows:

- Outcomes of the questionnaire administration.
- Statistical procedures for data analysis.
- Results of the first part of the questionnaire.
- Results of the second part of the questionnaire.
- Results of the third part of the questionnaire.
- Discussion of the questions of the study.
- Discussion of the hypotheses of the study.

Outcomes of the Questionnaire Administration

The researcher administered a survey questionnaire to a sample population of 140 subjects (70 middle school senior students and 70 high school senior students). The total of the questionnaires which were turned in to the researcher was 140. The researcher decided that any questionnaire including

three unanswered items or more would be disregarded in the process of analysis. After collecting and classifying all student questionnaires, the researcher found that out of the 70 questionnaires given to the middle school senior students to complete, 62 questionnaires were regarded valid. And out of the 70 questionnaires given to the high school senior students to complete, 64 questionnaires were deemed valid for the study. Among the remaining 14 questionnaires which were considered invalid, 2 were completely blank, 7 included 3 to 10 unanswered items, and 5 included more than 10 unanswered items.

Statistical Procedures For Data Analysis

After coding the subjects' responses (e.g., 1= Yes and 2= No), the responses were transferred to computerized data answer sheets. Using Statistical Analysis System (SAS), a computer program was designed by the Computer Center at King Faisal University for processing and analyzing the responses statistically. Final computer lists were compared with the data answer sheets by the researcher to make sure that the lists were free of errors. At this first stage of statistical analysis, the frequencies and percentages of the subjects' responses to each item in the first and second parts of the questionnaires were calculated by computer, whereas the frequencies and percentages of the third part (open-ended questions) of the questionnaires were analyzed manually by the researcher.

At the second stage of the analysis, the frequencies and/or percentages of the subjects' responses to each item in the first and second parts of the questionnaires were presented in various types of figures (charts) to be easily readable. For executing this process of presenting the frequencies and/or percentages of the subjects' responses in different charts, the researcher installed a new version of a Microsoft Excel program in his own PC, consulted a couple of instructors and friends having experience in using Excel, and attended some summer classes in using Excel at Lansing Community College (LCC).

At the third stage of analysis, other descriptive and comparative statistics were conducted. That is, the means of the subjects' responses to each item in the second part of the questionnaire were calculated. A *t* test was conducted to determine if statistically significant differences were evident between the means of the subjects' responses of the two sample groups (i.e., middle school students and high school students). These statistical tests were run at the Computing Information Center of Michigan State University using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results of the First Part of the Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire includes five items (1 through 5) designed to elicit demographic information concerning the subjects of the study. In this part, each subject was asked to give information about: 1) his age, 2) his grade level, 3) whether or not his father speaks English, 4) whether or not his mother speaks English, and 5) whether or not he has traveled to a country where

its people speak English as their native language. The results of the analyses of the responses to each item in this part are presented in the following figures.

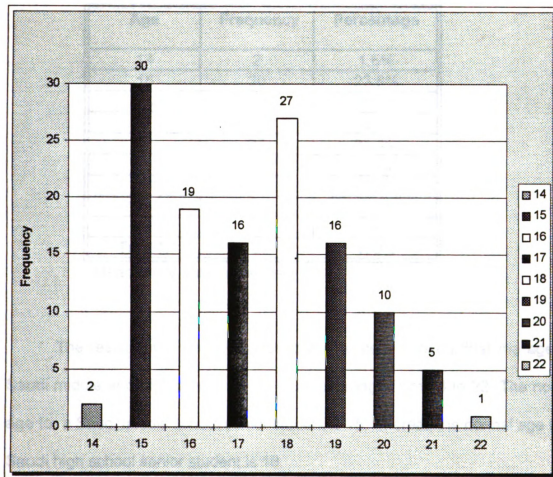
Figure 1**Responses to item 1: Ages of the subjects**

Table 2**Frequencies and percentages of the subjects' ages**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
14	2	1.6%
15	30	23.8%
16	19	15.1%
17	16	13.7%
18	27	21.4%
19	16	12.7%
20	10	7.9%
21	5	4.0%
22	1	0.8%
Total N	126	100%

Mean of the subjects' ages = 17.3

The results of the subjects' responses to item 1 reveal that the ages of Saudi middle and high school senior students range from 14 to 22. The normal age for a Saudi middle school senior student is 15, whereas the normal age for a Saudi high school senior student is 18.

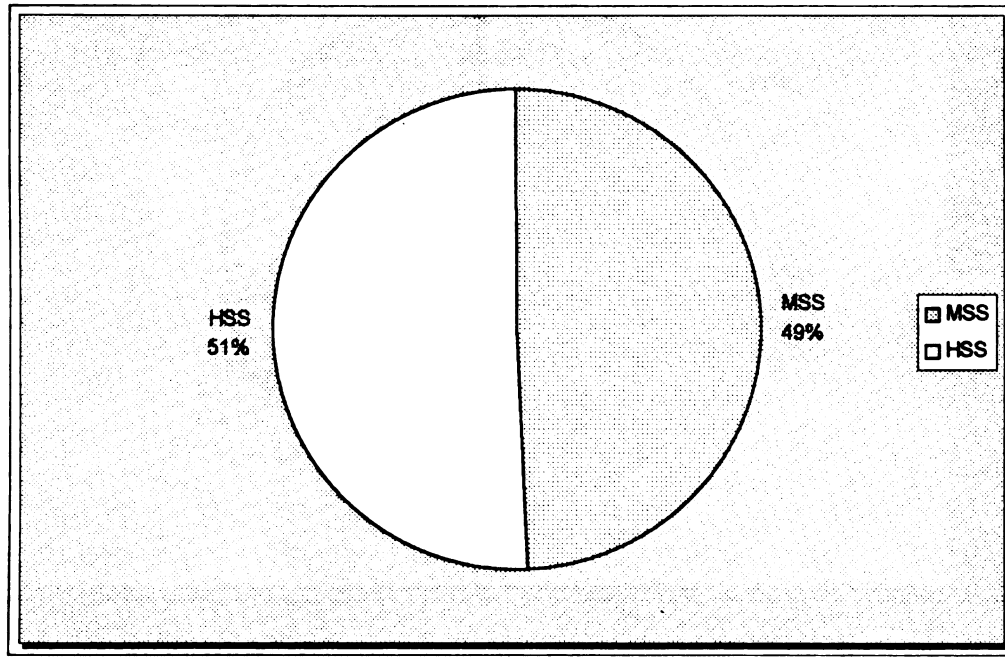
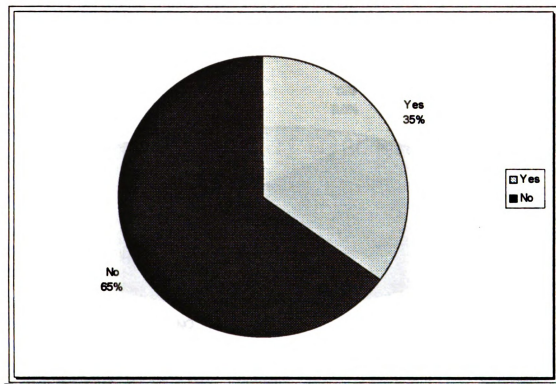
Figure 2**Responses to item 2: Grade level in school**

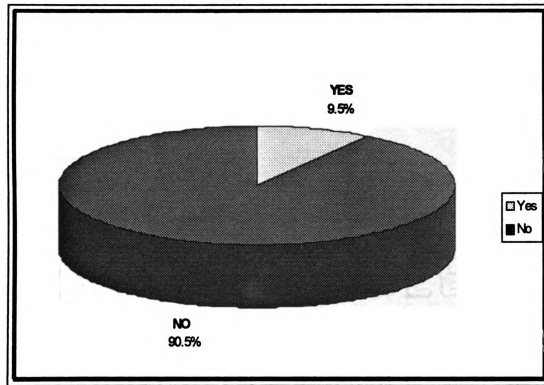
Figure 2 shows that 62 (49%) of the subjects of the study were **middle school senior students** and that 64 (51%) of the subjects of the study were **high school senior students**. The middle school senior students were randomly selected from seven middle schools in the Al-Ahsa district. Similarly, The high school senior students were randomly selected from seven high schools in the same district.

Figure 3

Responses to item 3: **Does your father speak English?**



Based on the students' responses, Figure 3 shows that 35% of the students' fathers can speak English, while about two thirds (65%) of the students' fathers can not speak English as a foreign language.

Figure 4**Responses to item 4: Does your mother speak English?**

According to the students' responses, only 9.5% of their mothers can speak English, whereas the majority (90.5%) of the students' mothers can not speak English as a foreign language. And this might be attributed to the fact that the majority of Saudi mothers prefer staying at home and taking care of their families and houses.

Figure 5

Responses to item 5: **Have you ever traveled to a country where its people speak English as their native language (such as U. S. or U. K.)?**

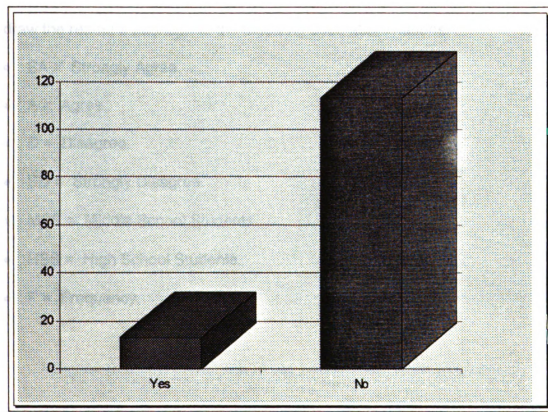


Figure 5 indicates that just (10%) of the subjects have traveled to a country where its people speak English as their native language (such as U. S. or U. K.), while the majority of the subjects (90%) have not traveled to a country where its people speak English as their native language.

Results of the Second Part of the Questionnaire

This part of the questionnaire included 46 items (6 through 51). The frequencies, percentages, means, and *t* test values of the students' responses to each item in this part are presented in the following figures and tables.

But, before presenting the figures and tables, the researcher would like to draw the reader's attention to the following used abbreviations:

- SA = Strongly Agree.
- A = Agree.
- D = Disagree.
- SD = Strongly Disagree.
- MSS = Middle School Students.
- HSS = High School Students.
- F = Frequency.

Figure 6

Responses to item 6: Reading in English is important.

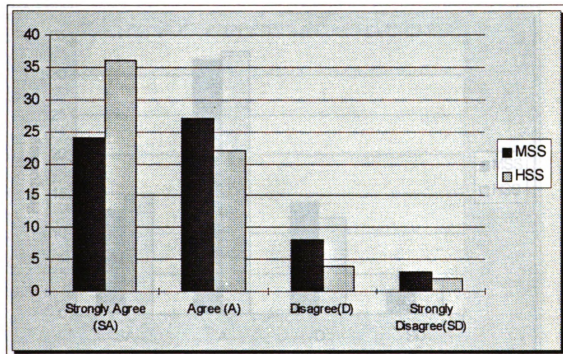


Figure 6 shows that 47.6% of the students **strongly agreed** that reading in English is important, and 38.9% of the students **agreed** with the statement. On the other hand, 9.5% of the students **disagreed** with the statement, while 4.0% **strongly disagreed** with the statement. Generally, the percentage of the students who responded positively (Strongly Agree and Agree) is 86.5%, whereas the percentage of those who responded negatively (Strongly Disagree and Disagree) is 13.5%.

Figure 7

Responses to item 7: **I like to read in English as a foreign language.**

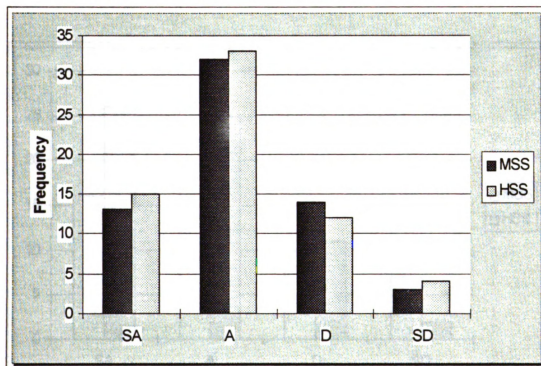
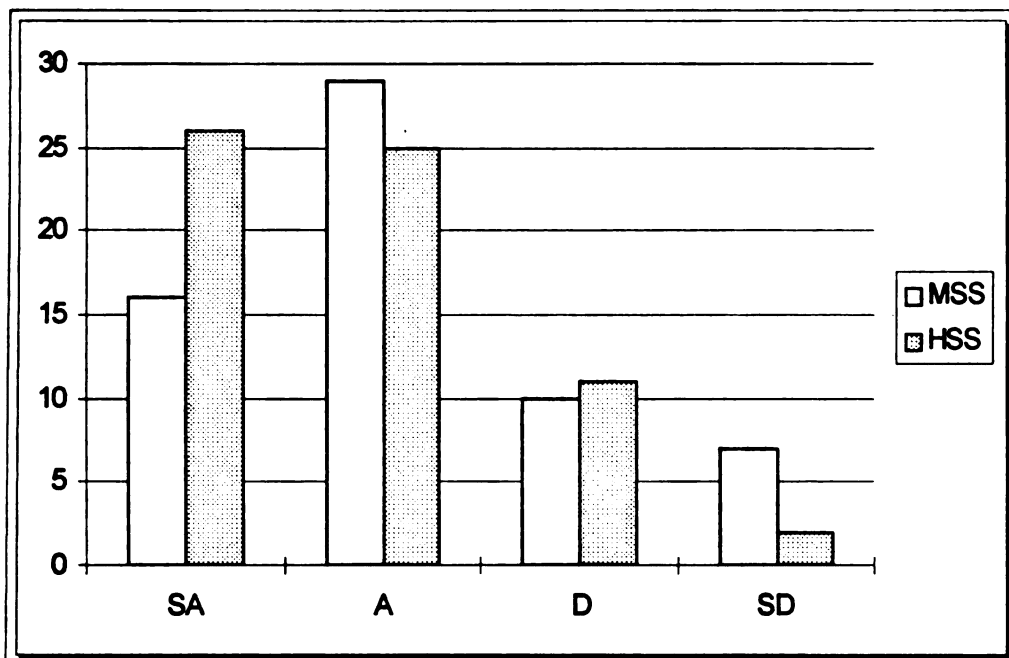


Figure 7 reveals that 22.2% of the students **strongly agreed** that they like to read in English as a foreign language, while 51.6% of the students **agreed** with the statement. On the other hand, 20.6% of the students **disagreed** with the statement, and 5.6% **strongly disagreed** with the statement. In general, the percentage of the students who responded positively (Strongly Agree and Agree) is 73.8%, and the percentage of those who responded negatively (Strongly Disagree and Disagree) is 26.2%.

