

**Investigating second language English teachers' reading instruction
and their attitudes towards teaching English reading in a fifth and
seventh grade Libyan setting**

Genan Fathi Shaker Elashhab

PhD

University of York

Education

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Abstract

This study examines the attitudes and practices in the teaching of reading English within the specific context of Libya. The aims were: (1) to investigate the time allocated to teach reading in an English lesson, (2) to find out whether teachers differed in their reading practices according to their grade groups, (3) to explore teachers' attitudes towards their teaching of reading in English, (4) to explore teachers' attitudes towards the different reading strategies, (5) to explore teachers' thoughts towards the use of different teaching techniques, (6) to find out if these teachers differed in their attitudes, reading strategies and techniques of reading according to grade.

A mixed methods non-experimental research design was used combining a questionnaire, systematic observations and stimulated recall interviews. In the quantitative systematic observation, 34 teachers in grades 5 (i.e., teaching children aged eleven) and 7 (i.e., teaching children aged thirteen) were observed. The grade 5 learners had been exposed to no hours of English education prior to this study, while grade 7 learners had been exposed to the language for around two years. Descriptive statistics and chi-square of the quantitative systematic observation, using SPSS, revealed that teachers spent less time teaching reading techniques and encouraging the use of reading strategies than they did teaching things other than reading. Interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between grades. The findings further suggested that the development of EFL sounds links (through systematic phonics instruction) was almost absent and that the teachers preferred to teach reading through alphabetic knowledge decoding skills. Moreover, thematic analysis of the qualitative data with NVivo identified that teachers in both grades used a variety of techniques for teaching reading and some specific reading strategies. Factor analysis of the questionnaire data, using SPSS, identified nine factors. The questionnaire results revealed that Libyan teachers of both fifth and seventh grades displayed similar positive attitudes towards teaching reading. The study concluded with some implications that can inform teachers' practices in Libyan EFL classrooms.

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Abbreviations Used

EFL English as a Foreign Language

EL English Language

ELT English Language Teaching

FL Foreign Language

L1 First Language

L2 Second Language

CM Compensatory model

NRP National reading panel

SRI Stimulated Recall Interviews

SVR Simple View of reading

RC Reading Comprehension

D Decoding

LC Listening Comprehension

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother and father for their unconditional love, support and encouragement throughout my life and in particular during my years of education and the preparation of this thesis.

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own, except where otherwise referenced, and it is the result of study that has been conducted since the official commencement date of the degree. This work has not, in whole or in part, previously been published and never been submitted for any other degrees for the University of York or otherwise.

Chapter One

Introduction and Context of the study

1.0 Introduction

This first chapter introduces the study and lays the groundwork for the rest of the thesis. It explains the background to the study, provides a statement of the problem and discusses the aim, and significance of the study. In addition, it sets the research questions and research objectives. The context in which this study has been conducted, i.e., Libya, is also described. The educational system in Libya, a historical review of the teaching of English as a foreign language in the country and a brief discussion of the current English syllabus and course books used are included. The final section of this chapter outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate English teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading in grade 5 (i.e., teaching children aged eleven) and 7 (i.e., teaching children aged thirteen) in a Libyan school setting. In addition, this research aims to establish the frequency of the techniques for teaching reading used in the classroom and to determine the reading strategies teachers encourage in their classroom.

1.2 Background to the Study

There is no denying the importance of English as a global language and research has emphasised the role of English as an international lingua franca (Mauranen et al., 2010). Because

of its importance, many schools around the world teach English as a second language or foreign language to young children. In these settings, significant emphasis is often placed on the teaching of reading. In fact, reading instruction is regarded as a vital aspect of every foreign language programme. Teachers' understanding of reading strategies is crucial for providing effective instruction in reading. Many children struggle with the EFL reading process due to the poor techniques used by their teachers in the classroom (Pearson, 2009) and teachers who realise that their learners are struggling in the reading process should be willing to encourage learners to use strategies which develop and improve their reading ability (Ness, 2009; Martin, Morrison, Szabo, & Garcia, 2012). Teaching EFL learners reading is an important task; this area has been studied by many scholars in L2 such as (Alsamadani, 2012; Janzen, 2007; Gilje, 2014; Griva, & Chostelidou, 2017). If teachers do not support learners with developing and using reading strategies, then teachers' techniques of teaching reading will become less valuable to the learners (Vaughan, 1977). Teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading are crucial in determining the success of any teaching programme. In fact, it is claimed that those teachers who have a positive attitude towards teaching reading can help their struggling and poor readers improve relatively quickly (Vaughan, 1977; Martin et al., 2012).

In Libya where Arabic is the first language of most people, teachers adopt a variety of techniques to teach reading in English which is taught as a foreign language (Al-beckay, 2014). There is a wealth of research on teaching English as a foreign language in developing countries. However, research on the teaching of English specifically in the Libyan context is scarce and there is limited data on the teaching methods and use of reading techniques in English in the Libyan classroom (Orafi & Borg, 2009). This may be due to the methods of teaching in the classroom and the learning environment, which are deemed unsuitable for learning a foreign

language (Dailey, 2009). To assess the methods for teaching reading, this study identified the frequency of techniques of teaching reading and teachers' encouragement of a range of reading strategies in fifth and seventh grade Libyan settings. It also explored teachers' attitudes towards their teaching of reading. It is hoped that this study will provide insights into the teaching of English in Libya and thus prove useful for primary teachers, policy makers and teacher educators in Libya and elsewhere. The investigation of reading techniques teachers used in the classroom, the effective strategies they encourage learners to use, and the way in which their attitudes shaped their practice, can shed light on the developing process of reading instruction.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research is theoretically and practically significant. First, it provides a reliable description of English teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading in fifth and seventh grades in Libya. It builds on the available literature on reading instructions to improve our knowledge of the topic in a North African setting. Thus, the findings of this research have practical applications in that they can be used to assess and enhance teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading in both fifth and seventh grades in Libya. It will also benefit stakeholders and decision-makers of the educational system in Libya. Last but not least, the data gained from this study can assist EFL reading teachers in compiling a list of techniques for teaching reading and a number of reading strategies that can be used in the Libyan setting.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Libyan teachers of all ages and experience differ in their attitude and the way they deliver reading instruction in English. As mentioned above, this study seeks to establish a list of reading

strategies that learners are encouraged to use and a list of reading techniques adopted by teachers. Furthermore, it compares the reading strategies and the teaching reading techniques adopted in the classroom with those identified in the literature, with the aim of examining the current strategies and techniques used in Libyan classrooms by the EFL teachers and their attitudes towards the use of these techniques and strategies.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) How much approximate total instruction time do fifth and seventh grade English teachers typically spend teaching reading and encouraging learners to use reading strategies in English language lessons?
- (2) What reading strategies do teachers encourage students to use in fifth and seventh grade English language classrooms, what teaching techniques do they use to teach reading and are there any grade differences?
- (3) What are the English teachers' general attitudes towards teaching reading of English in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting?
- (4) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of English word reading and comprehension?
- (5) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension?
- (6) Is there a statistically significant difference in the Libyan English teachers' attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques across grade groups?

1.6 Context of the Study

This section provides a short overview of the educational system in Libya including the history of English in Libya, the setting itself and the background of English language teaching in the country. Such a background will provide the reader with an understanding of the challenges of English language teaching in Libya, including the factors which led to the introduction of the new curriculum *English for Libya*, the textbook used in all schools. It will be explained how this curriculum represents a significant shift for English language teachers in Libya.

1.6.1 Setting for the Study

This research took place in Libya. The observations and 34 stimulated recall interviews study were conducted in the city of Benghazi, the second city after Tripoli. This city was chosen for this study because it has many schools and one main university (the University of Benghazi) from which most students graduate to become English language teachers. In addition, in Benghazi, it is relatively easy to get access to primary schools. The 292 questionnaires was also completed by teachers in small towns near Benghazi city, namely Rajma, Emeraj and Elbeyda located in the east side of the country, to obtain a larger number of participants from both grades.

1.6.2 History of English in Libya

The teaching of English in Libya started in the 1940s after the end of World War II. After the establishment of the British administration in Northern Libya, Southern Libya was administered by France (Sawani, 2009). The British government thought it was necessary to teach the English language in Libya. English language courses were taught and many inhabitants were encouraged to learn the language. The first English language series used in Libya was the

Basic Way to English by K.C.Ogden. The main focus in this book was the learning of English through the acquisition of a vocabulary of 850 words. Two other reading and comprehension books entitled *Basic Reading Book* by L.W. Lockhart were also used (Hashim, 1997).

In the early 1960s, a new series was designed for the post-primary stage, i.e., 4th and 5th grades. The books, entitled *The New Method*, were written by Michael West who was himself an English language inspector in Libya. The focus of this series was on the Arabic culture. These books were in use until 1967 when they were replaced by new textbooks known as *The Modern Reader* written by A. Johnson who was at that time an English language inspector in Egypt (Hashim, 1997). In 1968, the Minister of Education decided to revise the Libyan educational system. As a result, significant changes were made to the teaching of English in both preparatory and secondary schools. The aim was to make English the language of instruction for scientific courses in secondary schools and universities. However, this decision lacked the support of many Libyans. They believed that such a move would have a negative impact on their native Arabic language and could even threaten its existence in Libya (Mohsen, 2014).

In the mid-1960s, there was a need for a new English language programme and better textbooks to change and improve the whole process of teaching the language in Libya. A new series, known as *English for Libya*, was developed by Gusbi (1979), to suit the Libyan learners' linguistic and cultural background. It consisted of three textbooks, three workbooks and three teacher's handbooks. The teacher's book contained instructions to be followed in the classroom, useful visual aids, tips to enhance the teaching process and guidelines on the number of hours necessary for teaching each book. The textbooks were designed for the preparatory level, i.e., levels 7, 8 and 9 (i.e., 1st, 2nd, and 3rd preparatory), in the current fundamental education. These books were regarded as a starting point to focus on the Libyan culture. In the preparatory series,

the main focus was on the culture of Libya. While in the 1970s modifications on the content and structure occurred on specific grades such as the adjustments which occurred on the EFL curriculum for the secondary stage, this series remained in use until the mid-1980s. For the secondary grade, Gusbi (1979) designed another series known as *English for Libya* in which the main focus was English culture. These series were used in the first half of the 1980s (Mohsen, 2014).