Figure 8

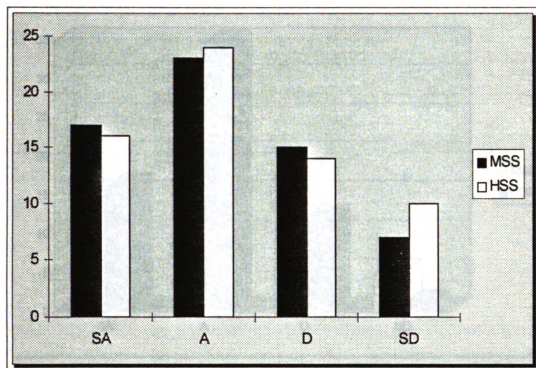
Responses to item 8: It is important to read every word in the English text that I want to read.



The results of the students' responses to item 8 indicate that 33.3% of the students **strongly agreed** with the statement, and 42.9% of the students **agreed** with the statement. While 16.7% and 7.1% respectively **disagreed** and **strongly disagreed** with the statement. Totally, more than three fourths, 76.2%, of the entire population of the study thought that it is important to read every word in the English text that they want to read.

Figure 9

Responses to item 9: Outside of school, I am seldom encouraged to read in English.



The results of the students' responses to item 9 show that 63.5% of the entire population of students expressed that outside of school, they are seldom encouraged to read in English.

Figure 10

Responses to item 10: When I read English silently, I notice that I move my lips and sound out what I read.

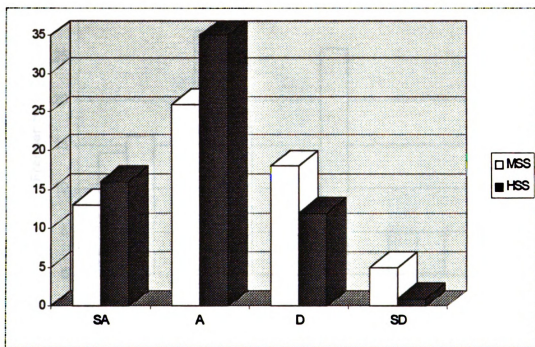


Figure 10 demonstrates that 71.4% of the subjects reported that they move their lips and sound out what they read when reading English silently. And this habit could be transferred to their English reading from their way in reading Arabic silently.

Figure 11

Responses to item 11: I usually do not read in English unless I have to.

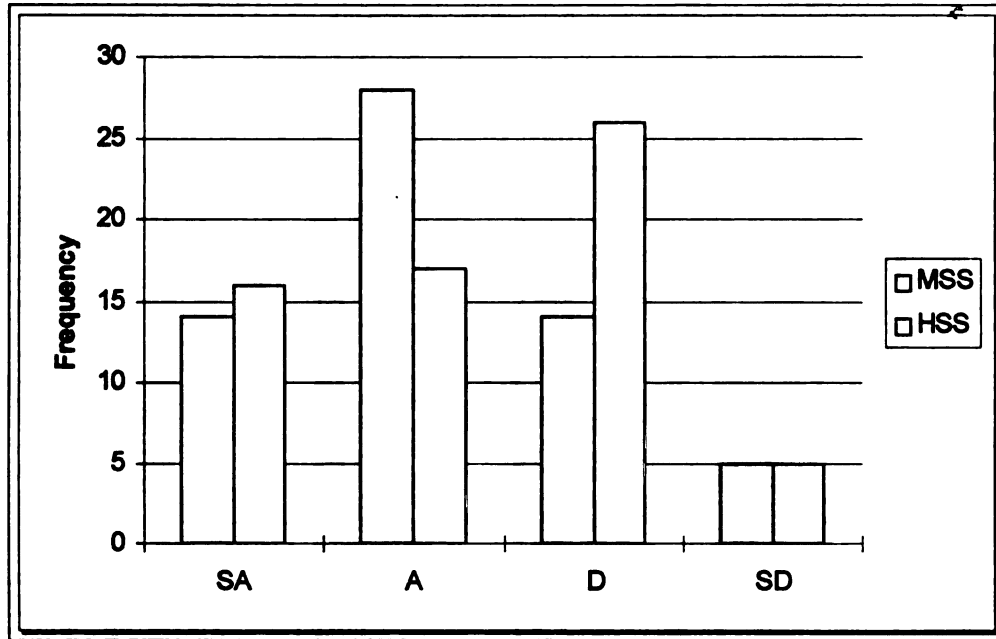
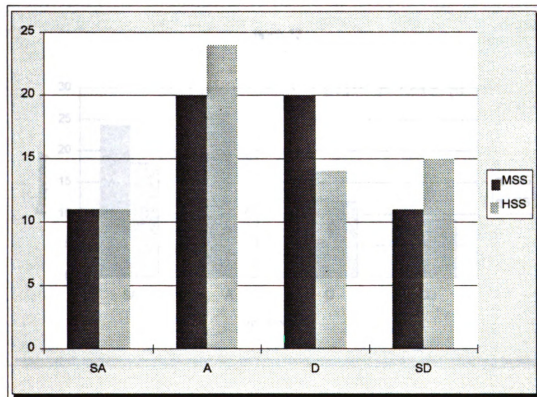


Figure 11 reveals that 60.0% of the students reported that they usually do not read in English unless they have to.

Figure 12

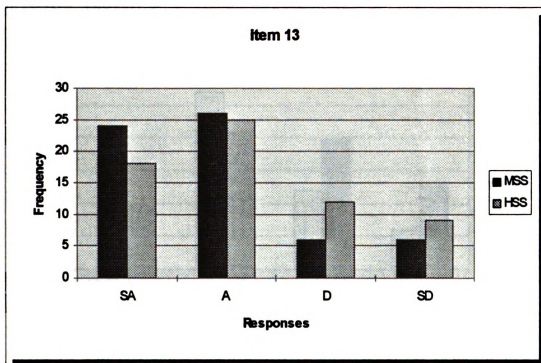
Responses to item 12: Not knowing the English cultural concepts causes me difficulty in comprehending what I read.



The subjects' responses to item 12 indicate that 52.4% of the subjects thought that not knowing the English cultural concepts causes them difficulty in comprehending what they read. This relatively low percentage can be attributed to the fact that several students did not understand and asked the researcher about what was meant by cultural schemata or concepts.

Figure 13

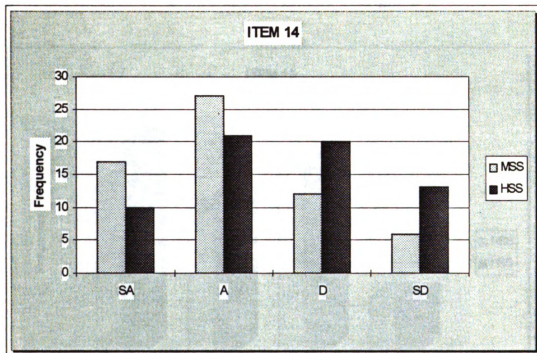
Responses to item 13: **My father encourages me to read in English.**



In Figure 13, 73.8% of the students mentioned that their fathers encourage them to read in English. On the other hand, 26.2% reported that their fathers do not encourage them to read in English. Generally speaking, it seems that more than two thirds of the students' fathers tend to encourage their children to read and learn English.

Figure 14

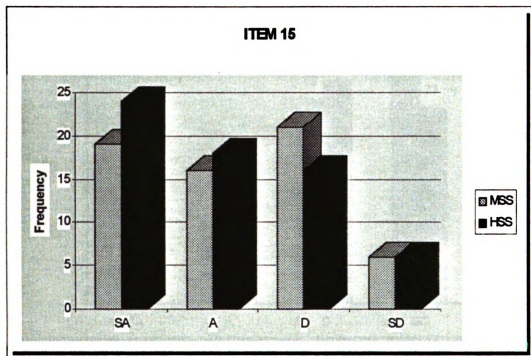
Responses to item 14: My mother encourages me to read in English.



The subjects' responses to items 12 indicate that 59.5% of the subjects reported that their mothers encourage them to read in English. The results of the students' responses summarized in Figures 13 and 14 reveal that fathers (73.8%) encourage their children to read in English more than mothers (59.5%) do.

Figure 15

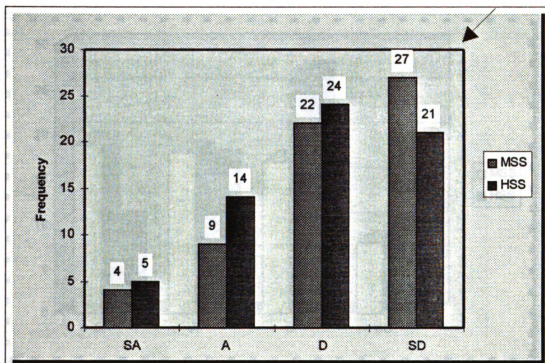
Responses to item 15: Members of my family (other than father and mother) encourage me to read in English.



In Figure 15, 60.0% of the whole population of the study agreed (including those who strongly agreed) that members of their families (other than fathers and mothers) encourage them to read in English. While 40.0% disagreed with the statement.

Figure 16

Responses to item 16: I face no difficulty in reading English as a foreign language.



The arrow points to the high number of students who responded negatively.

The results of the students' responses to item 16 show that only **25.4%** reported that they **face no difficulty** in reading English as a foreign language. Whereas a large majority, **74.6%**, of the students reported that they **face difficulty** in reading English as a foreign language.

Figure 17

Responses to item 17: I do not like to read in English, because I do not comprehend most of what I read.

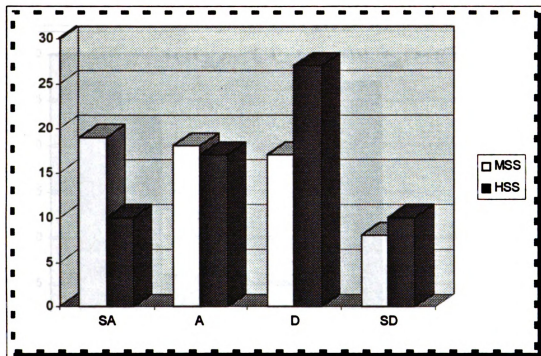
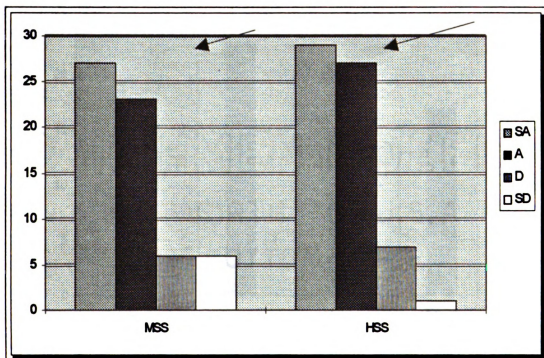


Figure 17 shows that about a half of the students, 50.8%, agreed with the statement, while the other half did not agree with it. These results might suggest that about one half of the students think that facing comprehension difficulties when reading does not negatively affect their attitudes toward reading English as a foreign language.

Figure 18

Responses to item 18: Not knowing how to pronounce what I read in English makes me upset.



The arrows point to the high number of students who responded positively.

The results of the students' responses to item 18 indicate that a high percentage of the students, 84.1%, expressed that not knowing how to pronounce what they read in English makes them upset. These results suggest that the majority of the Saudi students have pronunciation-related difficulties when reading English as a foreign language.

Figure 19

Responses to item 19: Facing difficult words when reading English does not affect my attitude toward reading.

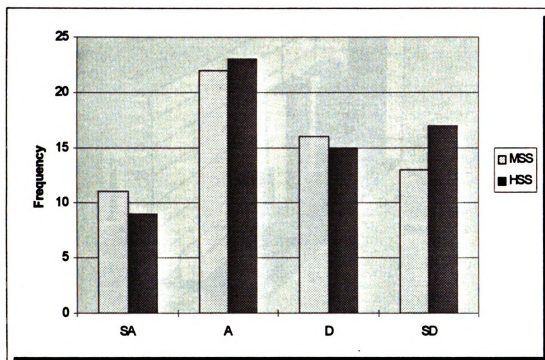


Figure 19 demonstrates that slightly more than a half of the entire population, 51.6%, thought that facing difficult words when reading English does not affect their attitude toward reading.

Figure 20

Responses to item 20: It is unimportant to be able to read in English.

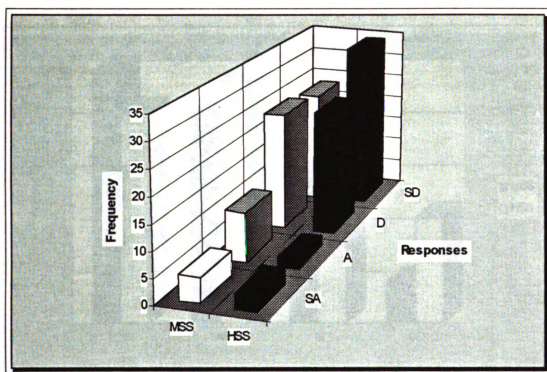
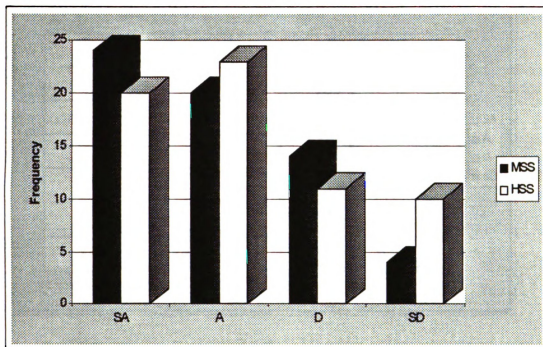


Figure 20 reveals that most of the students, 84.1%, refused that 'It is unimportant to be able to read in English.' On the other hand, only 15.9% agreed with the statement. These results suggest that a high percentage of the Saudi students recognize the importance of reading English in particular and learning English in general.

Figure 21

Responses to item 21: When reading in English, I feel it takes a lot of time and effort before I understand what I read.



The results of the students' responses to item 21 indicate that more than two thirds of the students, 69.0%, agreed with the statement: 'When reading in English, I feel it takes a lot of time and effort before I understand what I read.'

Figure 22

Responses to item 22: Reading English from left to right does not bother me.

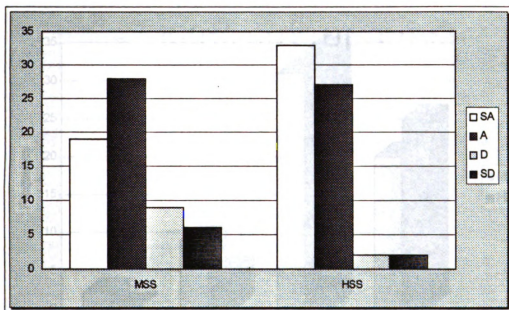


Figure 22 indicates that the majority of the students, 84.9%, reported that reading English from left to right does not bother them. While 15.1% (most of them were MSS students) disagreed with the statement.

Figure 23

Responses to item 23: My friends (or some of them) encourage me to read books and magazines in English.