In 1986, the English language was totally dropped from the Libyan curriculum due to governmental pressure and negative attitudes towards the English language. In fact, the Ministry of Education went as far as to ban the learning of English in schools and universities. In addition, all elements of western culture, for example western music, were also banned. What now seems a misguided directive was aimed generally at buttressing a sense of Arab nationalism, and in particular was a reaction against the influence of the United States. For these political reasons, and under a plan to cut down foreign impact on Libyans, all foreign languages were excluded from the Libyan school curricula. From 1986 the teaching of English and French were banned from schools and universities across the country for about a decade. Therefore, a significant portion of the population was brought up without learning, or even any exposure to, a foreign language.

The political reasons behind the halt of foreign language teaching also meant that, there was no internet access until 2002, thus depriving the Libyan population of exposure to other cultures and languages around the world. As a result of these government policies, school teachers lost their jobs. Some teachers of English started looking towards other departments for employment and started teaching different subjects such as History, Social Science and Geography. In the 1990s, a new series of EFL textbooks named *English for Libya* by Phillips et

al. (2002) were introduced. They were used instead of those ELT textbooks developed and designed by a team of English first language speakers. Moreover, there was a limited number of Libyan English language teachers due to the closure of English language departments and English language training institutions for years. There were further challenges since many Libyan English language teachers had not had the opportunity to master the language fully. In fact, many university learners studied English at a beginner's level. Hence, when they returned to work as teachers of English, they had a limited command of the language.

The situation of English language teaching at that time was summarised in a report by the UNESCO (1996) which stated that:

- the communicative approach to English language learning has not yet reached the Jamahiriya (Libya)
- schools lack the use of educational media; there is even no use of tape recorders and no testing of oral skills. Some schools have overhead projectors, but it seems that teachers do not have printed or blank transparencies or suitable pens to use them.
- there are no language laboratories or even specialist English teaching rooms (pp. 22-23).

To remedy to this situation, the educational policy makers introduced a new curriculum for both primary and high school levels in 2000. In 2000, the Libyan Ministry of Education developed a new English curriculum which was in a series known as *English for Libya* as a replacement for the 1990s ELT curriculum (Aloreibi, & Carey, 2017). Orafi and Borg (2009) explained that each level is divided into a course book and an activity book and that every unit consists of lessons which include the four language skills: reading, writing, listening comprehension and speaking.

According to, Gadour (2006), the use of updated course books has resulted in the need to use new teaching methodologies in the classroom. However, Mohsen (2014) claims that such a situation is problematic because most of the instructors have forgotten the language itself, but have to teach it due to societal pressure. Only a minority of school teachers are able to teach the curriculum properly. Course instructors who opposed the elimination of English from the curriculum were offered scholarships abroad to enhance their language skills (International Association of Universities (IAU), 2009). This has led to a generation gap among many teachers in Libya. In order to solve this problem, many teaching training programmes have been provided. But some of these have been ineffective because of the teachers' cultural background which has had a negative impact on the process (Gadour, 2006). Gadour (2006) explained that to overcome this issue, special training programmes were designed taking into account the teachers' cultures and knowledge of EFL. However, the programmes were not successful as the teachers were more accustomed to the older techniques and were not very responsive to the new up-to-date ones.

1.7 English as a Foreign Language

With regard to foreign languages in Libya, English is the most frequently used foreign language mainly due to its importance in business and commerce. It is also generally used by the younger generation in some domains which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

It has recently been observed that foreign language programmes in schools are starting at an increasingly early age around the world (Nikolov, 2009b). English is one of the most popular foreign languages studied. In a study conducted by Papp (2011), 42% of participants mentioned

that English was introduced into formal education in their institution for children aged five or younger. Of the participants, 25% started learning English at age six, and 16 % by the age of seven. The results showed that children who started to learn English before five years of age were an exception. Sometimes the main reason for young children to learn English is because of parental pressure to master the language. Hsu and Austin (2012) point out that this situation is very common in Taiwan where parents tend to enroll their young children in after-school English programmes. In Hungarian public schools, it is obligatory to take up foreign language learning (Nikolov, 2009a). Over half of pupils start to learn English at a very young age. In a comparative study of young Hungarian learners of English and German as foreign languages, Nikolov (2009a) revealed that the learners taking English were more motivated than their counterparts learning German. Moreover, El-Fiki (2012) explained in her research that in the Egyptian context a lot of attention has been placed on the development of English learners' proficiency. English is first introduced to young learners in elementary schools (in Grade 4 in Arabic programmes and Grade 1 in public language schools) and even private kindergartens. In Saudi Arabia, English instruction was introduced for all learners in primary grades (4th grade to 6th grade) in 2010. Learners attend 45-minute English classes twice a week which increases to four classes per week for middle and higher grades. In these classes onwards, English becomes a compulsory subject in these grades. Moreover, in some departments, English is the first language of instruction (Alrashidi, & Phan, 2015).

Interestingly, it has been reported that English teaching and usage in educational programmes is relatively low in the African continent (Negash, 2011). English as a foreign language is sometimes perceived as a threat to the native languages of African communities (Crystal, 2012). In Libya, policy makers and the government organisations have provided

English as a FL to young speakers of Arabic at the age of eleven in fifth grades. However, according to Pathan and Marayi, (2016) this attempt has been met with several challenges and obstacles, such as low levels of motivation of learners. Also, the course books do not take account of the local educational needs and lack the socio-cultural touch, thus having a negative effect on the learning process of English as a FL.

Educators such as McCloskey et al. (2006) have shown that age can influence the way a language is learned. However, age alone cannot guarantee success in learning a foreign language. Other factors such as sociocultural context, pre-service training programmes, educational policies and historical language practices are likely to influence the success of a language instructional programme. There is not one specific method of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) for children. In general, EFL teaching for young learners begins by adapting the following factors and examining how they relate to one another: programme planning, content and learner goals, effective teachers, programmatic and institutional support (McCloskey et al., 2006). McCloskey et al. (2006) also mentioned that teaching English to young learners of other languages is conditioned by a number of factors such as having a clear view of how the EFL programme functions. These aims, objectives and methods of assessment should be clearly outlined from the outset. One of the essential factors which affects the teaching of English to speakers of other languages is specialised training. Many scholars such as Fareh (2010), Pathan, and Marayi (2016) and McIlwraith and Fortune (2016) have investigated the role of training of EFL teachers and associated it with effective language teaching. Interestingly, these scholars claimed that EFL Arab teachers lack any training experience in teaching English. For example, Allen (2008) pointed out that, “[the] majority of primary school teachers have an insufficient command and training of English to be able to teach it effectively and teachers with insufficient

subject knowledge have very little if any confidence” (p. 2). Equally important are teachers’ attitudes and perceptions towards such educational programmes and learning and their intentions to model language learning for the students with whom they work. Where applicable, EFL educators receive the necessary degree, licensing, validation, or certification as determined by their institution, country, or region from qualified EFL teachers and assessors (McCloskey et al., 2006). As can be seen from these factors, the importance and success of teaching English language to speakers of other languages are conditioned by the way they teach it and their attitudes towards the lingua franca.

1.8 The Education System in Libya

In 2011, a policy was introduced to start English from the first stage in primary school (grade five). This policy does not apply to private schools where English is taught from very early grades, i.e., year one. In years four, five and six of Basic Education, children spend seven lessons per week learning Arabic. In this stage, pupils are introduced to Arabic morphology and syntax through their reading materials. The topics in the reading lessons are more complex in terms of meaning and grammar. These learners are taught eight Arabic reading lessons which last approximately 40 minutes each. In grade one, the pupils learn to read through pictures cues and get to practice the correct pronunciation. Then, these learners learn how to decode the 28 characters of the Arabic alphabet. Once they know how to decode the alphabet letters, they start to practice reading single sentences. As from year three, learners move to comprehension stories and get to practice writing, dictation and grammar through the reading passages. At the end of each reading passage, a number of comprehension strategies are encouraged. The reading curricula in grades seven and eight consist of two main books which include the following skills:

reading and composition - two lessons; dictation – one lesson; grammar – two lessons; and literary texts – one lesson (Ghuma, 2011).

In the 2008 report of the International Conference on Education which was written in English, the Libyan Education authorities specified the number of hours that should be devoted to reading in Arabic for the first six years of Basic Education:

The number of annual classes allocated to reading in [the] early elementary stages, is 238 classes, in addition to 136 annual classes in Islamic Education, which supports reading skills. The number of school years in which reading is primarily taught are 6 years[sic] (from first to sixth grades), but pupils are [also] taught subjects that help them learn to read at[sic] the seventh to ninth grades (GPCE, 2008, p 48).

Both languages, standard Arabic and English as a foreign language, are used in school classes. However, more time is devoted to Arabic than English in a typical school week. In addition, Arabic is used in everyday interactions while English tends to be restricted to the English classes only in school (Ghuma, 2011). Years five, six, seven, eight and nine learn English for general lessons.

According to the GPCE (2008), the main goal of the education system in Libya is to provide education through a “comprehensive policy of education for all” (p.20). In the report, the policy was ratified by the rule of law (Education Law of 1971) which confirmed that education is free and compulsory up to the end of basic education for males and females “without any distinction whether socially or in quality” (GPCE, 2008, p. 20). Basic education has always been compulsory, meaning that learners should obtain a qualification which allows them to enter high

school. At the end of high school, students take a national examination which they all sit simultaneously (Rajab,2007). This policy led to an increase in school enrolment rates which reached 95% in 2003 (GPCE, 2008, p. 21). Table 1.1 illustrates the number of schools, classrooms, teachers and students in basic and preparatory education for the academic year 2007/2008.

Table 1.1

Number of schools, classrooms, students and teachers (GPCE, 2008)

	Educational stage	Number of Schools	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Number of Teachers
1.	Basic Education	3397	40743	939799	119313
2.	Secondary Education	1033	10940	226000	39847
3.	Joint	72	1228	30697	3764
	Total	4502	52911	1196496	162924

Source: Statistics of the GPC for Education in GPCE (2008, p. 13)

It is worth noting that the education system in Libya is highly centralised and characterised by a complex hierarchical structure. Education in Libya is managed and controlled by the General People's Committee (GPCE). Therefore, all decisions relating to funding, school distribution across the country, teachers' employment, school admission regulations, curriculum development, examinations and inspection are set by the policy makers and staff in the universities illustrated in the hierarchy (see GPCE, 2008; Orafi & Borg, 2009). Table 1.2 illustrates the hierarchy of the Libyan education system by the GPCE for enrolling Libyan

learners who finish their kinder education for basic education. Additional regulations are sometimes taken by the GPCE which represents the top of the hierarchy.

Table 1.2

The hierarchy structure of the Libyan education system according to the GPCE (2008)

Level	Grade	Age
University Education		19-23
Intermediate Education Secondary	10	16-19
Preparatory	6, 7, 8, 9	6-15
Primary	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	5-11
Kindergarten		4-5

Adapted from Tamtam, Gallagher, Olabi, & Naher (2011)

The Libyan educational system consists of all age groups ranging from young children in kindergarten to adult learners in graduate and post-graduate education (Tamtam et al., 2011). Kindergarten is a 2-year stage for children aged 4 and 5. Basic Education is a 9-year staged and includes children aged 6 to 15 years. It starts with Grade One and continues to Grade Nine. Secondary (Intermediate) Education and Training is a 3-year stage which enrolls students aged 16 to 19 years. This level consists of general secondary education and vocational centres and institutions. Based on the GPCE Decision No. 165 in 2006, specialised secondary education in Libya includes disciplines such as the Basic Sciences, Languages and Economic Sciences (GPCE, 2008, p. 8). University Education consists of universities, higher institutions, and higher

technical and vocational centres. Finally, Advanced Studies includes masters and PhD (Doctorate) degrees.

Although the Libyan government fully supports and finances the education system at all levels which means that school is free in Libya, there have been on-going concerns among Libyan educationalists about the quality of the education in the country (Ghanem, 2006). According to Alhamali (2007), a researcher in the field of EFL Libyan context, “the educational programmes suffer from limited curricula, a lack of qualified teachers (especially Libyan teachers), and a strong tendency to learn by rote rather than by reasoning, a characteristic of Arab education in general” (p.78). In other words, the teaching and training programmes offered are of a low standard and not appropriate for the teaching programmes of the current curriculum at middle and high schools.

1.9 The New English Curriculum

This new English curriculum is presented in a series of course books and work books known as *English for Libya*. The course books are designed for all levels and follow the same structure. They all include sections associated with specific skills such as reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar in addition to the conversation skills of listening and speaking. The main aim of this curriculum was to be a clear departure from its predecessor, where functional language use, listening and speaking had been neglected. This new curriculum is based on encouraging the use of reading strategies, for example, pre-reading, reading and post-reading strategies. Grammatical tasks are also included in the course book. The book highlights the significance of using English as the main language of both learners and course instructors in the classroom setting. The main objective is to allow the learners to interact with their peers and to

talk in English with other learners (Connor & Macfarlane, 2007). This curriculum also includes many interactive activities which require learners to work in pairs and practice the target language. According to Macfarlane (2000), the activities are “a good opportunity for the students to speak the target language” (p.5). But for progress to be made, it is essential for all teachers to have a positive attitude towards the learning process, specifically when learners make errors. Following the strategies on educational change set out in the Fullan review (2007), the English curriculum in Libya can be described as power-coercive. Fullan’s most well-known review, *The Meaning of Educational Change*, was first published in 1982 and subsequently re-published and updated in 1991, 2001 and 2007. His strategies for educational change, as set out in the Fullan review (2007), revolutionised the theory and practice of education reform. *The Meaning of Educational Change* report is a definitive compendium to all aspects of the management of educational change - a powerful resource for everyone involved in school reform. The main aim of the report is to take into account change processes at the school building level to develop a variety of local strategies that include, for example, love your employees, connect peers with purpose, prevail in capacity building, and have transparency rules, and systems. Fullan (2007) used a wide range of innovations and reforms to explain the practical meaning of educational change. Many themes were included such as reading, teacher education, school-wide innovation, and state and national policies. These changes had an impact locally and internationally with regards to the educational process. His report focused on the types and purposes of educational change. It raised questions about the types of change, including changes in schools, teachers, learners and principals. Fullan provided evidence to show that many types of innovation were poorly implemented and irrelevant to the stated purpose of the education system. He examined the difficult situations teachers face and revealed that change was one of the main challenges.

Moreover, he argued that teaching skills, such as planning, monitoring learners, and constructive discussion, suggested by administrative policy makers, were a burden rather than an asset. He argued that most of these teaching skills were not useful and that professional development appeared to be insufficient. Instead, teachers need to be given a chance to collaborate and exchange ideas on specific teaching skills within the system. Therefore, according to Fullan (2007), real change may take place if the reform agenda is internalised and new capacities such as connecting peers with purpose, transparency rules and the focus on capacity building are fostered at every step in the education system. Support is essential at all levels, as without it the planned system transformation could slow down or stop entirely. Numerous other strategies for implementing educational change may be found in Fullan's (2007) report.

Orafi and Borg (2009) argued that although Fullan's (2007) innovative strategies were adopted in the new curriculum, Libyan teachers did not participate or innovate in planning this curriculum. In fact, they had to apply what policy makers recommended in the training programmes run by the ELT inspectors, who were themselves trained by the publishers of this curriculum. In these one-week workshops, teachers were introduced to the textbooks and were provided with information about the curriculum. These training programmes were taught by university educators; therefore, the trainers themselves lacked the experience into the way teaching works at lower grades. In sum, it could be drawn that the implementation of New English Libyan curriculum is a complex process, and that the introduction of such curriculum needs to be planned carefully, and should take into consideration teachers' views, as they may influence the success of the implementation.

1.10 Fifth Grade and Seventh Grade English Curricula in Libyan Schools

In general, the Libyan curricula for English for fifth and seventh grades consist of two basic books: the pupils' book which is based on a group of exercises performed in class, and the activity book which includes activities to be completed in class and at home. The 2014-2015 Libyan syllabus consists of four main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The syllabus is divided into units for two semesters: the first semester starts in May and the second semester starts in December. In the first semester, the child studies four units and one revision unit. The first week is considered an introduction. Teachers are expected to cover two lessons every week. In the second semester, teachers start with Unit Five and are also required to finish two lessons every week. Every teacher is expected to end the semester with a revision class. It may be argued that there is little flexibility in teaching. In other words; teachers need to follow the curriculum only and have little opportunity for innovation, improvisation and creativity.

According to the fifth grade curriculum, Libyan pupils with the help of EFL teachers teaching reading are required to:

- (1) Recognise key words.
 - (2) Read and say key words.
 - (3) Read and recognise short phrases and simple sentences when supported by visual aids
- (Macfarlane, 2000, p.5).

According to the seventh-grade curriculum, Libyan pupils with the help of EFL teachers teaching reading are required by the end of the grade to:

- (1) Use understanding of text organisation to facilitate more detailed comprehension.
- (2) Develop the ability to deal with a broader range of text types.
- (3) Further develop understanding of real world examples.

(4) Read and perform conversation (Macfarlane, 2000, p.5).

According to the fifth and seventh grade curricula above, EFL reading teachers are not expected to encourage their learners to use a range of reading strategies that support the development of word reading and comprehension. The fifth grade curriculum places important emphasis on decoding. In contrast, seventh grade EFL teachers are expected to focus on comprehension instruction.

1.11 Organisation of the Thesis

This first chapter has introduced the study and described its aims and objectives. It has provided some background on the situation of English in Libya and explained the significance of conducting this research in the Libyan context.

Chapter Two focuses on the reading process. It briefly highlights some of the main models in L1 reading and examines the simple view of reading. In addition, it discusses the role of the teacher in reading instruction. Finally, it explains two main reading instructive methods stemming from the previous reading models.

Chapter Three provides a detailed description of reading in a second script. It gives an overview of a number of reading skills and language components thought to be crucial in second language reading such as phonological awareness, morphological awareness, syntactic knowledge, and working memory. Moreover, it discusses how reading happens in Arabic. It highlights two main theories of L2 reading and, the implications of L2 reading (English) on L1 (Arabic).

Chapter Four discusses the way in which teachers teach reading, i.e., reading techniques, strategies and skills. It also examines the teacher factors that influence the teaching of reading, i.e., attitudes, experience and gender.

Chapter Five explains the research methodology and the data collection instruments used in this study. It describes the process of piloting the systematic observations, stimulated recall interviews, and the teacher's questionnaire. Moreover, it discusses the selection of the population, the sampling of study participants, and the validity and reliability of the research.

Chapter Six presents the results from the systematic observation and stimulated recall interviews results and analyses the findings with reference to the points raised in the previous chapters.

Chapter Seven presents and discusses the quantitative results from the questionnaire. Chapter Eight consists a general discussion and Chapter Nine is the conclusion chapter.

1.12 Summary

This introductory chapter has established the background to the research, explained the significance of the study, clarified the statement of the problem and stated the research questions. It has also described the research context by providing some background on the history of English in Libya and explaining the hierarchy of the Libyan education system and the significance of conducting this research in the Libyan context. Finally, the chapter has outlined the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two

What is Reading?

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the complexity of reading by focusing on the empirical literature on the theories related to the reading process. It highlights some of the main models in reading and examines the simple view of reading. In addition, it discusses the two-main reading instructive methods stemming from the previous reading models in L1.