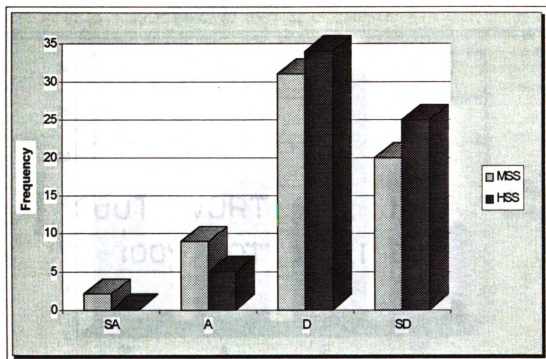


Figure 23 shows that a low percentage of the students, 12.7% agreed with the statement, whereas a considerable majority of the students, 87.3%, reported that their friends (or some of them) do not encourage them to read books and magazines in English.

Figure 24

Responses to item 24: I do not feel comfortable when I read in English, because its alphabet (letters) is different from the Arabic alphabet.

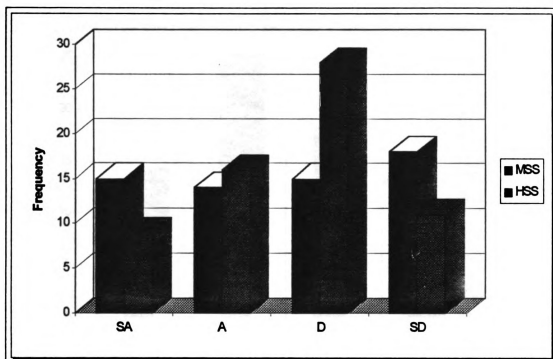
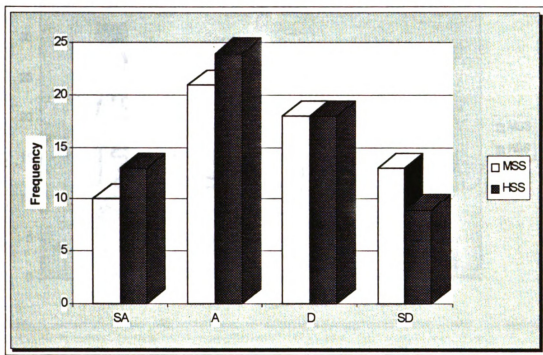


Figure 24 demonstrates that 42.9% of the students reported that they do not feel comfortable when they read in English, because its alphabet (letters) is different from the Arabic alphabet. This percentage is relatively high, putting in mind that these students have studied English for three years or more (middle school senior students have studied English for three years, while high school senior students have studied English for six years).

Figure 25

Responses to item 25: The comprehension difficulties which I face when reading English do not negatively affect my reading attitude.



The results of the students' responses to item 25 indicate that 54.0% of the population of the study thought that the comprehension difficulties which they face when reading English do not negatively affect their reading attitude.

Figure 26

Responses to item 26: **I have no problem in identifying and reading the English letters.**

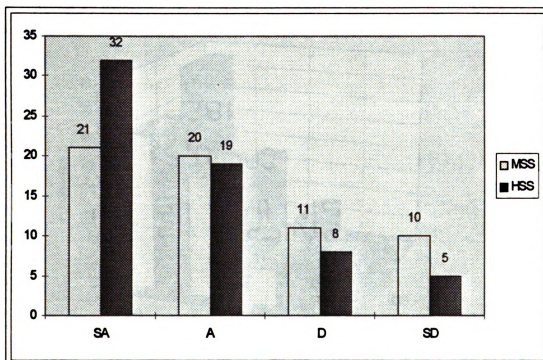
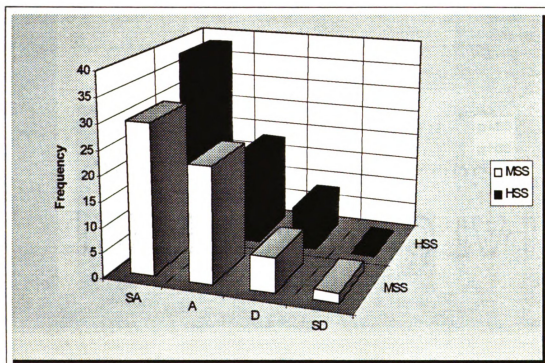


Figure 26 indicates that more than one fourth of the subjects, 27.0 percent, reported having problems in identifying and reading the English letters. On the other side, 73.0 percent reported that they face no problems in identifying and reading the English letters.

Figure 27

Responses to item 27: The passages and stories in the textbook should relate to our culture and experiences.



The students' responses to item 27 indicate that the majority of the students, 86.5%, expressed that the passages and stories in the English textbook should relate to their culture and experiences. On the other hand, only 13.5% of the students did not agree with the statement.

Figure 28

Responses to item 28: When I read in Arabic silently, I notice that I move my lips.

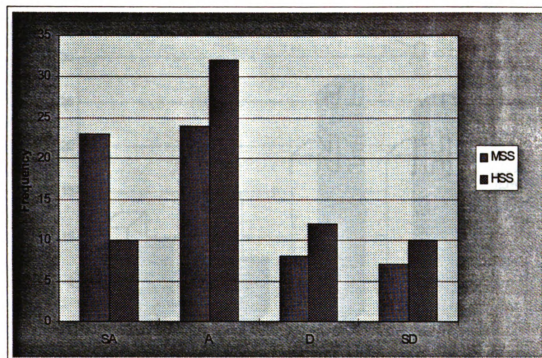


Figure 28 demonstrates that more than two thirds (70.6%) of the entire population of the study reported that they notice that they move their lips when reading in Arabic silently. Similarly, in Figure 10, 71.4% of the students reported that they move their lips and sound out what they read when reading English silently. These results show us the possible influence of the students' Arabic reading habits on their English reading.

Figure 29

Responses to item 29: I hate reading English due to reasons related to the English teacher.

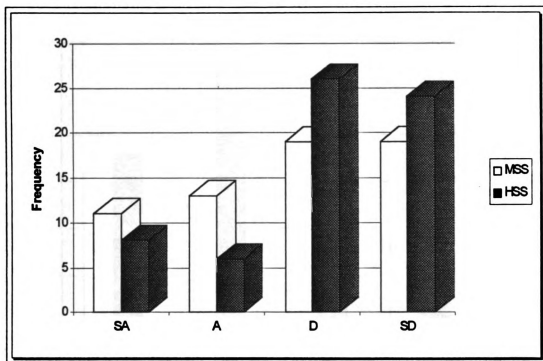
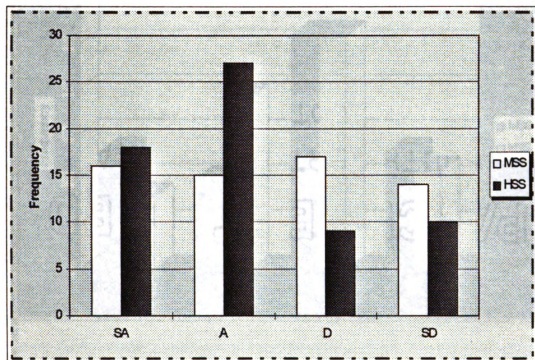


Figure 29 reveals that 30.2 percent of the students said that they hate reading English due to reasons related to the English teacher.

Figure 30

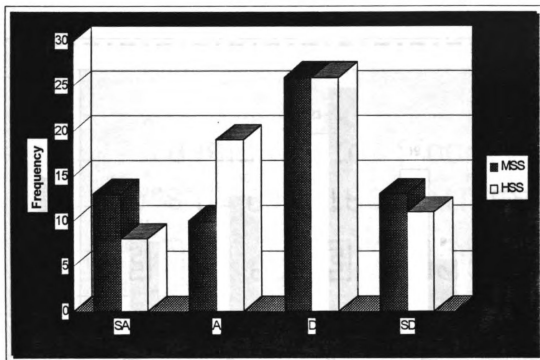
Responses to item 30: Our English teacher motivates us to do outside free reading in English.



The results of the students' responses to item 30 show that 60.3 percent of the students reported that their English teacher motivates them to do outside free reading in English.

Figure 31

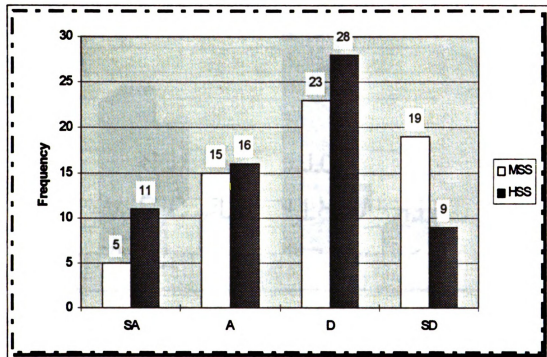
Responses to item 31: **I feel that reading in English is a tedious thing.**



In Figure 31, 60.3% of the students expressed that reading in English is not a tedious thing.

Figure 32

Responses to item 32: English grammar does not cause me difficulties when reading English.



The results of the students' responses to item 32 indicate that only 37.3 percent of the students thought that English grammar does not cause them difficulties when reading English, while about two thirds of the students, 62.7 percent, reported that English grammar causes them difficulties when reading English.

Figure 33

Responses to item 33: I like to learn English.

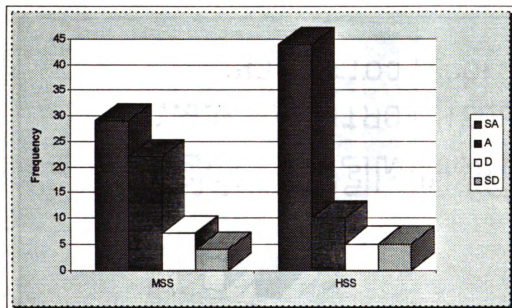
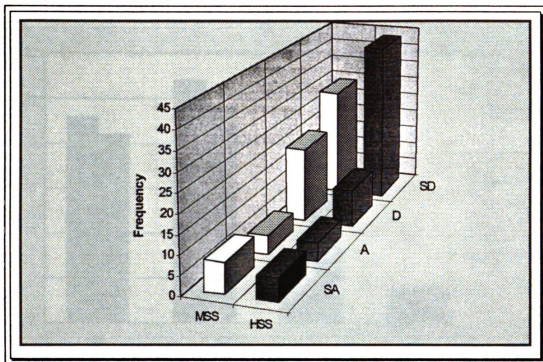


Figure 33 shows that a high percentage of the subjects, 83.3%, reported that they like to learn English. On the other hand, only 16.7% expressed that they do not like to learn English.

Figure 34

Responses to item 34: Learning English is not important.



The students' responses to item 34 indicate that 81.0% of the population of the study disagreed with the statement "Learning English is not important." In other words, this high percentage of the students think that learning English is important.

Figure 35

Responses to item 35: My parents (one or both of them) encourage me to learn English.

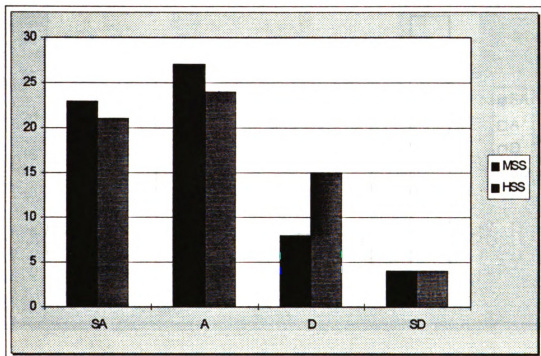


Figure 35 reveals that three fourths (75.4%) of the students' parents encourage their children to learn English.

Figure 36

Responses to item 36: **I dislike the idea of learning any foreign language.**

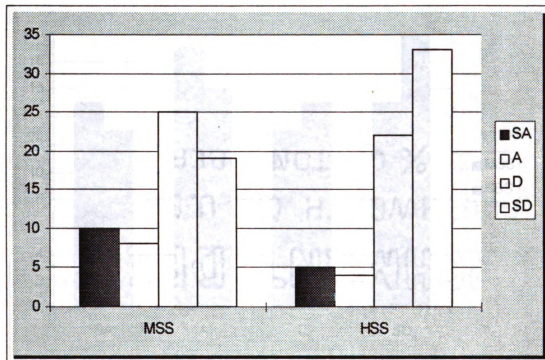
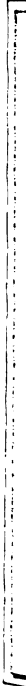


Figure 36 demonstrates that only 21.4 percent of the students agreed with the statement, whereas 78.6 percent of the students disagreed with the statement "I dislike the idea of learning any foreign language."

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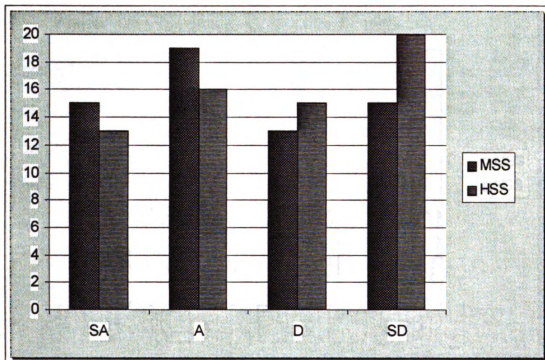


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Figure 37

Responses to item 37: I like to learn a foreign language other than English.



The results of the students' responses to item 37 show that one half (50.0%) of the students expressed that they like to learn a foreign language other than English, while the other half of the students responded negatively.

Figure 38

Responses to item 38: If it were up to me, I would never learn English.

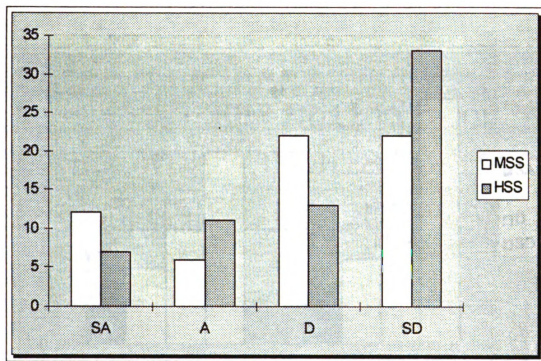
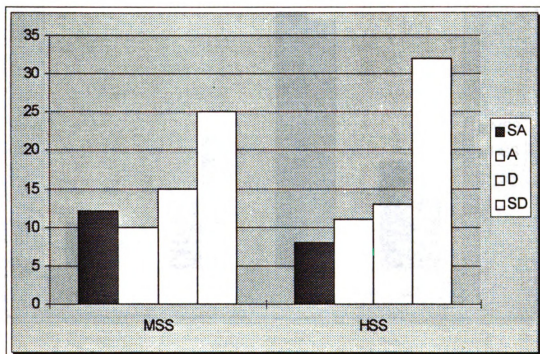


Figure 38 reveals that 28.6% of the students agreed with statement. On the other hand, more than two thirds of the students, 71.4% disagreed with the statement.

Figure 39

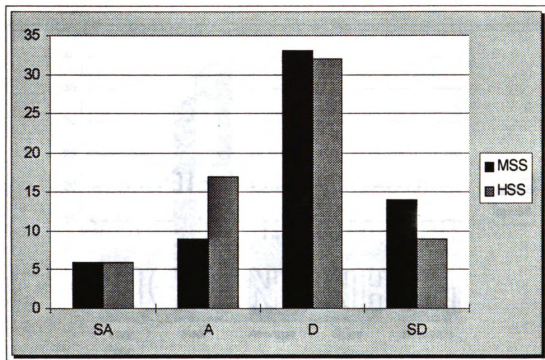
Responses to item 39: Passing the final English examination is more important than learning the language.