2.1 Reading

Research reveals that our definition of reading is built on the disciplines of cognitive psychology, educational psychology and psycholinguistics (Jackson et al., 2001). According to Grabe and Stoller (2001), reading is “the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (p.9). In line with this, reading may be conceptualised as a complex skill consisting of a number of levels of cognitive processes, such as the process of decoding words to convert them into mental representations and to obtain meaning units, the cognitive analyses to understand relationships between such meaning units, the activation of relevant prior knowledge and the experience to summarise, monitor comprehension and make inferences while integrating information. A child needs to acquire these skills and knowledge to become a skilled reader (NRP, 2000; Pearson, 2001). Reading is therefore a complex process which involves an amount of coordinated skills and linguistic knowledge such as phonemic

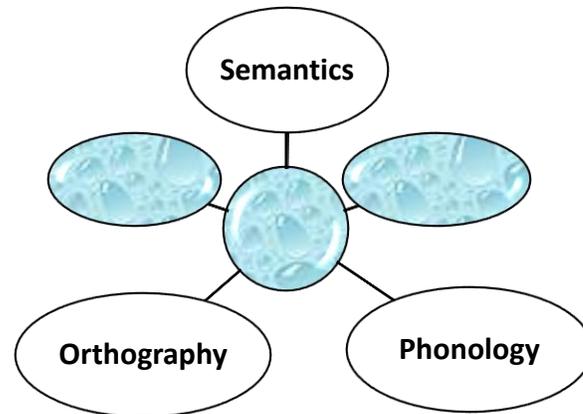
awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Kern, 2000). However, scholars differ in defining what reading is exactly. The complexity of this process, i.e., that how we read is not really understood or whether it can be captured appropriately by reading models, is why this chapter focuses on models rather than theories. There are several reading models, or ways in which educators instruct and teach reading. Each is based on a belief or philosophy of how children learn to read. “A reading model is a theory of what is going on in the reader’s eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text” (Davis, 1995, p. 59). Models of the reading process try to explain and predict reading behaviour. They are the base on which reading instructions are built. This study focuses on how readers in the Libyan classrooms are instructed and much of the reading instruction is bottom-up or top-down based. It investigates whether fifth and seventh grade Libyan English language teachers differ in their instruction, and whether they favour a top down or a bottom-up approach through the teaching techniques they use and reading strategies they encourage. Such differences in opinions are conceptualised from a number of different theoretical perspectives, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 Triangle Model: A Connectionist Model of Reading

According to Cain (2007), reading has been viewed much as neurons in the brain, e.g. this highly complex task includes a network of processing units: phonological, semantic, orthographic and linguistic processes. Given the complexity of the task, connectionist models have been developed involving a set of computational principles that are intended to represent the computation process in reading. Connectionist computational models play a crucial role in the research on reading from the way in which children learn to read to skilled reading and

reading impairments (dyslexia). The network processing consists of a group of layered units which are either explicit or hidden. The hidden units are used to connect the different types of information. Such units control other units, for example, the units representing orthography are associated with phonology. The hidden units play an important role in representing the complex mapping which occurs between the input spelling and output pronunciation. These layers are activated by the current input and previous input, for example, past experience and knowledge. The orthographic aspects can include letters while the phonological features may include phonemes or phonetic elements. The dual route model is a computational model that computes pronunciation from print via two procedures, a lexical procedure and a non-lexical procedure. It suggests that there are two methods of reading words, i.e., the direct route and the indirect route. The direct route involves decoding words through orthography to phonology. The indirect route relies on semantics.

An important feature of the connectionist models is that they centre on the learning process of reading. Although many of these models are based on the aspects of simulating upper grades reading, they also capture the reading process of younger learners (Cain, 2007). Figure 1 shows a connectionist network that orthographic, phonological and semantic information in decoding and other lexical tasks, based on the “triangle” framework (Plaut, McClelland, Seidenberg & Patterson, 1996).

Figure 1.0**A connectionist networks**

Importantly, the connectionist models conceptualise learning as a slow process involving small increases in knowledge, represented by strong and accurate connections between different units (e.g., the letters in printed words and the phonemes in spoken words to which they correspond). Losing any of these units does not cause a loss of all units. However, it leads to a gradual or partial degradation of the decoding process (Hulme & Snowling, 2013). Another important aspect of many connectionist systems is that after learning, learners show the ability to generalise (e.g., to pronounce words which they have not been trained on). An influential model that captures the constructs involved in reading is the Simple View of Reading which is discussed in the coming section. As in any other models this model has its own limitations. For instance, scholars such as Harley (2013) argue that the model has focused on the recognition of morphologically simple, often monosyllabic words. Plaut et al. (1996) confessed, “the nature of processing within the semantic pathway has been characterized in only the coarsest way” (p. 108). Harm and Seidenberg (2004) have addressed this limitation by implementing the semantic component to map orthography and phonology onto semantics on the triangle model. Last but not least, the model’s interpretation of phonological dyslexia and surface dyslexia are

oversimplified. Phonological dyslexia is likely to occur due to a phonological impairment, but some phonological dyslexics do not reveal that general impairment.

2.3 The Simple View of Reading

In the 1980s, the simple view of reading (SVR) was proposed (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). It is a balanced reading model and probably the most efficiently cited and implemented theoretical frameworks for explaining the operation of comprehension in reading. One of the main uses of this model is to serve as a guide for the teaching of reading competence, for the early detection of problems in that competency and for guiding the actions to address these problems. This model is based on the concept that reading comprehension consists of two basic components: linguistic comprehension and decoding. The relationship is formalised in the equation: $RC = LC \times D$. Consequently, from this view, sufficient knowledge of decoding skill and linguistic comprehension are both important for the reader to be a successful one and neither is sufficient alone. The SVR was adopted by the Rose Report (2005) and is one of the most significant contributions to primary national strategies on English literacy learning in the UK (Rose, 2005). The SVR reconciles the debate between models that propose opposing reading methods, i.e., the phonics focusing on decoding and the whole language approach (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). However, proponents of the two previous approaches found the Simple View of Reading inadequate. Supporters of the whole language approach argued that there was too much focus on decoding words in print and not enough on comprehension while proponents of the phonics approach claimed that the reverse was the case (Dombey, 2011). One of its main limitations is that it does not consider the importance of background knowledge which is an

important element for teaching reading (Kirby & Savage, 2008; Stuart, Stainthorp & Snowling, 2009).

Although the Simple View of Reading is a simple model, the reader requires a number of cognitive elements to succeed in any reading process at both higher and lower levels. These elements were suggested and studied in Wrens' cognitive framework (2000) which includes a number of cognitive elements deemed necessary in developing these skills, namely: cipher knowledge, lexical knowledge, an awareness of phonemes, knowledge of the alphabetic principle, knowledge of letters, and understanding concepts about print. According to Wren (2000), these elements facilitate the reading process. First, before any comprehending process, the reader needs to decode the word in print. Through the bottom-up process the readers will then interact top-down to allow themselves to focus on meaning (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Other studies have found that the reader's potentials in lexical knowledge, such as letter knowledge, concepts about print and knowledge of the alphabetic principle, and cipher knowledge that includes phoneme awareness, can facilitate the reading process (e.g., Perfetti, 2007). However, Wren (2000) contends that such knowledge and cognitions play a minor role in the reading ability of readers; good readers use their capabilities and dispositions. For example, fluency in decoding words, oral language ability, and domain knowledge, in addition to differences in dispositions, such as the reader's motivation, goals, and aims, are essential sources of variability in reading (Wren, 2000). Moreover, learners need to understand comprehension by word meanings, relationships between words and language context (e.g., Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

The Simple View of Reading (SVR) provides an account of the cognitive basis of reading that can be used to inform both research and practice. However, it is important to note that

environmental factors may also interact with the reader's knowledge, in addition to good reading, e.g., the text aspects, the subject matter, linguistic aspects and the discourse type (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Both the subject matter and the reading text interact together to either improve or impede the reading process. Also, linguistic knowledge either enhances or hinders the reading process. Such linguistic knowledge is conditioned by the reading text either according to the linguistic structure, vocabulary, ideas in the passage or adherence to language conventions. The discourse type, for instance, whether the reading passage is narrative, imperative or expository, may influence the reading process. Therefore, the reading level may be easy or difficult depending on these aspects (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Moreover, the aim of reading can be obtained by encouraging the learner to use a number of metacognitive reading strategies like using background knowledge to understand the core, summarising the text, monitoring and repairing of comprehension while reading (see Chapter Three for an overview of research in this area). The sociocognitive account of reading recognises the importance of these factors and in particular the role of the teacher in children's reading development.

Stuart et al. (2009) note that "cultural influences are inevitably brought to bear in understanding written texts, and they are implicit in the Simple View of Reading" (p.56). Therefore, many scholars in L1 have emphasised the importance of background knowledge in reading (Durkin, 1979; NRP, 2000; Ness, 2011). Cain (2010) pointed out that "for both local and global coherence, readers need to incorporate background knowledge and ideas (retrieved from long term memory) to make sense of details that are only implicitly mentioned" (p.74).

Hoover and Gough (1990) attempted to validate the Simple View of Reading equation utilising a number of multiple evaluative measurements to study the development of cognition,

language and reading among 250 US readers from first, second, third or fourth grades. The results revealed high correlation scores of more than 0.8 between actual reading scores and the predicted reading scores derived from the equation $RC = LC \times D$ in each grade level. Similarly, Catts, Adlof and Weismer (2006) conducted a study on three groups of eighth graders identified as poor comprehenders, poor decoders or typical readers. They pointed out that the Simple View of Reading model helped in categorising learners and ensured that they received the appropriate instructions and interventions. In the UK, a significant review of reading instruction (Rose, 2005) welcomed the Simple View of Reading as a framework for teaching reading.

Classroom implications

The SVR provides a valid justification and development of the synthetic phonics teaching programme in England 2006, but it does not give enough attention to the spoken language and written language script (DfES, 2006). According to Dombey (2011), teachers need to recognise that the complexity of English orthography makes learning to read in English particularly challenging. Therefore, L1 teachers are required to:

- encourage children to use rime and other sources of information to identify words
- help them adopt 'flexible unit size' strategies
- alert them to the morphological and orthographic patterning of English words
- familiarise them with the language of books
- teach them to make the most of the opportunities written text offers to the reader to search for meaning in a focused and flexible way (Dombey, 2009, p.10).

According to Dombey (2009), all teachers should teach these classroom instructions in a rich environment of meaning-making. He suggests that children need to be guided by their teachers to develop their understanding and recognition of words in print. Finally, the adoption and formalisation of this model based on $SVR=D \times LC$ should not prevent children from enjoying and being engaged in literacy. The section below explains the general models describing the reading process.

2.4 Top-Down Model

This reading model is based on the idea that readers read from the top, that is, they move down to the passage itself from the higher level of mental images. The model focuses on meaning rather than the decoding of form, which means that the interaction occurs between the reader and the reading passage instead of between the reader and the individual sounds of the spoken language and the letters (graphemes) of the written language. In this model, the readers play an active role in the reading process and use their own knowledge of the reading text. Goodman (1967) emphasised that the reader uses his lower process and makes assumptions to selectively interpret the reading text. The reader does this by having a general idea (schema) of what may be included in the reading passage. As a result, this schema assists the reader with an understanding of the vocabulary, leading them to read as much as they can until the meaning in the reading passage fulfils their expectations (Dechant, 2013). A top-down reading model opposes the bottom-up model. Goodman (1967) states that it is “an interaction between reader and written language, through which the reader attempts to reconstruct a message from the writer”. He also labels the model “a psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1967, p127). This term was given because the hints could be unreliable for the reader to guess meaning in

addition to the lack of word-attack strategies for decoding or pronouncing an unfamiliar word. Researchers, such as Stanovich (1980), argued that such a process is time consuming in comparison to the decoding reading process. So, this model has been largely superseded by more contemporary models.

2.5 Bottom-Up Model

Another opposing model is the bottom-up approach which was proposed by Gough in 1972. Bottom-up or stage models described by Gough (1972) and Chall (1996) propose that young learners learn skills in a linear, accumulative and sequential manner starting with pre-reading skills, then decoding skills and finally comprehension skills. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) proposed a detailed model in which reading is the natural result of decoding words effectively without any cognitive reliance. LaBerge and Samuels' model is popular for communicating that a reader's internal attention is limited. Consequently, if learners spend a lot of time on inner (cognitive) energy on simple reading tasks, for instance decoding, this will be at the expense of internal time devoted for comprehension. According to the authors, the internal elements of attention are viewed as most vital to this reading model of atomicity in reading.

Also, in this model it is argued that comprehending words from print includes these steps:

- words in print should be decoded
- learners need to comprehend the decoded words

This model perceives that emergent readers understand the meaning of words in reading by using decoding and comprehension skills interchangeably. As a result, this may facilitate the reading experience for the learner. Both the emergent readers and the struggling readers spend a significant amount of time decoding; consequently, comprehension may be adversely influenced.

Fluent readers need little internal attention in recognising words because they have the potential to do so and are more proficient in decoding a large number of words they come across.

Therefore, they will have more opportunities to focus their attention on comprehension. Laberge and Samuels (1974) mentioned that there must be direct instruction to decoding words and continual practice in order to see any improvement. According to their theory, there are specific techniques for teaching reading which are thought to improve learners' fluency and automaticity in reading, i.e., reading easier texts, reading text once for decoding purposes and then for meaning, reading strategies which encourage learners to read meaningful passages, and encouraging learners to listen to stories from an audio recording while reading the passage (Laberge & Samuels, 1974). In the bottom-up model, reading is perceived as the process of interpreting meaning from one symbol representation to another (Nunan, 1991). In other words, it is the process of recognising words in print and building up the meaning from the smallest units (words and letters) (Rivers 1964, Yorio 1971). In this model, the readers play a passive role since they rely heavily on their linguistic knowledge.

However, some critics argue that the bottom-up model is inflexible due to the fact that not all young learners have the same rate of reading development and that they are not passive readers of a text. In fact, they have more control over their own knowledge and skills than what is allowed within each stage based on prerequisite skills (Paris & Hamilton, 2009). Furthermore, according to Samuels and Kamil (1988), “[b]ecause of the lack of feedback loops in the early bottom-up models, it was difficult to account for sentence – context effects and the role of prior knowledge of text topic as facilitating variables in word recognition and comprehension” (p.31). Moreover, Dechant (2013) argues that the bottom-up reading model represents a one dimension in the reading process in addition to the whole processing of text at early stages. Yet there is a

limited focus on the readers' background knowledge and higher level processing reading strategies. In addition, the influence of a bottom-up approach relies heavily on phonic regularity of specific languages, and English is very often phonically irregular. For instance, the letter cluster *ough* represents /ɒf/ as in *cough*, /aʊ/ as in *bough*, /u / as in *through* and /ʌf/ as in *enough* (Mokotedi, 2012). To overcome these limitations, another model was proposed: the top-down model.

2.6 Interactive Models

Interactive models which explain the interactions between both bottom-up and top-down processes may provide more insightful descriptions of the reading process. Rumelhart (1994) explains that a reader uses all kinds of knowledge in order to understand the reading passage. The knowledge sources consist of featural, letter-level, letter-cluster, lexical-level, syntactic and semantic-level knowledge. The features can work interactively in both bottom-up and top-down ways. Stanovich (1980) explains that readers adopt these sources of knowledge to understand a passage and overcome any reading issues. Grabe and Stoller (2002) state that reading is interactive because "linguistic information from the text interacts with information activated by the reader from long-term memory, as background knowledge" (p.18). Consequently, linguistic knowledge and background knowledge are essential in understanding a reading passage. These findings are in line with the results of a study by Myhill and Brackley (2004) who stated that "children's existing schemata are powerful bases for supporting new learning or indeed for confounding it" (p.274). Furthermore, the variety of reading lessons, techniques and strategies will develop their interaction of background and texts. Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2001) explain that "effective literacy involves decoding text, recognising the meanings of text, understanding the

purposes of different texts and uncovering and challenging the ways in which texts construct the world” (p.25). Block (1992) pointed out that the bottom-up and top-down models interact with each other and are both influenced by the readers’ background knowledge. Research has witnessed a development in describing the way in which readers decode and comprehend a text. Block (1992) identifies this process as metacognition which is based on the idea that readers read while monitoring their reading. Many researchers are interested in this area of study (Mckeown et al, 2009, Paris & Hamilton, 2009).

2.7 The Role of the Teachers in the Teaching of Reading

Reading can be viewed as a sociocultural activity and the readers’ ability to comprehend the text depends on the sociocultural environment that they are in. A very important factor to consider in the reading process is the teacher’s role in reading instruction, which is the main focus of this thesis. Muller (1973) pointed out in his observational study that if teachers knew which strategies would assist the learner’s reading proficiency and which ones would interfere with the process, learning would be enhanced. Ruddle and Unrau (1994) explain that most teachers believe that professional teachers do not “conduct to the end” as facilitators. Instead, teachers have to motivate learners, “stimulate intellectual curiosity, discover learners' self-understanding, use aesthetic imagery and expression, encourage engagement in problem solving” (Ruddle & Unrau, 1994, p.1489). Effective teachers have important traits that affect learners’ motivation, which are personal characteristics that balance their teaching. These include high expectations, warmth and flexibility. Additionally, they focus on their learners’ involvement in the social environment of the classroom. The teacher's knowledge is based on academic preparation, professional development and a broader experience in life than their learners. This

knowledge which is used and based “on prior knowledge and beliefs on the instructional decision-making process as purpose, plan and strategy construction” (Ruddle & Unrau, 1994, p.1490) is developed with the aim of guiding learners in making meaning instruction.

Furthermore, the problems experienced by readers in learning reading appear to be attributed as much to techniques used by teachers for teaching reading comprehension as with the learners’ inability to master and develop their reading strategies, i.e., asking and answering questions, using background knowledge and breaking down words to construct meaning to comprehend the text, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. Yazar (2013) argues that “although reading is an individual activity, it requires guidance to develop basic reading skills” (p.36). A vital element that may have a negative impact on reading instruction is the lack of experience among educators who can effectively teach reading skills (Duke & Block, 2012). With regards to this, Sailors and Price (2015) emphasised that improvements in readers proficiency in text comprehension is maintained when the teachers are able to effectively teach their students. When teachers are coached in their reading instruction, they will become effective in teaching their learners. In line with this, Yazar (2013) states that “to teach reading effectively, teachers should teach and make students use reading strategies and to choose the right one to understand the text” (p.35). However, when teachers use ineffective techniques for teaching reading, this might unintentionally result in learners having difficulty with comprehension. To support this view, Coleman et al. (2005) argue that “good teaching is being understood to be a matter of providing good learning experiences (...) both at the level of quality performance activities and of a conducive learning environment” (p.80).

It is worth noting that there is a gap in the number of studies investigating the current level of teacher preparation, their experience in teaching reading and their impact on their

learners. Binks-Cantrell et al. (2012) attempted to determine whether teacher educators who have a higher understanding of basic language skills are better to develop their candidates' knowledge of a higher understanding of basic language constructs also. The teacher works as a mediator or facilitator of meaning-making. The readers (or learners) will have the opportunity to find other meanings not familiar to them from the beginning, by classroom discussions and sharing ideas. The meaning-construction takes place in the social environment of the classroom where the students are able to interact with the text, the teacher, themselves and each other. Aspects of affective and cognitive conditions (see Chapter Four), motivation, stance, unique perspectives, prior knowledge and beliefs, sociocultural attitudes and values directly influence the functions of meaning-construction. The teacher guides the learners with strategies to find the meaning. The different knowledge along with the affective and cognitive conditions that students and teachers bring to the meaning-construction process of reading are implied in the sociocultural theory which focuses on how teachers can create a learning environment.

Additionally, in order for the reader to negotiate meaning and comprehend a passage themselves, they will need a wide range of skills and knowledge. Branden (2000) explains that reading teachers encourage learners to negotiate meanings by continuous discussions to negotiate different views about meaning and by scaffolding on the pupils' contributions. Also by assisting their learners with appropriate strategies to overcome any difficulties when to read, and by explaining the meaning of new words when they come across them.

Teachers' skills and knowledge involve cognitive capacities (e.g., attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualisation ability), attitudes (an aim for reading, an interest for the reading material, a positive attitude as a reader), and a certain level of linguistic knowledge (vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge,

knowledge of specific comprehension strategies). These essential sources of changes in knowledge and capacities are the teaching techniques the teacher uses and the reader receives. Effective teaching should foster reading, which is defined in two ways: the comprehension of the passage under current consideration and decoding words. An effective teacher's role is to develop both reading skills of learners. Although teachers can concentrate their instruction on assisting learners to comprehend a text, an essential aim is guiding learners to become self-regulated, active readers who have a variety of strategies to help them comprehend and decode passages. Appropriate teachers are those teachers who establish these goals into their teaching of reading techniques (RAND Rand Reading Study Group, 2002).

The methods used by teachers who teach reading can vary significantly. Using the models explored in sections 2.4, 2.5 and the points made in this section as the background, the paragraphs below examine the different methods of teaching reading used by teachers in L1.

2.8 Methods of Teaching Reading

For many years scholars have debated whether the main focus of reading instruction should be based on phonics or on comprehension (Harp & Brewer, 2004). Due to the significance of this issue, it is not surprising that for many years this has been a contentious subject in schools and among teachers. In the phonics method, young learners learn to read phoneme sounds onto corresponding letters. They learn to blend these letters and combinations of phonemes to produce words. For instance, the word *shop* is divided into the three phonemes /sh/-/o/-/p/. Children learn to read these phonemes and merge the sounds together to make the word. In this approach, instructors start teaching children the minimal sounds, then the most

complex combinations of alphabetic characters. According to the Rose (2005) report, emergent readers should be taught:

- grapheme–phoneme correspondences in a clearly defined, incremental sequence
- to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesising) phonemes in the order in which they occur, all through a word to read it
- to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell.
- that blending and segmenting are reversible processes (p.4).