The students' responses to item 39 indicate that only 32.5% of the students responded positively.

Figure 40

Responses to item 40: My friends encourage me to learn English.



The results of the students' responses to item 40 strangely reveal that a majority of the students, 70.0 percent, reported that their friends do not encourage them to learn English.

Figure 41

Responses to item 41: As an EFL reader, my reading comprehension of what I read in English is:

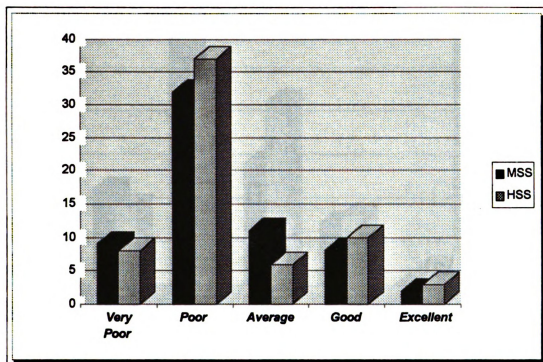


Figure 41 indicates that 13.5% of the students thought that their reading comprehension of what they read in English is "Very poor," 54.8% chose "Poor," and 13.5% selected "Average." On the other hand, 14.3% of the students thought that their comprehension of what they read in English is "Good" and only 4.0% of the students expressed that their comprehension of what they read in English is "Excellent." Generally, 68.3 of the students reported that their reading comprehension of what they read in English is poor.

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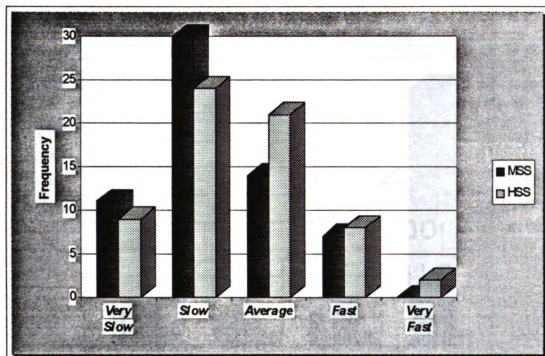
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Figure 42

Responses to item 42: As an EFL reader, the rate of my reading speed is:



The results of the students' responses to item 42 reveal that 15.9% of the students reported that the rate of their English reading speed is "Very slow", 42.8% of the students selected "Slow," and 27.7% chose "Average." Whereas 11.9% of the students selected "Fast" and merely 1.6% of the students thought that the rate of their English reading speed is "Very fast." In general, the results show that about 60.0% of the entire population of the students expressed that they are slow EFL readers.

Figure 43

Responses to item 43: Which of the following language skills do you think is the most important for EFL students to learn?

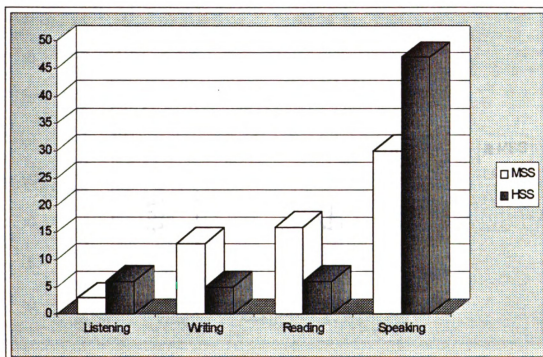


Figure 43 indicates that a majority of the students, 61.1%, responded that **speaking** is the most important language skill for EFL students to learn, while 17.5% of the students thought that **reading** is the second important language skill for EFL students to learn. 14.3% of the students viewed **writing** as the third important language skill, whereas 7.1% of the students thought that **listening** is the least important language skill for EFL students to learn.

Figure 44

Responses to item 44: Which of the following language skills do you think is the least important for EFL students to learn?

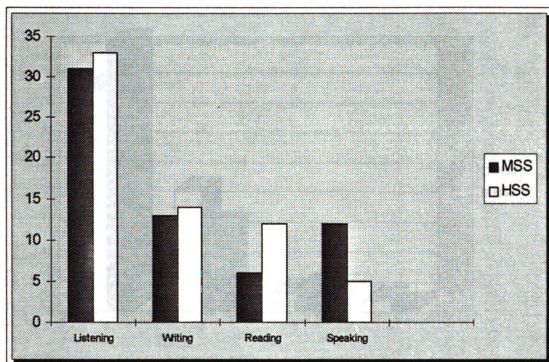


Figure 44 shows that a majority of the students viewed **listening** as the least important language skill for EFL students to learn.

Figure 45

Responses to item 45: How much do you read English for enjoyment in your spare time?

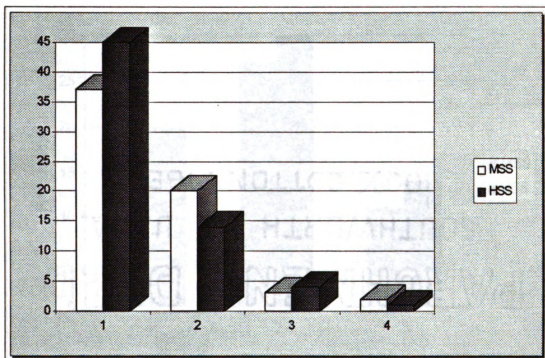
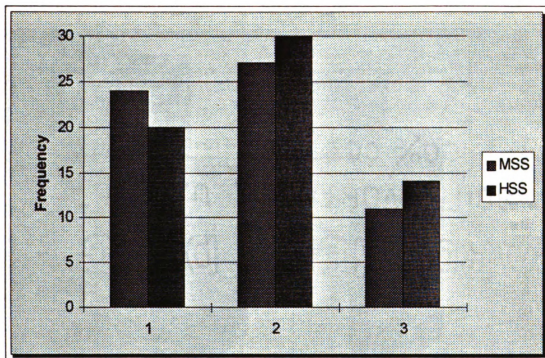


Figure 45 reveals that about two thirds of the students, 65.1%, selected choice #1: they "Never" read English for enjoyment in their spare time, 27.0% selected choice #2: they read "Less than 1 hour a week," 5.6% selected choice #3: they read "1-2 hours a week," and 2.4% of the students selected choice #4: they read English for "More than 2 hours a week."

Figure 46

Responses to item 46: What is the way which you follow when you read an English text?



Regarding the way which they follow when reading an English text, the results of the students' responses to item 46 demonstrate that 34.9% of the students selected choice #1: they "read (identify) the word letter by letter." And 45.2% of the students selected choice #2: they "read the text word by word," while 19.8% selected choice #3: they "read two words or more at the same time approximately."

Figure 47

Responses to item 47: Do you think that differences between Arabic and English in terms of cultural background knowledge could affect your reading in English?

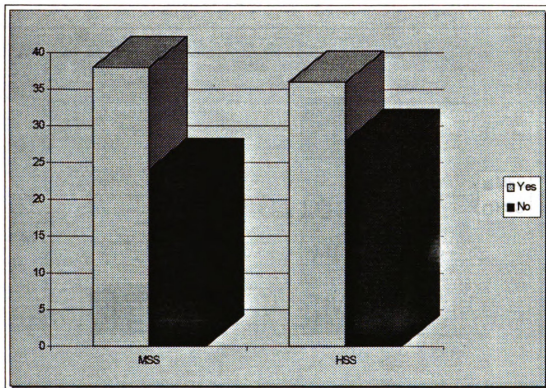


Figure 47 shows that 58.7% of the entire population of the students thought that differences between Arabic and English in terms of cultural background knowledge could affect their reading in English, whereas 41.3% of the students did not think that differences between Arabic and English in terms of cultural background knowledge could affect their English reading.

Figure 48

Responses to item 48: Does your home private library include non-academic English books and magazines that you find yourself interested in reading?

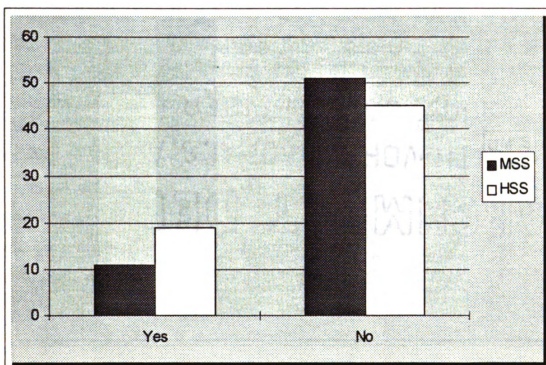
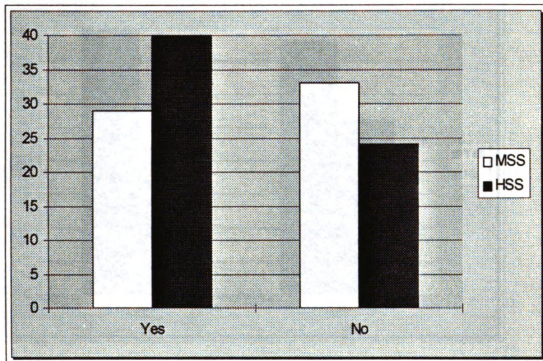


Figure 48 indicates that about three fourths of the students, 73.0%, reported that their home private libraries do not include non-academic English books and magazines that they find themselves interested in reading.

Figure 49

Responses to item 49: Do you think that home and friends have an effect on your attitude toward reading English as a foreign language?



The students' responses to item 49 reveal that 54.8% of the students thought that home and friends have an effect on their attitude toward reading English as a foreign language.

Figure 50

Responses to item 50: Have you studied English (including reading) for academic purposes only?

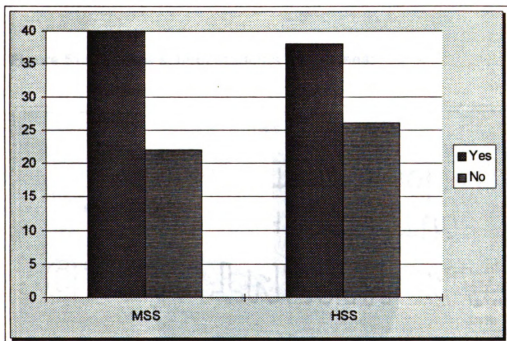


Figure 50 indicates that 61.9 percent of the students reported that they have studied English (including reading) for academic purposes only.

Figure 51 (a and b)

Responses to item 51: Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language?

Figure 51a. Middle school students' responses:

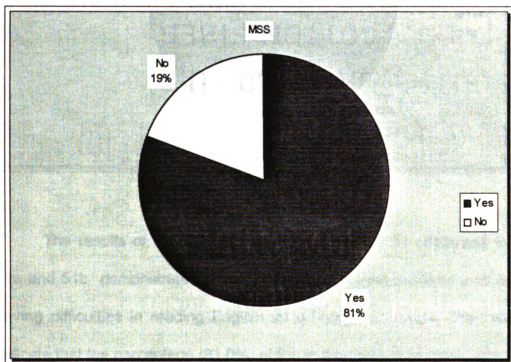
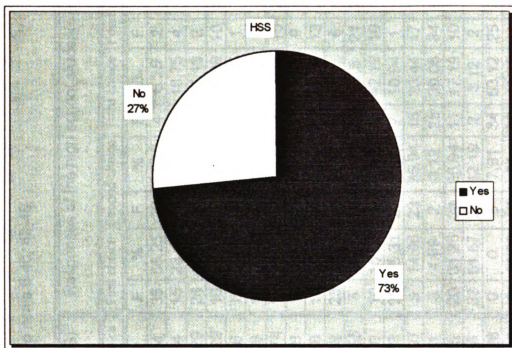


Figure 51b. High school students' responses:



The results of the students' responses to item 51 presented in Figures 51a and 51b demonstrate the high percentage of the students who expressed having difficulties in reading English as a foreign language. The results also indicate that the percentage (81.0%) of the middle school students, who reported that they have difficulties in reading English, is higher than the percentage (73.0%) of the high school students. In other words, the results suggest that the middle school students have more English reading difficulties than the high school students.

Table 3

Frequencies and percentages of the students' responses to items 6-40, 43-46.

Items	Responses of the middle school students (MSS)												Responses of the high school students (HSS)											
	First choice				Second choice				Third choice				First choice				Second choice				Third choice			
#	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Item 06	24	38.71	27	43.55	8	12.9	3	4.84					36	56.25	22	34.38	4	6.25	2	3.12				
Item 07	13	20.97	32	51.61	14	22.58	3	4.84					15	23.44	33	51.56	12	18.75	4	6.25				
Item 08	16	25.81	29	46.77	10	16.13	7	11.29					26	40.63	25	39.06	11	17.19	2	3.12				
Item 09	17	27.42	23	37.1	15	24.19	7	11.29					16	25	24	37.5	14	21.88	10	15.62				
Item 10	13	20.97	26	41.94	18	29.03	5	8.06					16	25	35	54.69	12	18.75	1	1.56				
Item 11	14	22.58	29	46.78	14	22.58	5	8.06					16	25	17	26.56	26	40.62	5	7.82				
Item 12	11	17.74	20	32.26	20	32.26	11	17.74					11	17.18	24	37.5	14	21.88	15	23.44				
Item 13	24	38.7	26	41.94	6	9.68	6	9.68					18	28.13	25	39.06	12	18.75	9	14.06				
Item 14	17	27.42	27	43.55	12	19.35	6	9.68					10	15.62	21	32.81	20	31.25	13	20.32				
Item 15	19	30.64	16	25.81	21	33.87	6	9.68					23	35.94	19	29.68	16	25	6	9.38				
Item 16	4	6.45	9	14.52	22	35.48	27	43.55					5	7.81	14	21.88	24	37.5	21	32.81				
Item 17	19	30.65	18	29.03	17	27.42	8	12.9					10	15.63	17	26.56	27	42.19	10	15.62				
Item 18	27	43.54	23	37.1	6	9.68	6	9.68					29	45.31	27	42.19	7	10.94	1	1.56				
Item 19	11	17.74	22	35.48	16	25.81	13	20.97					9	14.06	23	35.94	15	23.44	17	26.56				
Item 20	5	8.06	10	16.13	24	38.71	23	37.1					3	4.69	2	3.12	25	39.06	34	53.13				
Item 21	24	38.71	20	32.26	14	22.58	4	6.45					20	31.25	23	35.94	11	17.19	10	15.62				
Item 22	19	30.64	28	45.16	9	14.52	6	9.68					33	51.57	27	42.19	2	3.12	2	3.12				
Item 23	2	3.22	9	14.52	31	50	20	32.26					0	0	5	7.81	34	53.12	25	39.07				
Item 24	15	24.19	14	22.59	15	24.19	18	29.03					9	14.06	16	25	28	43.75	11	17.19				
Item 25	10	16.13	21	33.87	18	29.03	13	20.97					13	20.32	24	37.5	18	28.12	9	14.06				

Table 3 (continued)

Items	Responses of the middle school students (MSS)												Responses of the high school students (HSS)											
	First choice				Second choice				Third choice				First choice				Second choice				Third choice			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Item 26	21	33.87	20	32.26	11	17.74	10	16.13					32	50	19	29.69	8	12.5	5	7.81				
Item 27	30	48.38	23	37.1	7	11.29	2	3.23					38	59.38	18	28.12	8	12.5	0	0				
Item 28	23	37.1	24	38.71	8	12.9	7	11.29					10	15.62	32	50	12	18.76	10	15.62				
Item 29	11	17.73	13	20.97	19	30.65	19	30.65					8	12.5	6	9.38	26	40.62	24	37.5				
Item 30	16	25.81	15	24.19	17	27.42	14	22.58					18	28.13	27	42.19	9	14.06	10	15.62				
Item 31	13	20.97	10	16.12	26	41.94	13	20.97					8	12.5	19	29.69	26	40.62	11	17.19				
Item 32	5	8.06	15	24.19	23	37.1	19	30.65					11	17.19	16	25	28	43.75	9	14.06				
Item 33	29	46.78	22	35.48	7	11.29	4	6.45					44	68.76	10	15.62	5	7.81	5	7.81				
Item 34	8	12.91	5	8.06	20	32.26	29	46.77					6	9.38	5	7.81	10	15.62	43	67.19				
Item 35	23	37.1	27	43.55	8	12.9	4	6.45					21	32.81	24	37.5	15	23.44	4	6.25				
Item 36	10	16.13	8	12.9	25	40.32	19	30.65					5	7.81	4	6.25	22	34.38	33	51.56				
Item 37	15	24.19	19	30.65	13	20.97	15	24.19					13	20.31	16	25	15	23.44	20	31.25				
Item 38	12	19.36	6	9.68	22	35.48	22	35.48					7	10.94	11	17.19	13	20.31	33	51.56				
Item 39	12	19.36	10	16.13	15	24.19	25	40.32					8	12.5	11	17.19	13	20.31	32	50				
Item 40	6	9.67	9	14.52	33	53.23	14	22.58					6	9.38	17	26.56	32	50	9	14.06				
Item 43	3	4.83	13	20.97	16	25.81	30	48.39					6	9.38	5	7.81	6	9.38	47	73.43				
Item 44	31	50	13	20.97	6	9.68	12	19.35					33	51.56	14	21.88	12	18.75	5	7.81				
Item 45	37	59.67	20	32.26	3	4.84	2	3.23					45	70.31	14	21.88	4	6.25	1	1.56				
Item 46	24	38.71	27	43.55	11	17.74							20	31.24	30	46.88	14	21.88						

Table 4

Frequencies and percentages of the students' responses to items 41 and 42.

Items	Responses of the middle school students (MSS)										Responses of the high school students (HSS)									
	First choice		Second choice		Third choice		Fourth choice		Fifth choice		First choice		Second choice		Third choice		Fourth choice		Fifth choice	
#	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Item 41	9	14.52	32	51.62	11	17.74	8	12.90	2	3.25	8	12.5	37	57.81	6	9.38	10	15.62	3	4.68
Item 42	11	17.74	30	48.39	14	22.58	7	11.29	0	0.00	9	14.06	24	37.5	21	32.81	8	12.5	2	3.12

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Table 5

Frequencies and percentages of the students' responses to the items 47-51.

Items	Responses of the middle school students (MSS)						Responses of the high school students (HSS)					
	YES			NO			YES			NO		
#	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Item 47	38	61.29	24	38.71			36	56.25	28	43.75		
Item 48	12	19.35	50	80.65			22	34.38	42	65.62		
Item 49	29	46.77	33	53.23			40	62.5	24	37.5		
Item 50	40	64.52	22	35.48			38	59.38	26	40.62		
Item 51	50	80.65	12	19.35			47	73.44	17	26.56		

Table 6**Means and *t* test values of the subjects' responses to part two (items 6-51)**

Item #	Mean of the entire population	Mean of the MSS sample	Mean of the HSS sample	<i>t</i> test <i>p</i> < 0.05
6	1.6984	1.8387	1.5625	0.053
7	2.0952	2.1129	2.0781	0.809
8	1.9762	2.1290	1.8281	0.057
9	2.2381	2.1935	2.2813	0.622
10	2.1032	2.2419	1.9688	0.058
11	2.2400	2.1613	2.3175	0.340
12	2.5079	2.5000	2.5156	0.931
13	2.0476	1.9032	2.1875	0.103
14	2.3413	2.1129	2.5625	0.010
15	2.1349	2.2258	2.0469	0.324
16	3.0556	3.1613	2.9531	0.207
17	2.4048	2.2258	2.5781	0.047
18	1.7698	1.8548	1.6875	0.271
19	2.5635	2.5000	2.6250	0.495
20	3.2302	3.0484	3.4063	0.020
21	2.3968	2.4516	2.3438	0.567
22	1.8016	2.0323	1.5781	0.002
23	3.2143	3.1129	3.3125	0.110
24	2.6111	2.5806	2.6406	0.748
25	2.4524	2.5484	2.3594	0.283
26	1.9683	2.1613	1.7813	0.037
27	1.6111	1.6935	1.5313	0.231
28	2.1667	1.9839	2.3438	0.037
29	2.8889	2.7419	3.0313	0.121
30	2.3175	2.4677	2.1719	0.121
31	2.6270	2.6290	2.6250	0.982
32	2.7222	2.9032	2.5469	0.035
33	1.6587	1.7742	1.5469	0.168
34	3.2698	3.1290	3.4063	0.126
35	1.9603	1.8871	2.0313	0.365

Table 6 (continued)

Item #	Mean of the entire population	Mean of the MSS sample	Mean of the HSS sample	t test p < 0.05
36	3.0794	2.8548	3.2969	0.012
37	2.5556	2.4516	2.6563	0.308
38	3.0000	2.8710	3.1250	0.191
39	2.9683	2.8548	3.0781	0.267
40	2.7857	2.8871	2.6875	0.191
41	2.4048	2.3871	2.4219	0.849
42	2.4047	2.2742	2.5312	0.064
43	3.3254	3.1774	3.4688	0.092
44	1.9048	1.9839	1.8281	0.425
45	1.4524	1.5161	1.3906	0.324
46	1.8492	1.7903	1.9063	0.373
47	1.4127	1.3871	1.4375	0.569
48	1.7302	1.8065	1.6563	0.058
49	1.4524	1.5323	1.3750	0.077
50	1.3810	1.3548	1.4063	0.556
51	1.2302	1.1935	1.2656	0.341

Major Findings of the Second Part of the Questionnaire

After presenting the results of the students' responses in the previous figures and tables, the researcher would like to highlight the following major findings and comments:

1. The students' responses to items 1, 2, 20, 33, 34, and 38 reveal that a large majority of the Saudi subjects have positive attitudes toward reading and learning English as a foreign language.
2. The students' responses to items 13, 14, 15, and 35 show that the families who encourage their children to read and learn English are more frequent than those families who do not encourage their children to read and learn English.
3. The students' responses to items 23 and 40 reveal significant outcomes which should be investigated in further research. In item 23, 87.3% (the highest percentage in part two) of the subjects reported that their friends do not encourage them to read books or magazines in English. In item 40, 70.0% of the subjects mentioned that their friends do not encourage them to learn English.
4. Interestingly, in their responses to item 10, 71.4% of the subjects reported that they move their lips when reading English silently. Similarly, in their responses to item 28, 70.6% of the subjects reported that they move their lips when reading Arabic silently. This finding suggests that reading strategies and habits might transfer from L₁ to L₂.

5. The subjects' responses to items 12 and 47 (dealing with cultural schemata and their effects on comprehension) do not seem, to some extent, consistent with what the literature stressed nor what the researcher expected, since only about half of the subjects reported that lacking English cultural schemata could cause them difficulty in comprehending what they read in English. This relatively low percentage can be attributed to the fact that several students did not understand and asked about what was meant by cultural schemata or concepts.
6. The students' responses to item 18 indicate that a large majority (84.1%) of the whole population of the study reported problems related to pronouncing what they read. This finding seems consistent with what Haynes (1989) and Vellutino and Scanlon (1987) noted. Haynes (1989:38) interestingly concluded that "differences in Arabic and English phonology, such as difficulty of English vowels, lack of some English sounds, and lack of final consonant clusters in Arabic, could explain many misreadings by Arabic readers." Similarly, Vellutino and Scanlon pointed out that phonological coding deficits constitute a major source of reading difficulty in beginning readers.
7. The results of the students' responses to item 22 (dealing with reading directionality) show that 84.9% of the Saudi students expressed that reading English from left to right does not cause them difficulty. However, the results also indicate that there is a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.002$) between the responses of the 9th grade students and those of the 12th grade

students. That is, 76% of the 9th grade students reported that reading English from left to right does not cause them difficulty, whereas 94% of the 12th grade students reported that reading English from left to right does not cause them difficulty. All in all, according to the students' perceptions, reading directionality is not a major factor causing reading difficulties for them. And this finding does not appear to be in line with the previously presented literature on reading directionality.

8. Statistical analyses demonstrate that there is a significant difference ($p=0.037$) between the 9th grade students and the 12th grade students' responses to item 26, "I have no problem in reading the English letters." The percentage of the 9th grade students who reported that they have no problem in reading the English letters is 66%, while the percentage of the 12th grade students who reported that they have no problem in reading the English letters is 80%. This indicates that middle school senior students statistically significantly encounter more orthographic difficulties than high school senior students.
9. The results of the students' responses to item 27, "The passages and stories in the textbook should relate to our culture and experiences" reveal that a high percentage of the students —86.5%— agreed with the statement. Applicationally speaking, this issue should be put into consideration when writing or designing English textbooks for Saudi EFL Students.
10. Unlike what the researcher expected, only 30% of the students reported on the possible negative effect of their English teacher on their reading

attitudes. This low percentage shown in the students' responses to item 29 can be justified by the fact that the students – although they were repeatedly reminded by the researcher that nobody would read their responses except him—were probably afraid that their teachers might read or know about their opinions concerning them (teachers). This assumption is supported by the fact that several students told the researcher when and after turning in their questionnaires that their English teachers were the main reasons for making them (students) dislike English.

11. The results of the students' responses to item 32 indicate that 62.7% of the entire population of the study reported that the English grammar causes them difficulties when reading English. Nevertheless, there is a statistically significant difference ($p= 0.035$) between the middle school students' responses and the high school students' responses. This difference shows that the middle school students face more grammar-related difficulties than the high school students.

12. In their responses to the statement, "I dislike the idea of learning any foreign language", only 21% of the students agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 79% of the students disagreed. The results also demonstrate that there is a statistically significant difference ($p= 0.012$) between the middle school students' responses and the high school students' responses. That is, the high school students are significantly more in favor of learning any foreign language than the middle school students. And this could be attributed to the assumption that high school students are more mature and more aware of

the importance of and need for learning other foreign languages (e.g., English) for their future study or job.

13. The results of the students' responses to items 43 and 44 suggest that the Saudi students believe that speaking is the most important language skill to learn. Reading is ranked by the students as the second important language skill to learn, thirdly writing, and fourthly listening as the least important language skill to learn. Pedagogically, teachers should meet the students' views and concerns and apply more interactive and communicative activities in their classrooms.
14. The students' responses to item 50, "Have you studied English (including reading) for academic purposes only" indicate that 62% of the subjects study English for academic purposes only. Motivationally speaking, this finding implies that about two-thirds of the students are instrumentally (not integratively) motivated to learn English.
15. The results indicate that the majority of the subjects of the study think they encounter reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language. For instance, in their response to item 51, which asked the subjects: 'Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language', 81% of the middle school senior students and 73% of the high school senior students answered 'Yes.' These results also indicate that the middle school senior students face more EFL reading difficulties than the high school senior students.

16. Table 6 indicates that there are statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the middle school students' responses and the high school students' responses to items: 14, 17, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, and 36.

Results of the Third Part of the Questionnaire

In section one of the third part, the subjects were asked three open-ended questions. The first question was: What are the reading difficulties which you believe you face in reading English in general? The second question was: Are there any other factors (not mentioned in this questionnaire) that, you think, could cause English reading difficulties for you? And the third question was: What are your suggestions and recommendations for improving the Saudi students' reading of English as a foreign language? In section two of this part, the subjects were asked to write any comment on the questionnaire or the study.

In this part, the frequency and percentage of each difficulty, factor, and suggestion reported by the students are **separately** calculated. All frequencies and percentages are listed in order, from responses with **high** frequency and percentage to responses with **low** frequency and percentage. With respect to those who **did not respond** to all or some questions in the third part of the questionnaire or wrote **irrelevant** responses to the study (e.g., talking about the importance of speaking, listening difficulties, etc.), their cases are considered **invalid** (i.e., they are not calculated). The results are summarized in the following tables.

Table 7

Responses to item 52: What are the reading difficulties which you believe you face in reading English in general?

Serial (#)	Difficulties	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	I face difficulty in understanding the meanings of the English words which I read	47	43.11%
2	I face difficulty in pronouncing what I read correctly	35	32.11%
3	I face difficulty with the English grammatical rules	31	28.44%
4	I face difficulty in understanding the main idea of what I read	29	26.60%
5	I face difficulty in reading words including a silent letter	18	16.51%
6	I face difficulty in reading and/or comprehending long words	18	16.51%
7	I face difficulty in pronouncing a sound produced by reading two letters or more as in words like <i>she</i> , <i>television</i> , and <i>phone</i>	16	14.67%
8	I face difficulty in pronouncing some English letters	13	11.92%
9	I face difficulty in understanding English idioms	13	11.92%
10	I face many difficult words when reading English	12	11.00%
11	I face difficulty in reading passages not related to my life	11	10.09%
12	Reading in English takes a long time	9	8.25%
13	I feel bored when I read in English	7	6.42%
14	I face difficulty in reading some letters which are pronounced differently when they occur in different places of the word, such as the letter 'C'	6	5.55%
15	I face difficulty in reading and understanding new vocabulary	5	4.58%

Table 7 (continued)

Serial (#)	Difficulties	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
16	I feel shy when reading English aloud	4	3.66%
17	I face difficulty in memorizing English words	4	3.66%
18	I face difficulty in reading English words which are exactly identical in writing, but different in pronunciation and meaning	3	2.75%
19	When reading in English I feel that I forget or skip some letters	2	1.83%
20	I face difficulty in understanding a certain word having more than one meaning, such as <i>run</i>	2	1.83%
21	I face difficulty in reading English numbers	2	1.83%
22	I face difficulty in reading English long texts	2	1.83%
23	I face difficulty in understanding assigned exercises and questions	2	1.83%
24	I face difficulty in differentiating between capital and small letters	1	0.91%
25	I feel confused when reading in English	1	0.91%

N = 126

Valid cases = 109

Invalid cases = 17 (no response or irrelevant responses)

Table 7 indicates that 43.1% of the Saudi middle and high school senior students who responded to item 52 reported that they face difficulty in understanding the meanings of the English words which they read. And this reading difficulty is the most frequently reported one by the students. The second frequently reported reading difficulty by the students (32.1%) was: "I face a difficulty in pronouncing what I read correctly," whereas the difficulty with the English grammatical rules was the third frequently reported reading difficulty by the students (28.44%).