The report recommends that high-quality phonic work will be most effective when:

- it is part of a broad and rich curriculum that engages children in a range of activities and experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills and phonological awareness
- for most children it starts by the age of 5, subject to the professional judgement of teachers and practitioners
- it is multisensory, encompassing simultaneous visual, auditory and kin aesthetic activities to enliven core learning
- it is time-limited, such that the great majority of children should be confident readers by the end of their primary level
- it is systematic, that is to say, it follows a carefully planned programme with fidelity, reinforcing and building on previous learning to secure children's progress
- it is taught discretely and daily at a brisk pace
- there are opportunities to reinforce and apply acquired phonic knowledge and skills across the curriculum and in such activities as shared and guided reading
- children's progress in developing and applying their phonic knowledge is carefully assessed and monitored. (pp.4-5).

Many researchers in L1 are in favour of using this method (NRP, 2000; Rose, 2005; Torgesen et al., 2007) and supporters of this method argue that all children have the potential to become quick and successful readers (NRP, 2000; Ehri et al., 2001). The NRP's report (2000) on reading instruction carried out by the NRP (2000) is one of the most reliable sources of data and evidence on the teaching of reading. The report addresses the question as to whether or not a systematic phonics instruction is better than a non-systematic phonics instruction including basal programmes, whole language approaches and whole-word programmes (NRP, 2000, pp. 2-95). The (NRP, 2000) report emphasised these important points about phonics instruction. First, phonemic awareness and phonic strategies are vital for progressing decoding and fluency skills (Snow & Juel, 2005). Second, the use of explicit systematic phonics instruction is vital for all readers and appears to function adequately with a small number of learners (Jeynes, 2008). Young learners who struggle in reading or who may confront some issues in more advanced years require both systematic and explicit phonics instruction. As a result, explicit instruction centering on letter sounds, decoding and encoding of words will be useful for these groups of learners. In addition to the repeated exposure to generalisations and practice, using this knowledge in reading and writing skills might be important to facilitate these learners' motivation to read. It is worth mentioning that one of the most useful conclusions drawn in behavioural science is that direct instruction on letter-sound associations and word decoding enhances children's reading proficiency (Stanovich, 1994). Also, the NRP (2000) found that systematic phonics instruction assists young learners in their reading in pre-school and primary school. It is also beneficial for struggling readers. Moreover, phonics instruction has a positive impact on reading achievement, fluency and reading comprehension, suggesting that the

synthetic phonics approach is necessary in any early reading instruction. However, no reliable source mentions that this approach could be taught alone.

In opposition to the phonics approach is the whole language approach. This reading approach was previously known as the *top-down reading approach*, with this method children learn to read by recognising whole words rather than individual phoneme/grapheme correspondences. One prominent supporter of the whole language approach is Kenneth Goodman, a professor of education at the University of Arizona. In his book *Whole in Whole*, he argues that phonics instruction actually hinders reading development. In this approach, children are encouraged to use their background knowledge and to focus on meaning and structure. Goodman believes that there are four functions in reading: predicting, sampling, confirming and correcting. This approach is founded on the idea that words lead to meaning. It opposes the idea of breaking words into letters and phonemes and decoding. Instead, language should be viewed as a function of meaning, which leads to comprehension. The *whole approach*, therefore, encompasses teaching practices derived from a more general philosophy of teaching and learning. According to Smith and Goodman (1971), young children should also acquire meaning and purpose when learning to read from a very early stage.

2.9 Summary

This second chapter has investigated the theoretical thinking and knowledge about the reading process by examining models such as the connectionist computational, bottom up and top-down ones. On the basis of the above paragraphs, it could be concluded that learners need to have access to all models to progress in the reading process. As discussed above, an important model which presents a framework for the learning process both these opposing models is the

Simple View of Reading. This chapter has also highlighted the crucial role that teachers play in children's reading development. Leading on from these review findings, the next chapter will focus on how reading happens in a second language.

Chapter Three

An Introduction to Reading in a Second Language Script

3.0 Reading in a Second Language

Becoming a proficient reader is conditional on the development of a set of skills and knowledge which facilitate the reading process for any child. Not only do children have to acquire the ability to decode words, but they also need to be able to detect the meaning from a text and to comprehend its words and sentences as a whole. In other words, children need to acquire both decoding and comprehension skills in reading a text (NRP, 2000). Research has emphasised the complexity of these skills and that of other language components (Alderson et al., 2014). One of the aims of this thesis is to examine how these reading skills are taught in a second language (L2) classroom setting in Libya.

This chapter provides an overview of a number of reading skills and language components thought to be crucial in second language reading, namely decoding, phonological awareness, morphological awareness, vocabulary, working memory and syntactic knowledge. In particular, it discusses the process of reading in Arabic and also briefly examines specific problems with their implications for teaching reading in the language. Additionally, the applicability of some L1 reading models to languages other than English is assessed. This chapter also highlights two main theories about L2 reading: dual reading theory and the compensatory second language theory. The last section consists of a brief summary and conclusion.

3.1 Reading in a Foreign Language:

Reading has been defined in research as a mental process used by readers to comprehend a passage. Grabe (2009) clarifies this cognitive aspect of L2 reading by stating that reading is “a combination of text input, appropriate cognitive processes, and the information that we already know” (p.74). Specifically, this complex reading process is based on a combination of interactive cognitive processes. Therefore, this reliance on these cognitive dimensions of reading is important for EFL teachers (Grabe, 2009). Reading in a foreign language is equally not more complex than the reading in L1. Many scholars in the field of FL have studied and concentrated on the main components which lead to successful fluent readers. The following section will highlight and discuss these different components.

3.2 Components of Reading in L2

The reading process in L1 and L2 involves decoding, phonological awareness, morphological awareness, vocabulary, and other components. This review considers each of these individual components in turn.

3.2.1 Decoding

As in L1, decoding plays a key role in L2 reading (Koda, 2007; Alderson et al., 2014). Jeon and Yamashita (2014) define decoding in L2 as a reading process in which the reader transfers letters (graphemes) to sounds (phonemes) and basically to the language.

All languages consist of words based on sounds (phonemes). In writing, the sounds are denoted by symbols known as graphemes. Such graphemes can represent single letters or combinations of letters such as *sh*, *oy* and *igh*. Consequently, if readers become familiarised with

the grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) systems or in non-alphabetical systems, they will be able to encode oral forms into written forms to read and also decode these written forms (Rose, 2005).

Decoding is viewed as one of the most vital factors in any reading process because no learner will be able to understand a word without decoding words automatically taking into consideration orthographic, phonological, and semantic usages (Kuzborska, 2011). Decoding proficiency is essential in word recognition and, consequently, a critical element of acquiring reading in a first script, and more specifically an Arabic script. In other words, learners need to recognise the graphical features which form the Arabic script. According to Hansen (2010), Arab children are required to use visual scanning strategies that almost differ from the ones that are utilised in their Arabic language in any second language they may have learnt. Therefore, to gain a better understanding on how first language Arab learners acquire reading skills in a second language like English, it is essential to study the decoding process in an Arabic orthography. Furthermore, Koda (2007) explains that during the decoding process, children who are acquiring L2 learn to read in both L1 and L2. Therefore, a number of tasks are required in order to decode words in a text. First, L2 readers need to develop their knowledge of the sounds of letters and shapes and blend them together. When Arabic learners start learning literacy in English, they need to learn a new alphabetic script and new spelling patterns. Moreover, they have to develop their skill of breaking syllables into onset and rime, words into morphemes and syllables and also decode words. In terms of syntax, they need to be aware of clauses, have the ability of connecting words to one another and work out the connection between clauses. These learners are required to be familiar with the culture of the second language they are learning. Learning literacy of the second language is sometimes challenging and can be conditioned by the readers'

competence in L1 and L2. Birch (2002) describes L2 reading as involving both “top-down” and “bottom-up” processing. “Bottom-up” processing strategies involve phonological decoding skills such as identifying individual letters and identifying syllables (Koda, 2007). This suggests that decoding plays a key role in L2 reading. However, other scholars such as Stanovich (1986) have pointed out that decoding skills are not the only predictors of reading, other language components, such as vocabulary or semantic knowledge, are also important. To-date, scholars differ in L2 the way they view the reading process: some see it as a word recognition process while others view it as a whole. In other words, there is no agreement as to the specific contribution of decoding skills to reading ability. The next section examines the role of phonological awareness on children’s L2 reading proficiency.

3.2.2 Phonological Awareness in L2

Phonological awareness is conceptualised as the awareness (Stanovich, 1991) and ability to manipulate (Anthony & Francis, 2005) the sound components, e.g., syllables, onsets, rimes and phonemes, involved in a given language. It also refers to the process of shifting from the ability of recognising words in print to the ability of creating examples (Anthony & Francis, 2005). This means that learners will be able to recognise and create words that rhyme or that may have the same initial sound. For instance, the teacher uses a familiar sound or has a go with the sounds of children’s names to enhance and clarify the instruction for the learners (e.g., “You can invent many games and activities that involve rhyming. For example, at transitions, pair a child’s name with a rhyming word e.g., Red Ted, go to the snack table”). This may motivate the learners to read words in a given curriculum (Skibbe et al., 2016, p.231). Alshaboul et al. (2014) state that at basic levels young readers can make word choices of rhymes while at advanced levels

they can create examples. As children become older, they become more alert and sensitive to smaller word units. Thus, they start learning to read syllables before onsets and rimes, they then control onsets and rimes prior to individual phonemes, and phonological information becomes blended before being segmented. It has been argued that children's inability to manipulate sounds may have a negative effect on their reading proficiency (Hulme & Snowling, 2013). Therefore, a consistent relation between phonological awareness and reading progress is vital. Although Arabic phonological awareness has been examined in the context of second language acquisition experiences, there have been few attempts to study Arabic phonological awareness in young learners (Alshaboul et al., 2014). The Arabic output uses an alphabetic orthography based on consonant vowel phonemes correspondences (Fender, 2003). The fact that Arabic orthography is phonologically transparent contributes to the decoding process in Arab children (Abu-Rabia, 1997). In contrast, English orthography is considered to be deep or opaque (Fender, 2003) containing many irregularities in its Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) (Bassetti, 2013). Therefore, good EFL readers of English usually master orthographic and phonological processing strategies to contribute to decoding in reading (Stanovich, 1991). All these requirements may interfere with their first language awareness in L2 learning. As a result, Arab learners of English will confront obstacles in the reading process. Fender (2003) believes that when Arab students read words in English (the target language), they concentrate on phonological processing skills developed through their first language reading background. The view that Arab second language learners may experience difficulties in their second language phonological awareness is supported by Randall's review (2007). He highlights that Arab readers are much less sensitive to vowel differences between words. This is due to the fact that the vowel system in Arabic is simpler than in English which is a phonologically complex language. Arabic

consists of 21 vowels and diphthongs (a sound which is a combination of two vowels like /ai/). English has 20 vowels and diphthongs. It also has 24 consonants and 49 consonant clusters which may occur at the beginning and the end of syllables. For instance, in English, a word can consist of double consonants, a vowel and double consonants ((CC) V (CC)) as in a word like *flask* and also of triple consonants, a vowel, and triple consonants ((CCC) V (CCC)) as in words like *string*. Accordingly, there is significant variety in syllable possibilities in English (Grabe, 2009). On the other hand, the Arabic script does not include any consonant clusters and is not a complex language like English. Arabic readers of English struggle to differentiate between the variety of phonological sounds and struggle with decoding salient vowel sounds. Randall (2007) emphasises that due to CVCV structure, Arab learners are not likely to understand whole syllables in English and cannot develop their awareness of onset and rime patterns which are vital components in decoding English words (Abu-Rabia & Taha, 2004).

Farran et al. (2017) compared phonological awareness skills in 83 English-Arabic bilingual children in the US in order to investigate the association between different language components. Their research explored the relationship between language and reading in bilingual English-Arabic children. The participants were bilingual English-Arabic children in third, fourth and fifth grades (35 males and 48 females) who had attended the school and received instruction in Arabic for three or more years. The study follows the theoretical framework of an interactive model of reading. According to Farran et al. (2017), the model reveals how young learners from different populations learn to decode under various conditions (e.g., typical development, language delay, dyslexia, bilingualism). Their study indicates that the process of reading in Arabic involves both bottom-up and top-down processes, and interaction in its various language components. Results suggest that Arabic language components may predict Arabic word reading

accuracy and Arabic word reading fluency. Such results reflect the extended triangle model of reading (Bishop & Snowling, 2004), which focuses on the importance of multiple components of language in reading development. Moreover, the results of Farran et al.'s (2017) study demonstrated significant correlations between Arabic phonological awareness and English phonological awareness, after controlling for chronological age. These significant correlations were achieved between Arabic elision and English Phonological Awareness Composite ($r = .47$, $p.001$) and between Arabic blending and English Phonological Awareness Composite ($r = .43$, $p.001$). All findings revealed a significant correlation between Arabic phonological awareness (elision and blending) in addition to factors of English phonological processing. In addition, the study (Farran et al., 2017) has pedagogical implications for teaching reading. The language and reading skills of both Arabic and English young learners are likely to be affected by the sociolinguistic context brought about by diglossia and bilingualism, therefore influencing the school outcomes of these learners. To sum up, one can draw that these predictions are essential for a learner to become a skilled reader. Chapter six of this thesis adds to our understanding of decoding and fluency instruction in the specific EFL Libyan context.

3.2.3 Morphological Awareness in L2

An additional important aspect in L2 reading is morphological awareness. This awareness is conceptualised as the potential and conscious ability of children to manipulate and use the morphological constituents of a word (Carlisle, 2000). Morphological awareness differentiates competent readers from poor readers who struggle in developing morphological processes to analyse words into meaningful morphemes (Tong et al., 2011). Along with phonological knowledge, morphological awareness is regarded as a predictive element of reading comprehension (Carlisle, 2000). Brittain (1970) was one of the first researchers to examine this

topic. Utilising Berko's (1958) pseudo-word task modelled after inflectional production task (wug-wugs), Brittain (1970) illustrated the association between morphological awareness and young learners' literacy ability. Many researchers have found an important connection between children's capacity to read words obtained from stems of the word and their word reading (Haddad & Geva, 2008). Such reviews demonstrate the positive association between morphological awareness and the acquisition of reading tasks in English L1 and L2.

Since this thesis focuses on teaching reading to Arab EFL Libyan learners, it is vital to study how foreign language learners are instructed to decode morphological roots such as suffixes and prefixes. Moreover, it is important to study the difficulties Arab learners may face due to being influenced by their L1 reading routines. Arabic words are identified as having a "trilateral-root model", i.e., the meaning of most words can be attributed to their root, which mostly consists of three letters, less often of four letters, and to a smaller degree of five letters. For example, the root KTB (which has the basic meaning of *write*) can be combined with different patterns of vowels to give, among other words, *kataba* (he wrote), *yaktubu* (he writes), *kitab* (book) and *maktab* (office). The root Jhd (which has the basic meaning of *see*) can be combined with different patterns of vowels to give, among other words, *jahida* (he witnessed), *jaahid* (witness), *majhad* (view), as illustrated in Table 3.1 (Hansen, 2010). Since this phenomenon does not occur in English, an Arabic reader who reads English needs to decode a lot of information when reading an English word. This is due to the fact that the decoding process cannot occur by direct translation of spelling to pronunciation. In English, similar consonant structures are not always semantically related and vowel differences may be critical. Such a situation may be problematic and hard to grasp for a reader whose L1 functions in a different way.

Table 3.1

Examples of word formation stand on roots and patterns in Arabic

الجذر	فعل	اسم الفاعل	اسم المكان
Root	Basic form of verb	The Actor	Place of the Action
ك ت ب {k-t-b}	كتب {kataba} (he wrote)	كاتب { kaatib } (Writer)	مكتب { maktab } (office)
ش ه د {f-h-d }	شهد {fahida} (he witnessed)	شاهد {faahid} (witness)	مشهد {mafhad} (view)

Adapted from Hansen (2010, p. 569)

The second feature of Arabic that may affect young Arab learners of English is the phonological system of Arabic. It has only six vowels: three long and three shorts. Only the long ones are represented by letters. The short ones are represented by diacritical marks for early readers who start to learn at about the fourth grade. Although these diacritical marks which are decoded by young children in reading may only have a minor impact on the process of reading in Arabic, they can cause difficulties when Arabic speakers learn to read in English (Hansen, 2010; Ryan & Meara, 1991). For instance, learners who may heavily use consonants and overlook vowels, may transfer the Arabic pattern into English passages and mistake words as *circuit* and *mountains* for *cricket* and *moments*, respectively (Ryan & Meara, 1991). Moreover, as they progress, they can read words from right to left without using any diacritic markings, thus turning the language to a deep orthography (Fender, 2008). This may create confusion when reading a second language and can be a burden to the reading process. Being used to reading

from right to left, Arabic-speaking learners target their eyes directly to the right side of the words when reading in English. This poses an extra challenge to teachers.

In addition, several Arabic phonemes are not to be found in English, e.g., /ʔ/, /ħ/, /x/, /sʕ/, /dʕ/, /tʕ/, /ðʕ/, /ʕ/, /ɣ/, and /q/. Moreover, there are some English consonantal phonemes which are not found in Arabic, e.g., /g/, /p/, /v/, and /ʃ/. The digraph consonants <sh> /ʃ/ and <th> /ð/, /θ/ are also phonemes in Arabic but are represented by a grapheme based on one consonant. There are no clusters containing more than two consonants in Arabic. Also, the Arabic language lacks the silent <e> convention. Twenty-two out of the 28 consonants have different forms for word initial, word medial, and word final positions. Therefore, young Arab learners acquire a more phonologically transparent orthography in which each letter corresponds to one phoneme. Such passages become simple to decode phonologically due to the reliable grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence consistency of letters and consonants.

Another factor which may pose a challenge to learners is their perception of vowels and the difficulty in differentiating between similar words such as *pulls* and *plus*. However, Ryan and Meara (1991) emphasised that while learners may decode incorrect vowels, the consonantal underlying pattern (PLS, in the above example) often remains correct in these cases. Finally, in contrast to English, Arabic is described as having a *shallow orthographic structure*; which means it has a systematic relationship between sound and symbol. Although this might be viewed as a positive point of the language, it may cause difficulties for Arabic readers when they start to learn to read in another script which includes different types of words and a slower processing rate (Randall & Meara, 1988).

Ryan and Meara (1991) carried out a study on Saudi learners demonstrating two presentations of a set of words: the first presentation shows the full version of the given word and the second presentation shows the word with a missing vowel. The learners were required to find out this missing vowel. The learners obtained higher scores in locating the error in words like *sufficient* and *photograph* (missing vowels underlined) than in words like *department* and *distribute* (missing vowels underlined), because in the first two words the missing vowels are on the right side. Therefore, we can draw that Arabic and English scripts may share some similarities such as both being alphabetic, as well as some differences in terms of the reading skills needed for processing specific morphemes, vowels and phoneme grapheme correspondences. These differences between Arabic and English make it more difficult for Arab children to acquire literacy in English.

3.2.4 Vocabulary in L2

Vocabulary is regarded as a highly significant component in word reading (Nation et al., 2007) and being exposed to two languages has been shown to facilitate children's acquisition of vocabulary in a second language (Poulin-Dubois et al., 2013). Hudson (2007) also states that "vocabulary is a considerable factor in reading ability. Consequently, it appears that a large vocabulary can facilitate reading comprehension" (p. 227).

The empirical evidence shows that it is an essential requirement to develop the vocabulary strategies of L2 children and poor learners. For example, Garcia (2006) demonstrated that this requirement is necessary for young second language Spanish-speaking learners. The statistical results from the National Institute of Child Health and Development, a US government body, showed that insufficient vocabulary knowledge was a predictor of weak reading

comprehension (NRP, 2000). This national panel was formed in 1997 at the request of Congress with the stated aim of assessing the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. The direct relationship between poor vocabulary and progress in reading comprehension applies particularly to young children who do not master the academic vocabulary required to accomplish school tasks (Kiefer & Lesaux, 2008). Although this kind of vocabulary does not occur frequently in spoken language, it impedes the children's reading comprehension. Poor readers are likely to read less. As a result, this prevents them from learning new vocabulary which is considered to be an extra burden for them. This contrasts with good young readers who have a richer vocabulary because of their greater practice of reading. This effect is known as the *Matthew effect* (Stanovich, 1986).

3.2.5 Working Memory

Working memory is thought to be a significant cognitive component of reading comprehension because of the requirement of both storing and integrating information during L2 reading (Alderson et al., 2014). One of the main elements of information processing focuses on the association between memory and young learners' reading proficiency (cf. Seigneuric & Ehrlich, 2005). Baddely (1986) explains that there are specific reading strategies encouraged by teachers which appear to facilitate working memory and comprehension.