Generally speaking, most of the reading difficulties reported by the students of this study are related to comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, orthography, and attitude. As the previously reviewed literature suggested in chapter 2, these reading difficulties reported by the subjects of this study can be caused by schematic, linguistic, and/or attitudinal factors. Additionally, these results appear to be in line with what the literature proposed concerning the reading difficulties which most ESL/EFL students face when reading English.

Table 8

Responses to item 53: Are there any other factors (not mentioned in the questionnaire) that, you think, could cause English reading difficulties for you?

Serial (#)	Factors	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	No interest or desire in reading English	21	28.37%
2	Lack of qualified and competent English teachers	18	24.32%
3	The English teacher does not explain the lesson adequately and clearly	13	17.56%
4	Lack of practice in reading English	10	13.51%
5	Length of the English textbook we study	9	12.16%
6	The boring methods used in teaching reading	9	12.16%
7	Lack of audio-visual materials which teach proper reading and pronunciation	8	10.81%
8	Lack of English language centers for learning English outside of school	8	10.81%
9	The environment around me does not encourage me to read in English	8	10.81%
10	Not teaching English in the elementary school	7	9.45%
11	Not enough time for studying English in the classroom	7	9.45%
12	The way the English teacher treats us when we make a mistake in reading	4	5.40%
13	Length of English passages we are required to read	3	4.05%
14	Not learning English in an early stage	3	4.05%
15	Having many other assignments to do	2	2.70%
16	Nobody helps me in reading at home	2	2.70%
17	Lack of English books and magazines in the school library	2	2.70%
18	Rush of the English teacher in teaching us	2	2.70%
19	Studying English just to pass the final exam	2	2.70%
20	English is not the language of forefathers and parents	2	2.70%

Table 8 (continued)

Serial (#)	Factors	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
21	Classrooms are crowded with students	2	2.70%
22	Lack of English books relating to our customs and traditions	1	1.35%
23	Lack of pictures in the textbook we read	1	1.35%
24	Existence of differences between Arabic reading and English reading	1	1.35%
25	Weakness of the English program in general	1	1.35%
26	Forcing the student to read aloud in the classroom	1	1.35%
27	Not liking the English teacher	1	1.35%
28	The teacher is not aware of the difficulty we face in reading English	1	1.35%
29	Lack of confidence when reading in English	1	1.35%
30	Not reading the lesson before the teacher explains it	1	1.35%

N = 126

Valid cases = 74

Invalid cases = 52 (no response or irrelevant responses)

In Table 8, the Saudi students mention other factors that could cause them difficulties in reading and learning English in general. Some of the factors reported by the students, such as lack of qualified and competent English teachers, lack of practice in reading English, boring methods used in teaching reading, lack of audio-visual materials which teach proper reading and pronunciation, studying English just to pass the final exam, and classrooms are crowded with students appear to be in agreement with what the researcher described in the first chapter. In addition, these factors reported by the students seem consistent with the findings of the studies done by Saudi researchers on

Saudi EFL students (e.g., Zaid, 1993; Jan, 1984; Dhafar, 1986, cited in the first chapter).

At any rate, most of these factors reported by the students are worthy of research, investigation, and consideration.

Table 9

Responses to item 54: What are your suggestions and recommendations for improving the Saudi students' reading of English as a foreign language?

Serial (#)	Recommendations and Suggestions	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Beginning English instruction in the elementary school stage	36	34.28%
2	Selecting qualified and competent teachers for teaching English	23	21.90%
3	Establishing English language centers and institutes	18	17.14%
4	English teachers should not speak Arabic in the English classes	17	16.19%
5	Simplifying the English textbooks	12	11.42%
6	Selecting English textbooks that include subjects concern students	11	10.47%
7	Providing students with audio-visual aids helping them learn correct reading and pronunciation	10	9.95%
8	Using interesting and creative methods in teaching English reading	9	8.57%
9	Organizing intensive classes and seminars for learning English during summer vacations	9	8.57%
10	Using the media (e.g., TV and radio) in teaching English	7	6.66%
11	Recruiting English or American teachers for teaching English in the public schools	6	5.71%
12	Telling students about the importance of learning and reading English	6	5.71%
13	Motivating students to read in English by parents and teachers	6	5.71%
14	Providing school libraries with English books and magazines	5	4.76%

Table 9 (continued)

Serial (#)	Recommendations and Suggestions	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
15	Enclosing the passages of the English textbook with a cassette so students can listen to how the passages and new words are read	3	2.85%
16	Developing the English curriculum	3	2.85%
17	Distributing small English booklets concerned about areas of special interest to students in this age	2	1.90%
18	Increasing the number of the English language periods (hours)	2	1.90%
19	Providing the English passages with pictures or drawings to help students understand what they read	2	1.90%
20	Employing computers in learning English	2	1.90%
21	Making English an optional subject matter	2	1.90%
22	Eliminating English idioms from textbooks	2	1.90%
23	Finding Arabic books or stories, dealing with Saudi culture and heritage, which are translated into English	1	0.95%
24	Teaching students how to use English dictionaries	1	0.95%
25	Using English language labs	1	0.95%
26	Teaching students to focus on the meaning of the word more than how to read it	1	0.95%
27	Encouraging students to ask about what they do not understand	1	0.95%

N = 126

Valid cases = 105

Invalid cases = 21 (no response or irrelevant responses)

Table 9 includes many interesting and practical suggestions and recommendations which should be put into consideration when thinking of improving the Saudi students' reading and learning of English as a foreign

language. Nevertheless, thorough research is needed to measure the applicability and practicality of these suggestions and recommendations before implementing them in the English classes of the Saudi public schools.

Table 10

Responses to item 55: Please write any comment on the questionnaire or the study.

Serial (#)	Comments	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Thank you for giving us the chance to express and talk about our views regarding the problems we encounter in learning English freely and frankly	27	31.76%
2	Thank you for your effort in preparing this questionnaire	22	25.88%
3	This is an excellent and important study	17	20.00%
4	I wish you success in this study	15	17.64%
5	This is an interesting questionnaire	12	14.11%
6	This questionnaire tries to solve the problems which we face in reading English	9	10.58%
7	This questionnaire is very useful for knowing the reasons which make most students suffer from the English language	6	7.05%
8	This questionnaire included most of the problems which Saudi students face in studying English	6	7.05%
9	I hope that this study will find a solution for our problems in learning English	5	5.88%
10	This questionnaire aims to improve the English language of Saudi students	4	4.70%
11	I learned a lot from this questionnaire	4	4.70%
12	I think that this questionnaire should be distributed to students all over Saudi Arabia	3	3.52%
13	I am impressed by this questionnaire	3	3.52%
14	I found a lot of information about English reading in this questionnaire	3	3.52%
15	I hope that such studies will help develop our level of English learning	2	2.35%
16	I hope that our suggestions and ideas will be applied and taken into consideration	2	2.35%
17	This questionnaire is important for every student in Saudi Arabia	2	2.35%

Table 10 (continued)

Serial (#)	Comments	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
18	This questionnaire indicates that the writer is concerned about what the Saudi student faces of problems in learning English	2	2.35%
19	Some of the questions in this questionnaire are difficult to understand	2	2.35%
20	I hope that the goal of this questionnaire will be attained	2	2.35%
21	The idea of this questionnaire is good	2	2.35%
22	Thank you for caring about our problems and concerns	2	2.35%
23	I hope that your research will help us in the future	2	2.35%
24	Thank you for your concern about the students' views regarding their English learning and the problems they face	2	2.35%
25	I think that this questionnaire should be administered to students every year just to know more about their development and their problems in learning English	2	2.35%
26	I am impressed by the way the questions are put	1	1.17%
27	This questionnaire is not useful to me, because I face problems in subject matters other than English	1	1.17%
28	I hope that this study will solve one of the problems which the Saudi students face and are tired of during their study	1	1.17%
29	The questionnaire is long	1	1.17%
30	This questionnaire drew my attention to things about English reading which I did not know about before	1	1.17%
31	This questionnaire wants to help every Saudi student better learn English reading	1	1.17%

Table 10 (continued)

Serial (#)	Comments	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
32	This study will not benefit me, because I will graduate by the end of this term. It is too late!	1	1.17%
33	We are waiting for the solutions	1	1.17%
34	I feel that this questionnaire is truthful in its goals	1	1.17%
35	In my opinion, the benefit of this study is not for you alone, but also for all Saudi students	1	1.17%
36	Consulting students and knowing their opinions about the difficulties they encounter in learning English is the first step toward solving the problem	1	1.17%
37	I hope that your research will benefit us and the coming generations	1	1.17%

N = 126

Valid cases = 85

Invalid cases = 41 (no response or irrelevant responses)

The major comment which can be made on the students' comments presented in Table 10 is that in any serious endeavor of planning, organizing, and/or developing students' language learning, students should be granted the opportunity to frankly and freely express their views, worries and concerns about their own language learning. Then, there should be room for rational and logical discussion with them about what is good or not for them.

On the other hand, most of the students expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the researcher for caring about their problems and concerns in reading and learning English. Furthermore, a group of the students reported that

this study is an important one, that the "questionnaire is very useful for knowing the reasons which make most students suffer from the English language," and that they "learned a lot from this questionnaire."

Discussion of the Questions of the Study

The answers to the questions of the study come from the responses of the students themselves through survey questionnaires administered to a randomly selected sample population of Saudi middle and high school senior students. Following are the study's questions and a summary of answers:

Q 1. Do Saudi male beginning EFL students think that they encounter EFL reading difficulties?

A. The results indicate that a considerable majority of the subjects of the study thought they encounter reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language. For instance, in their response to item 51, which asked the subjects: 'Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language', 81% of the middle school senior students and 73% of the high school senior students answered 'Yes.' These results also indicate that the middle school senior students face more EFL reading difficulties than the high school senior students.

Q 2. What are the views/perceptions of Saudi male beginning EFL students about the factors reported in this study that could cause reading difficulties for them?

A. The results demonstrate that most of the reading difficulties reported by the subjects are attributed to linguistic-related factors. For example, 84% of the subjects reported that they had problems with the pronunciation of what they read, and 63% thought that English grammar caused them difficulties when reading English. On the other hand, the results show that the subjects did not fully perceive the great role of cultural schematic factors in causing

comprehension difficulties. In other words, according to the subjects' responses, it seems that schematic factors cause fewer reading difficulties for the students than those caused by the linguistic factors. For illustration, in their response to item 12, only 52% of the students reported that not knowing the English cultural concepts (schemata) caused them difficulty in comprehending what they read. In contrast, attitudinal factors seem to cause less reading difficulties for the students than those caused by the linguistic and schematic factors discussed in this study. For instance, in their responses to item 7, just 26% of the students expressed that they did not like to read in English as a foreign language.

Q 3. What are the attitudes of Saudi male beginning EFL students toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general?

A. The results of this study, contrary to what the researcher expected, reveal that a great majority of Saudi male beginning EFL students have very positive attitudes toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general.

Q 4. Are Saudi male beginning EFL students encouraged by their families and friends to read and learn English?

A. Responding to this question, the results show that the families who encourage their children to read and learn English are more than the families who do not. Regarding friends' encouragement, the results, strangely enough, indicate that a high percentage of the students are not encouraged by their friends to read and learn English.

Q 5. How do Saudi male beginning EFL students perceive their comprehension and speed when reading English?

A. The results reveal that when asked to rate their reading comprehension, 68.5% of the students described their English reading comprehension as "Very poor" or "Poor," while 13.5% of the students described their comprehension as "Average," 14% described their comprehension as "Good," and 4% of the entire population described their comprehension as "Excellent." On the other hand, when asked to rate their reading speed, 58% of the students thought their speed was "Very slow" or "Slow," while 28% rated their speed as "Average," 12% thought their speed was "Fast," and only 2% believed that their reading speed was "Very fast."

Q 6. According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the reading difficulties which they face when reading English as a foreign language?

A. In response, the students reported several reading difficulties they encounter when reading English, but the most frequently reported reading difficulties are:

1. Facing difficulty in understanding the meanings of the English words which they read.
2. Facing difficulty in pronouncing what they read.
3. Facing difficulty with the English grammatical rules.
4. Facing difficulty in understanding the main idea of what they read. (For more information on the reading difficulties which the Saudi students reported that they encounter when reading English, you can refer to Table 7).

Q 7. According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, what are the factors that may cause them reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language?

A. When asked the same question, the students mentioned many factors which could cause reading difficulties for them when reading English. However, the most frequently mentioned factors by the students are:

- 1) No interest or desire in reading English.
- 2) Lack of qualified and competent English teachers.
- 3) The English teacher does not explain the lesson adequately and clearly.
- 4) Lack of practice in reading English. (For more information on the factors which the Saudi students reported, you can refer to Table 8).

Q 8. What are the suggestions and recommendations of the Saudi male beginning EFL students for improving their EFL reading?

A. In their response to the same question, the students proposed a good number of suggestions and recommendations for improving their EFL reading in particular and English learning in general. For example, the students suggested:

- Beginning English instruction in the elementary school stage.
- Selecting qualified and competent teachers for teaching English.
- Establishing English language centers and institutes.
- English teachers should not speak Arabic in the English classes.
- Simplifying the English textbooks.
- Selecting English textbooks including topics that concern students.

- **Providing students with audio-visual aids to help them learn correct reading and pronunciation.**
- **Using interesting and creative methods in teaching English reading. (For more information on the suggestions and recommendations which the students reported, you can refer to Table 9).**

Discussion of the Hypotheses of the Study

In addition to discussing and answering the above questions, the researcher of this study would like to discuss and test the hypotheses he laid out in the beginning of his study. The hypotheses were:

H₀ : There is no statistically significant difference between the means of the responses of the middle school senior students and the high school senior students to the questionnaire items of this study.

H₁ : The middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study encounter considerable EFL reading difficulties.

H₂ : The middle school senior students encounter more reading difficulties than the high school senior students.

H₃ : The middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study have negative attitudes toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general.

With respect to the first null hypothesis stating that **there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the responses of the middle school senior students and the high school senior students to the questionnaire items of this study**, the results presented in Table 6 indicate that this hypothesis is accepted in most of the items in part two of the

questionnaire. Nevertheless, this null hypothesis is rejected in items 14, 17, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, and 36. In other words, the middle school senior students and the high school senior students responded significantly differently to these eight items.

The second hypothesis assumed that **the middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study encounter considerable EFL reading difficulties**. Based on the findings of this study summarized in a previous section, this hypothesis is accepted since a high percentage –77%– of the students reported that they faced reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language.

The third hypothesis stated that **the middle school senior students encounter more reading difficulties than the high school senior students**. According to the students' responses, this hypothesis is accepted. To give one example, in their responses to item 51 which directly asked the students: "Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language?", 81% of the middle school senior students answered "Yes," whereas 73% of the high school senior students responded "Yes."

The fourth hypothesis postulated that **the middle school senior students and the high school senior students of this study have negative attitudes toward EFL reading in particular and learning English in general**. Based on the results of this study, one can conclude that this hypothesis is completely rejected. For instance, the students' responses to items 1, 2, 20, 33,

34, and 38 revealed that a large majority of the students had positive attitudes toward reading and learning English as a foreign language. At any rate, after reviewing the students' responses, it might also be concluded that the high school senior students generally had more positive attitudes toward reading and learning English than the middle school senior students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The main objectives for carrying out this study were to explore the reading difficulties which Saudi male beginning EFL students perceive they face when reading English as a foreign language, investigate some of the cultural schematic, linguistic, and attitudinal factors which might cause reading difficulties for Saudi beginning students of English as a FL, help ESL/EFL teachers, ESL/EFL textbook writers, and concerned educational establishments (e.g., the Saudi Ministry of Education and English language centers) understand some of the reading difficulties and factors which affect this type of EFL students, help Saudi beginning EFL students understand some of the reading difficulties which they could face in reading English as FL and to be aware of factors causing these reading difficulties, and offer implications, applications, suggestions, and recommendations that could help ESL/EFL learners, teachers, and educational establishments overcome or at least reduce reading difficulties encountered by Saudi EFL students.

At any rate, this research study is basically organized into five chapters. Chapter One contains an introduction, an overview of the teaching of English as

a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the goals of the study, the questions of the study, the hypotheses of the study, the limitations of the study, and the definitions of the terms and abbreviations used in the study.

Chapter Two reviews the literature relating to the following areas: schematic factors, linguistic factors, attitudinal factors, and implications, applications, suggestions, and recommendations related to ESL/EFL reading.

The methodology employed in selecting the subjects, developing the materials, and collecting the data for the study is discussed in Chapter Three. In addition, information about procedures and analyses followed in the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four includes the presentation and analysis of the collected data. More specifically, this chapter provides the results of the study which are discussed in the following sections: outcomes of the questionnaire administration, statistical procedures for data analysis, results of the first part of the questionnaire, results of the second part of the questionnaire, results of the third part of the questionnaire, and discussion of the questions and hypotheses of the study.

This chapter (Chapter Five) presents a summary of the study, conclusions, and suggestions and recommendations for improving the Saudi students' EFL reading in particular and learning of English as a foreign language in general. Furthermore, this chapter concludes with relevant suggestions and recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the subjects' responses discussed in Chapter Four, the following major comments and conclusions can be drawn:

- A high percentage of the subjects of the study perceive that they encounter reading difficulties when reading English as a foreign language. For instance, in their response to item 51, which asked the subjects: 'Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language', 81 % of the middle school senior students and 73 % of the high school senior students answered 'Yes.' These results also indicate that the middle school students, as they expressed, face more EFL reading difficulties than the high school students, and this can be attributed to the fact that the 12th grade students had more time (three years) of studying English and that they are more familiar with English than the 9th grade students.
- According to the Saudi male beginning EFL students' perceptions, the major reading difficulties which they face when reading English as a foreign language are:
 1. Difficulty in understanding the meanings of the English words they read.
 2. Difficulty in pronouncing what they read correctly.
 3. Difficulty with the English grammatical rules.
 4. Difficulty in understanding the main idea of what they read.
 5. Difficulty in reading words including a silent letter.

6. Difficulty in reading long words.
 7. Difficulty in pronouncing a sound produced by reading two letters or more as in words like *she*, *nation*, *television*, and *phone*.
 8. Difficulty in pronouncing some English letters.
 9. Difficulty in understanding English idioms.
- It appears that most of the reading difficulties reported by the subjects can be attributed to linguistic-related factors. For example, 84% of the subjects reported that they had problems with the pronunciation of what they read, and 63% responded that English grammar caused them difficulties when reading English.
 - Based on their responses, it seems that schematic factors cause less reading difficulties for the students than those caused by the linguistic factors discussed in this study. For illustration, in their response to item 12, 52% of the students reported that not knowing the English cultural concepts (schemata) caused them difficulty in comprehending what they read.
 - Attitudinal factors seem to cause fewer reading difficulties for the students than those caused by the linguistic and schematic factors discussed in this study. For instance, in their responses to item 7, only 26% of the students expressed that they did not like to read in English as a foreign language.
 - The students' responses to items 23 and 40 reveal significant outcomes which should be investigated in further research. In item 23, 87.3% (the highest percentage in part two) of the subjects reported that their friends do not encourage them to read books or magazines in English. In item 40,

70.0% of the subjects mentioned that their friends do not encourage them to learn English. Similarly, Jan (1984) found that only 39% of the subjects of his study agreed with the statement "My friends encourage me to speak English" (p. 146). These results suggest that Saudi students (as peers and friends) do not encourage each other to learn, practice, and read English.

- In their responses to item 10, 71.4% of the subjects reported that they move their lips when reading English silently. Similarly, in their responses to item 28, 70.6% of the subjects reported that they move their lips when reading Arabic silently. This finding suggests that reading strategies and habits might transfer from L₁ to L₂.
- The results of the students' responses to item 22 (dealing with reading directionality) show that 84.9% of the Saudi students expressed that reading English from left to right does not cause them difficulty. So, according to the students' perceptions, reading directionality is not a major factor causing reading difficulties for them.
- The findings of this study indicate that there are statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the middle school students' responses and the high school students' responses to items: 14 (My mother encourages me to read in English), 17 (I do not like to read in English, because I do not comprehend most of what I read), 20 (It is unimportant to be able to read in English), 22 (Reading English from left to right does not bother me), 26 (I have no problem in identifying and reading the English symbols), 28 (When I read in Arabic silently, I notice that I move my lips), 32 (English grammar

does not cause me difficulties when reading English), and 36 (I dislike the idea of learning any foreign language).

- The results of the students' responses to item 27, "The passages and stories in the textbook should relate to our culture and experiences" reveal that a high percentage of the students –86.5%– agreed with the statement. Applicationally speaking, this issue should be put into consideration when writing or designing English textbooks for Saudi EFL Students.
- The results of the students' responses to items 43 and 44 suggest that the Saudi students believe that speaking is the most important language skill to learn. Reading is ranked by the students as the second important language skill to learn, thirdly writing, and fourthly listening as the least important language skill to learn. Pedagogically, teachers should meet the students' views and concerns and apply more interactive and communicative activities in their classrooms.
- The students' responses to item 50, "Have you studied English (including reading) for academic purposes only" indicate that 62% of the subjects study English for academic purposes only. Motivationally speaking, this finding implies that about two-thirds of the students are instrumentally (not integratively) motivated to learn English.
- Jan (1984) found that lack of motivation and interest among students to learn English was a major problem affecting Saudi students' EFL learning. He concluded that "This motivation problem is a major cause for the low achievement of the students" (p. 242). Unlike Jan's (1984) finding, this study,

interestingly, found that the subjects are highly motivated to learn and read English. To give one example, the results of the subjects' responses to item 33 indicated that 83 % of the Saudi subjects expressed that they like to learn English. These great differences between the motivations and attitudes of the subjects of Jan's study and the subjects of this study can be attributed to a variety of factors, but, as the researcher speculates, the most obvious and important of which are:

- A)** The long period of time (eleven years) between the two studies. During this period many social, educational, and political issues could have influenced the attitudes of Saudi students toward learning English and those who speak it. Confirming this assumption, Baker (1992) reports that attitudes change slowly and gradually over time. In his words: "attitudes change over time" (p. 97).
- B)** During the last five years several circumstances and events took place in the Arabian Gulf area which could have contributed to the development of more positive attitudes toward studying English in the Gulf area. More specifically, during and after the Desert Storm War, the people in the Gulf area (e.g., Saudis and Kuwaitis), seemingly, have felt the great need and importance of communicating with their English-speaking allies (the American and British). In line with this point of view, Baker (1992) suggests that attitude change may occur when relationships between L1 and L2 individuals are close, warm, and friendly, and when the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions are supportive.

C) During the last five years, TV satellites and cables have become extensively more available in the Gulf area. As a result, the Gulf people became presumably more motivated to learn English in order to understand what they hear or watch in the international media (e.g., TV and radio).

Recommendations

Inspired by the applications, suggestions, and recommendations provided in Chapter Two and enhanced by interesting and worthwhile suggestions and recommendations proposed by the subjects in Chapter Four, the researcher would like to suggest the following recommendations for improving Saudi students' EFL reading and learning in general:

1. The views, opinions, and concerns of ESL/EFL students about their own language learning (including reading) should be attended to and considered as much as possible in any attempt to teach them or improve their English.
2. Since unqualified ESL/EFL teachers can make reading or learning English a bad experience for students and might generate negative attitudes toward reading and learning English, the Saudi Ministry of Education is urged to assign the most competent and qualified EFL teachers to teach in the initial stage (7th grade) at which English is first taught to Saudi students. This process could greatly motivate the new students to learn the newly introduced language with curiosity, interest, and joy which could last for many years, if not for a whole lifetime . In other words, students' first experiences or impressions about reading or learning English, whether good or bad, might tremendously affect their attitudes and consequently their performances in reading or learning that language.

3. Old and boring ESL/EFL teaching methods, such as the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) should be replaced with more creative, attractive, and effective ones, such as the Communicative Method. And this task is the responsibility of ESL/EFL teachers to a great extent.
4. ESL/EFL textbook writers should be aware of and concerned about the type and nature of students they write for. When they (textbook writers) write or design ESL/EFL textbooks for ESL/EFL students, they should put into consideration that Saudi Arabian students, their Arabic and Islamic values, customs, traditions, and cultures at large are different from others (e.g., Spanish or Chinese students). Thus, such ESL/EFL textbooks should relate to and consider Saudi students' cultures and values.
5. Parents should be encouraged to read to their children and have their children read to them.
6. School and public libraries should be provided with English books, stories, newspapers, and magazines which fit the Saudi students' ages and intellectual levels and which do not conflict with or ridicule the students' beliefs, values, or traditions.

Recommendations For Further Research

Throughout the process of conducting and reporting this study, several thoughts and ideas related to this research have struck the mind of the researcher to search them. Nevertheless, since this study at hand has limits in terms of purpose, goal, and time, the researcher recommends that further research can be done on the following areas:

- **Replicating the same study on Saudi students in other cities or districts. The results of these studies should be compared with this study, so a more accurate generalization about the EFL reading difficulties that Saudi students encounter can be articulated.**
- **Doing the same study (or one similar to it) on Saudi students at different grade levels, such as 7th and 8th grade students.**
- **Further research is needed to evaluate the ESL/EFL textbooks used in Saudi Arabia.**
- **Research is greatly needed in evaluating the methods employed in teaching EFL reading and English in general in the Saudi public schools.**
- **Transferability of the Saudi Arabic-speaking students' reading strategies and habits used in Arabic to English is another interesting and worth-investigating topic.**
- **More research can be done on investigating the role of friends in influencing Saudi students' EFL reading attitudes.**
- **All mentioned above about studies suggested to be done on Saudi male students applies also to Saudi female students.**
- **Finally, there are several areas addressed in this study which could be investigated in further research. For example, additional research may examine or study the difficulties, factors, or suggestions reported by the students in the third part of the questionnaire (listed in Chapter Four).**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UCRIHS Approval Letter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 24, 1995

TO: Naji I. Al-Arfaj
1443 Meadow Rue
E. Lansing, MI 48823

RE: IRB#: 94-593
TITLE: FACTORS CAUSING READING DIFFICULTIES FOR SAUDI
BEGINNING STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE (EFL)
REVISION REQUESTED: N/A
CATEGORY: 1-A, C
APPROVAL DATE: 04/21/95

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project including any revision listed above.

RENEWAL: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must use the green renewal form (enclosed with the original approval letter or when a project is renewed) to seek updated certification. There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB # and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

**PROBLEMS/
CHANGES:** Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly: (1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or (2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517)355-2180 or FAX (517)336-1171.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:pjm

cc: James C. Stalker



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
32 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

517/355-2180
FAX: 517/432-1171

Appendix B

Approval Letter From the Saudi Ministry of Education For Conducting the Study In Saudi Public Schools

الرقم: ١٧/٢/١٤١٥ التاريخ: ١٥/١٠/١٤١٥ المشرعات: | سراج ط د -

الموضوع: بشأن الموافقة على إجراء دراسة .

سعادة / مدير التعليم بمحافظة الأنصاء المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :

تقدم : الباحث / ناجي بن ابراهيم بن عبدالرحمن العرفج من جامعة الامام محمد بن سعود الاسلامية والمبتعث الى أمريكا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في اللغة الانجليزية .

يطلب : إجراء بحث بعنوان (الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطالب السعودي في قراءة اللغة الانجليزية) وفق استمارة البحث والأستبانة المرافق صورة لهما .

نأمل السماح له بإجراء البحث ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحث (أو الباحثين) يتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب بحثه .

كما نرجو إحالة كامل الأوراق إلى مشرف البحوث بإدارتكم لإكمال اللازم .

وتقبلوا تحياتي ،،،

مدير عام إدارة البحوث التربوية

د.علي بن عبدالحالق القني

وزارة المعارف
إدارة التعليم بالأنصاء
قسم الدراسات والبحوث
تيد: ١٧٥٢٨٦
تاريخ: ١٥/١٠/١٤١٥
المشتريات: | سراج ط د -

مدير التعليم بالأنصاء
مكة للمعل

صورة لسعادة وكيل الوزارة المساعد للتطوير التربوي .
صورة للإدارة ص ١ - ب ٤ .

ملاحظة : الوزارة غير مسؤولة عن إرسال أو إستلام الأدوات الخاصة بدراسة الباحث .

Appendix C

The Arabic Version of the Student Questionnaire

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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12-27-1994.

To Whom it May Concern

This to certify that, I have reviewed the Arabic translation of the questionnaire, "Factors causing reading difficulties for the Saudi students of English as a Foreign Language", prepared by Mr. Naji Al-Arfag, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English, Michigan State University. The Arabic translation of the English text is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Malik Balla (PH.D.)
Assistant Professor and Coordinator
of the Arabic Language Program,
Michigan State University.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

إستبيان

عزيزي الطالب :

إن الغرض الأساسي من هذا الاستبيان هو جمع معلومات عن صعوبات القراءة التي تواجهها عند قراءة اللغة الانجليزية. هذا الاستبيان يهدف أيضا الى جمع معلومات عن العوامل و الاسباب التي قد تؤدي الى هذه الصعوبات في قراءة اللغة الانجليزية. هذه المعلومات سوف استفيد منها في كتابة رسالة الدكتوراه التي أحضرها في امريكا.

إن مشاركتك في تعبئة هذا الاستبيان تعتبر مهمة جدا، كما ان مشاركتك سوف تسهم في معرفة وفهم الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطالب السعودي في قراءة اللغة الانجليزية والعوامل التي تسبب تلك الصعوبات.

ختاما، أخي الطالب أود أن أؤكد لك أن مشاركتك في تعبئة هذا الاستبيان لن تؤثر على درجاتك في مادة اللغة الانجليزية أو غيرها حيث أن إجابتك سوف تحاط بالسرية التامة ولن يطلع عليها الا الباحث فقط . وزيادة في إطمئنانك فإنه لا حاجة لكتابة اسمك على الاستبيان الذي بين يديك.

شكرا لك على وقتك وتعاونك.

أخوك / ناجي بن إبراهيم العرفج
جامعة ولاية ميشجن - امريكا

ملاحظة: إن تعبئتك لهذا الاستبيان تعني موافقه على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

تعليقات

- * من فضلك أجب على جميع العبارات والأسئلة بصدق وامانة.
- * اختر اجابة واحدة فقط لكل سؤال أو عبارة.
- * لا تردد في الاستفسار عن اي سؤال أو عبارة ليست واضحة لديك.

الجزء الاول : معلومات شخصية

- ١- العمر _____ سنة.
- ٢- الفصل او المستوى الدراسي _____
- ٣- هل والدك يتكلم اللغة الانجليزية ؟
نعم لا
- ٤- هل والدتك تتكلم اللغة الانجليزية ؟
نعم لا
- ٥- هل سافرت الى بلد لغة أهله هي اللغة الانجليزية (مثل أمريكا أو بريطانيا)؟
نعم لا

الجزء الثاني: عبارات عامة

ضع دائرة حول الاختيار الذي يُعبر عن رأيك حول العبارات التالية مستخدماً أحد هذه الاختيارات :

- أ - أوافق بشدة : إذا كنت توافق على العبارة بشدة وقوة
 ب - أوافق : إذا كنت توافق على العبارة
 ج - لا أوافق : إذا كنت لا توافق على العبارة
 د - لا أوافق بشدة : إذا كنت لا توافق على العبارة بشدة وقوة

مثال :

* ينبغي تدريس اللغة الفرنسية في المدارس السعودية العامة.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

٦- القراءة باللغة الانجليزية تعتبر شيئاً مهماً .

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

٧- أنا أحب أن أقرأ باللغة الانجليزية.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

٨- أعتقد أنه شئ مهم علي أن أقرأ كل كلمة في النص أو القطعة الانجليزية التي أريد أن أقرؤها.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

٩- نادراً ما ألتجئ على قراءة أشياء مكتوبة باللغة الانجليزية خارج الفصل.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

١٠- عندما أقرأ قراءة سرية (صامتة) باللغة الانجليزية ألحظ أنني أحرك شفتي وأنطق ما أقرؤه (بشكل غير مسموع).

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

١١- عادة لا أقرأ بالانجليزية إلا إذا اضطررت إلى ذلك.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

١٢- إن عدم معرفة المفاهيم والمعاني المرتبطة بثقافات و عادات الإنجليز يسبب لي صعوبة في فهم ما أقرؤه باللغة الانجليزية.

- أ - أوافق بشدة ب - أوافق ج - لا أوافق د - لا أوافق بشدة

- ١٣- يُشجعني والدي على أن أقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٤- تُشجعني والدي على أن أقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٥- أفراد من أسرتي (غير أبي أو أمي) يشجعوني على أن أقرأ باللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٦- لا أواجه صعوبة في قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٧- لا أحب القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية لأنني لا أستوعب معظم ما أقرأه.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٨- عدم معرفة كيفية نطق ما أقرأه باللغة الإنجليزية يجعلني أحس بقلق أو عدم راحة.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ١٩- إن مواجهة كلمات صعبة عند قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية لا يؤثر على انجالي أو ميلي نحو قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ٢٠- تُعتبر القدرة على القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية غير مهمة.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ٢١- عند القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية أشعر بأنها تأخذ مني كثيرا من الوقت والجهد قبل أن أفهم ما أقرأه.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ٢٢- قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية من جهة اليسار إلى اليمين لا تسبب لي صعوبة.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ٢٣- أصدقائي (أو بعضهم) يشجعوني على قراءة كتب ومجلات إنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة
- ٢٤- لا أشعر بالراحة عند قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية لأن حروف اللغة الإنجليزية تختلف عن حروف اللغة العربية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٢٥- إن صعوبة الفهم التي أواجهها عند قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية لا تؤثر سلباً على إتجاهي أو ميلي نحو القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة ٢٥

٢٦- ليس عندي مشكلة في معرفة أو تمييز حروف اللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٢٧- ينبغي أن تعالج كتب اللغة الإنجليزية المقررة موضوعات ذات صلة بثقافتنا و تجاربنا.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٢٨- عندما أقرأ باللغة العربية (قراءة صامتة) ألاحظ أنني أحرك شفهي أثناء قراءتي.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٢٩- أنا أكره اللغة الإنجليزية لأسباب تتعلق بمُتدّرس اللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٠- مُدرّس اللغة الإنجليزية يُشجعنا على أن نقوم بقراءات حرة خارجية (غير مقررة في المنهج الدراسي) باللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣١- أشعر بأن القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية شيء مُبَل.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٢- قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية لا تسبب لي صعوبة أثناء القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٣- أنا أحب أن أتعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٤- تُعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية شيء غير مهم.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٥- والدي - أحدهما أو كلاهما - يشجعانني على تعلّم اللغة الإنجليزية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٦- أنا أكره فكرة تعلّم أي لغة أجنبية.

أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٧- أنا أحب أن أتعلّم لغة أجنبية غير اللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٨- لو كان القرار في يدي لرفضت تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرّة.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٣٩- ليس من المهم تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية ولكن المهم هو اجتياز الامتحان.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٤٠- لا يشجّعني أصدقاؤى على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.
أ- أوافق بشدة ب- أوافق ج- لا أوافق د- لا أوافق بشدة

٤١- كهارى للغة الإنجليزية، أعتبر أن مستوى فهمي لما أقرؤه باللغة الإنجليزية :
أ- سيئ جدا ب- سيئ ج- متوسط د- جيد ها- جيد جدا

٤٢- كهارى للغة الإنجليزية، أعتبر أن سرعتي في قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية:
أ- بطيئة جدا ب- بطيئة ج- متوسطة د- سريعة ها- سريعة جدا

الجزء الثاني: الأسئلة *

من فضلك ضع دائرة حول أحد الخيارات المعطاه بعد كل سؤال.

٤٣- أي مهارة من مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية التالية تعتقد أنها الأكثر أهمية للطلاب لدراستها:
أ- الاستماع ب- الكتابة ج- القراءة د- المحادثة

٤٤- أي مهارة من مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية التالية تعتقد أنها الأقل أهمية للطلاب لدراستها:
أ- الاستماع ب- الكتابة ج- القراءة د- المحادثة

٤٥- كم من الزمن تقضيه خلال وقت فراغك في قراءة كتب أو مجلات باللغة الإنجليزية
لمجرد التسلية أو الإطلاع؟

أ- لا أقوم بمثل هذا النوع من القراءة بتاتا. ب- أقل من ساعة في الاسبوع
ج- من ساعة إلى ساعتين في الاسبوع. د- أكثر من ساعتين في الاسبوع

٤٦- ما هي الطريقة التي تتبعها بشكل عام أثناء قراءة نص إنجليزي؟
أ- أقرأ (أو أعاين) الكلمة حرفا حرفا ب- أقرأ (أو أعاين) النص كلمة كلمة
ج- أقرأ (أو أعاين) كلمتين أو أكثر من النص في وقت واحد تقريبا.

٤٧- هل تعتقد بأن وجود فروق أو إختلافات بين اللغة العربية و اللغة الإنجليزية فيما يتعلق بمعرفة العادات و التقاليد الثقافية الموروثة يمكن أن يؤثر على قراءتك باللغة الإنجليزية؟

أ - نعم ب - لا

٤٨- هل مكتبك الخاصة في المنزل تحتوي على كتب إنجليزية غير دراسية (ليست مقررة عليك في دراستك)؟

أ - نعم ب - لا

٤٩- هل تعتقد بأن الأهل و الأصدقاء لهم تأثير على اتجاهك أو ميلك نحو قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية؟

أ - نعم ب - لا

٥٠- هل درست أو تدرس الآن اللغة الإنجليزية (بما في ذلك القراءة) لأسباب دراسية فقط؟

أ - نعم ب - لا

٥١- هل تواجه صعوبات في قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؟

أ - نعم ب - لا

الجزء الثالث

القسم الأول / أسئلة مفتوحة :

٥٢- ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهها عند قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية؟

- الصعوبات التي أواجهها في قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية هي:

- (١) _____
- (٢) _____
- (٣) _____
- (٤) _____

٥٣- هل هناك أي عوامل أو أسباب أخرى (لم تذكر في هذا الإستبيان) تعتقد أنها قد تسبب لك صعوبات في قراءة اللغة الإنجليزية؟ أذكرها من فضلك :

- (١) _____
- (٢) _____
- (٣) _____
- (٤) _____

٥٤- ما هي إقتراحاتك و توصياتك لتطوير و تحسين مستوى قراءة الطلبة السعوديين للغة الإنجليزية؟

- (١) _____
- (٢) _____
- (٣) _____
- (٤) _____

القسم الثاني / تعليقات :

٥٥- من فضلك أكتب أي تعليق أو رأي حول هذا الاستبيان.

جزاك الله خيرا على وقتك و مشاركتك.

Appendix D

The English Version of the Student Questionnaire

A Letter To The Student

Dear student:

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about the reading difficulties which you face when reading English as a foreign language and the factors which could cause these reading difficulties. Your participation in this study is very important and it will contribute to the understanding and improvement of the Saudi students' reading of English as a foreign language.

As you complete this questionnaire, please remember that there are NO right or wrong answers. Your participation in this study will not affect your grade in this class. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation!

Researcher

Naji I. Al-Arfaj
English Department
Michigan State University

Note: *Completing the attached questionnaire means that you have consented to participate in this study.*

Next page, please

QUESTIONNAIRE**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- ◆ Please answer **all** statements and questions **honestly** and **frankly**.
- ◆ Please choose **one** answer to each statement or question.
- ◆ Do not hesitate to ask about anything not clear for you.

Part One: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____ years old.
2. Grade in school : _____
3. Does your father speak English?
Yes. _____ No. _____
4. Does your mother speak English?
Yes. _____ No. _____
5. Have you ever traveled to a country where its people speak English as their native language (such as U. S. or U. K.)?
Yes. _____ No. _____

Next page, please

Part Two (Statements):

Please circle the answer that reflects your opinion about each of the following statements using this scale:

SA = If you **strongly agree with the statement**

A = If you **agree with the statement**

D = If you **disagree with the statement**

SD = If you **strongly disagree with the statement**

Example:

French should be taught at the Saudi public schools.

SA A (D) SD (This means that you **disagree with the statement).**

6. Reading in English is important.

SA A D SD

7. I like to read in English as a foreign language.

SA A D SD

8. It is important to read every word in the English text that I want to read.

SA A D SD

9. Outside of school, I am seldom encouraged to read in English.

SA A D SD

10. When I read English silently, I notice that I move my lips and sound out what I read.

SA A D SD

11. I usually do not read in English unless I have to.

SA A D SD

12. Not knowing the English cultural concepts causes me difficulty in comprehending what I read.

SA A D SD

13. My father encourages me to read in English.

SA A D SD

14. My mother encourages me to read in English.

SA A D SD

15. Members of my family (other than father and mother) encourage me to read in English.
SA A D SD
16. I face no difficulty in reading English as a foreign language.
SA A D SD
17. I do not like to read in English, because I do not comprehend most of what I read.
SA A D SD
18. Not knowing how to pronounce what I read in English makes me upset.
SA A D SD
19. Facing difficult words when reading English does not affect my attitude toward reading.
SA A D SD
20. It is unimportant to be able to read in English.
SA A D SD
21. When reading in English, I feel it takes a lot of time and effort before I understand what I read.
SA A D SD
22. Reading English from left to right does not bother me.
SA A D SD
23. My friends (or some of them) encourage me to read books and magazines in English.
SA A D SD
24. I do not feel comfortable when I read in English, because its alphabet is different from the Arabic alphabet.
SA A D SD
25. The reading comprehension difficulties which I face when reading English do not negatively affect my reading attitude.
SA A D SD
26. I have no problem in identifying and reading the English symbols (letters).
SA A D SD
27. The passages and stories in the textbook should relate to our culture and experiences.
SA A D SD

28. When I read in Arabic silently, I notice that I move my lips.
SA A D SD
29. I hate reading English due to reasons related to the English teacher.
SA A D SD
30. Our English teacher motivates us to do outside free reading in English.
SA A D SD
31. I feel that reading in English is a tedious thing.
SA A D SD
32. English grammar does not cause me difficulties when reading English.
SA A D SD
33. I like to learn English.
SA A D SD
34. Learning English is not important.
SA A D SD
35. My parents (one or both of them) encourage me to learn English.
SA A D SD
36. I dislike the idea of learning any foreign language.
SA A D SD
37. I like to learn a foreign language other than English.
SA A D SD
38. If it were up to me, I would never learn English.
SA A D SD
39. Passing the final English examination is more important than learning the language.
SA A D SD
40. My friends encourage me to learn English.
SA A D SD
41. As an EFL reader, my reading comprehension of what I read in English is:
Very poor ____ Poor ____ Average ____ Good ____ Excellent ____
42. As an EFL reader, the rate of my reading speed is:
Very slow ____ Slow ____ Average ____ Fast ____ Very fast ____

Part II (Questions)

Please circle one of the given choices.

43. Which of the following language skills do you think is the most important for EFL students to learn?
- A. Listening B. Writing C. Reading D. Speaking
44. Which of the following language skills do you think is the least important for EFL students to learn?
- A. Listening B. Writing C. Reading D. Speaking
45. How much do you read English for enjoyment in your spare time?
- A. Never C. 1-2 hours a week
B. Less than 1 hour a week D. More than 2 hours a week
46. What is the way which you follow when you read an English text?
- A. I read (identify) the word letter by letter.
B. I read the text word by word.
C. I read two words or more at the same time approximately.
47. Do you think that differences between Arabic and English in terms of cultural background knowledge could affect your reading in English?
- A. Yes. B. No.
48. Does your home private library include non-academic (not required for your study) English books and magazines that you find yourself interested in reading?
- A. Yes. B. No.
49. Do you think that home and friends have an effect on your attitude toward reading English as a foreign language?
- A. Yes. B. No.
50. Have you studied English (including reading) for academic purposes only?
- A. Yes. B. No.
51. Do you have difficulties in reading English as a foreign language?
- A. Yes. B. No.

Part III**Section One (Open-ended questions):**

52. What are the reading difficulties which you believe you face in reading English in general?

- The reading difficulties which I face in reading English are:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

53. Are there any other factors (not mentioned in this questionnaire) that, you think, could cause English reading difficulties for you? Please mention them.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

54. What are your suggestions and recommendations for improving the Saudi students' reading of English as a foreign language?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Section Two (Comments):

55. Please write any comment or opinion about the study.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

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