These are known as rehearsal strategies and include using prior knowledge and summarising texts which are based on working memory processing, as explained in the next chapter. Teachers play an important role in facilitating such reading strategies, for instance, as they are reviewing information prior to reading a text, they could ask the learners questions or have the learners make up questions for everyone to answer rather than just retelling students the to-be-learned

information. Such a process will encourage the learners to focus on the most salient piece of information so that they can be involved in more processing. Also, teachers can provide instructions which include encouraging learners to process cues. According to the memory research, it is easier to obtain information when it is stored using a cue and such cue should be available at the time the information is being retrieved (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017). For instance, the acronym HOMES can be used to represent the names of the Great Lakes — Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior. The acronym is a cue that is used when the information is being learned and remembering the cue when taking a test can assist the reader to retrieve the information. Cues that assist learners with the reading task presented are helpful. This teaching technique is referred to as priming the memory. For example, when a reading comprehension exercise is instructed, learners will get an idea of what is expected by discussing the vocabulary and the topic in advance. This will allow them to concentrate on the salient information and interact in more effective depth of processing (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017).

Elsayyad (2014) claims that few studies have investigated the influence of working memory on EFL young learners' reading comprehension in an Arabic context. His study which researched *the relationship between working memory and reading comprehension in L1 Arabic and L2 English for Arabic speaking children* helped fill this knowledge gap. His mixed methodology research project consisted of a number of small studies that investigated the relationships between working memory and reading. His participants were L1 Arabic and L2 English children in grade six (aged 11) of mainstream Kuwaiti schools (N = 44 to 99). His quantitative study examined the relationship between working memory, phonological skills and vocabulary in reading. Another study combined findings from approximately 70 completed parental questionnaires about home literacy background with qualitative data from four parental

interviews, and compared these data with their children's scores on working memory. The regression results showed that first language working memory measures played a role in predicting L2 reading comprehension. These findings led Elsassyad (2014) to argue that in spite of the acknowledged necessity of working memory for reading, its role had not been fully assessed in the context of children learning to read. More significant, there is very limited research into working memory and reading in Arabic. According to Elsassyad, exploring the role of working memory in the Arabic context will demonstrate how working memory contributes to reading comprehension in bilingual learners and may also clarify the debate concerning the potential relationship between working memory and reading comprehension. Such research will also enhance our understanding as to whether working memory functions mainly through verbal measures or both verbal and nonverbal ones. In this context, results that emerge from the present work may assist teachers with developing young readers' literacy skills. In addition, his research emphasised the role of word decoding (fluency and accuracy) in reading comprehension in L1 and L2. Consequently, he recommends that teachers carry on teaching decoding, because it is a vital component of reading comprehension). Also, teachers may develop decoding by encouraging learners to recognise patterns in words instead of using rule memorisation. Findings in his research reveal that teachers could take into account limitations in working memory.

In addition, other researchers such as (e.g., Swanson et al., 2006) have found that differences between competent and less competent skilled readers on cognitive measures are related to limitations in working memory. Swanson et al. (2006) explored growth in reading, vocabulary and memory in Spanish children (ages 5 to 10) learning English as second language and who had also been classified as struggling L2 readers. They reported that only Spanish measures of working memory growth predicted growth in the second language (English). Such

results could be due to the way in which the L1 working memory functions in L2 reading comprehension, which could in turn be influenced by the L2 language proficiency level of the participants in their study. It could therefore be inferred that L2 language proficiency level could determine the contribution of L1 or L2 working memory in predicting L2 reading comprehension.

3.2.6 Syntactic Knowledge in L2

A further component thought to be important to the reading process is grammatical knowledge. This knowledge helps learners to comprehend full sentences and their stance in the context. It has been argued that for L2 learners to have competent grammatical knowledge, they must view things in meta-linguistic terms, that is, they must have the ability to distinguish the internal syntactic component within sentences (Abu-Rabia & Shakkour, 2014). Such grammatical knowledge is an essential facilitator, allowing learners to understand how words can be combined into larger grammatical elements, such as sentences and paragraphs (Alderson, 1993; Alderson et al., 2014).

Guo et al. (2011) classified two levels of syntactic awareness: low-level and high-level syntactic abilities. According to these authors, low-level syntactic awareness is that “which tapped the acquisition of tacit syntactic knowledge” (p.163). As for high-level syntactic abilities, they are the ability to clarify and use syntactic forms and to highlight and reflect on one’s knowledge of the rules of syntax; they also denote a pupil’s role in skill measuring on a task testing syntactic knowledge. Such knowledge may influence the level of difficulty of reading passages which L2 readers come across in the reading process (Hudson, 2007). Furthermore, Grabe (2009) provides a list of rules a reader may use when reading. The rules highlight the role

that grammar has in enhancing the function of reading comprehension, for example, clarifying ideas, tracking referents, timing the events, and providing information about content through the way words and sentences are ordered. These grammatical roles provide important information required for understanding passages.

In addition, Jeon and Yamashita (2014) explain that syntactic or grammatical knowledge is regarded as an essential component of reading in both first and second languages (e.g., Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2011). In the area of literacy acquisition, syntactical knowledge involves different concepts such as *syntactic awareness* and *syntactic/sentence processing*. Syntactic processing involves converting a flat input sentence into a hierarchical structure that correlates to the units of meaning in the sentence. Syntactic parsing is the skill of recognising a sentence and developing a syntactic structure for it. Parse trees are important, and in grammatical applications and checking word-processing systems a sentence that cannot be parsed may have grammatical errors and be difficult to decode (Jurafsky & James, 2017). According to Koda (2007), many studies in L2 are more concerned with the strategies associated with “parser” behaviours than with the methods through which learners can differ in their syntactic processing or reading ability.

Research has revealed that many young EFL learners struggle in reading syntax (Grabe, 2009). For Arabic EFL learners, the fact that English and Arabic are dissimilar in word order makes reading in English even more difficult. English follows the SVO (subject+ verb+ object) order whereas Arabic sentences have the VSO (verb+ subject+ object) structure. Also in English, adjectives precede nouns whereas in Arabic they follow nouns (Alhazmi, 2015). Research in some Arab countries shows the effect of linguistic deficiency of many students to their poor comprehension when reading English texts. For example, Al-Qahtani (2016) found that Saudi

middle grade learners struggled with the reading process due to a number of linguistic factors, i.e., vocabulary, syntax, decoding. The learners were surveyed and interviewed about their reading habits and use of reading skills. One of those factors which contributed to their poor reading comprehension was lack of their L1 syntactic knowledge. The issue of inadequate EFL reading comprehension appears to be similar in different parts of the Arab world (Al-Qahtani, 2016).

This section has highlighted the influence of learners' L1 knowledge on their learning of the L2. Research has shown that the L2 also has an impact on the L1. This point is also discussed on the next page.

3.3 The Impact of L2 on L1 and L1 on L2 in Learning Literacy

One of the crucial aims of classroom instruction is to develop learners' reading skills. In the four main language skills, reading plays an essential role in learning a foreign language. Consequently, many reading researchers and teachers in recent years have aimed to have successful competent readers in their classrooms. Currently, due to the global communication needs, it is common to master at least one foreign language. Therefore, it is necessary for both teachers and learners to learn the nature of associations of languages in one's mind and to be aware of the ways in which languages may have an impact on each other (Talebi, 2013). Cook (2002) asserts that "there are few places in the world where only one language is used" (p. 2). This is the rationale for multi-competence. Such phenomenon of language transfer, or the first language affecting the second, initiated from the notion of multi-competence (Cook et al., 2003).

In specific, Cook et al. (2003) suggest that in second language acquisition (SLA), the concept of *multi-competence* refers to the difference between the cognitive ability of someone who masters more than one language and someone who masters only one language. Hence, multi-competence is now usually said to be "the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind" (p. 1). From the multi-competence view, the different languages a person masters are viewed as one attached system, rather than a separate language system. Therefore, learners who read a second language are viewed as unique multilingual individuals, rather than learners who have just added another language to their range of skills. Cook (2005, p. 52) asserts that "the syntactic processing of people who know another language is no longer the same as monolingual, even if the differences are small and need complex techniques to establish". Cook et.al (2003) examined the changes in the L1 of learners who know an L2. The authors have conducted research that studies the L1 of L2 users from different subjects such as vocabulary,

pragmatics, cognition and syntax, in addition to using a variety of linguistic and psychological models. Cook et.al (2003) suggested that the L2 may have a positive effect on the L1. For instance, they found that the Japanese who speak English are more likely to prefer plural subjects in the Japanese sentences they use than the Japanese who do not know English.

In addition, Hussien (2014) highlighted the positive impact of English as a second language on the process of accurate reading and spelling acquisition within reading passages in Arabic, the first language used by Egyptian children. The study examined the influence of English learning on Arabic spelling and reading in 45 Arabic-speaking English learners in Grade 4 compared to Arabic monolingual Grade 4 students (n = 38) in a public school in Egypt. The Arabic-English bilingual programme was designed to teach English as well as use English in teaching science. The researcher developed and administered spelling and oral reading accuracy tests in Arabic. Results revealed that learners in the bilingual programme outperformed their monolingual peers in both Arabic spelling and read out-loud Arabic reading accuracy. Moreover, Cook (1992) mentions that learning a second language can also be influenced by the L1 learning process. In fact, a majority of L2 learners refer to their first language when they process their L2. Therefore, there is always an opportunity to use L1 in the EFL classrooms. Its accurate use is vital to make EFL learning more effective. This is relevant to our study, in which L1 could be used strategically by the learners. One of the reading strategies encouraging learners to use their L1 knowledge in their L2 is the “translating English words to Arabic learning strategy” which involves transferring their L1 knowledge to their L2 knowledge (see Chapter Six).

3.4 L2 Models of Reading

The preceding discussion highlights some of the typical language components thought to be important in the reading process. One can argue from this discussion that previous research has neglected the relative contribution of each of these components to the reading process in L2, with researchers focusing on specific components in each study. However, Bernhardt's (2005) compensatory reading model aims to overcome these limitations and provides a comprehensive framework for considering the different language components involved in reading in L2 and the implications of L1 within it.

Two predominant models, the compensatory model of second language reading and the dual-route model offer different explanations for how young children read words. The compensatory is the model to reading that I now turn to.

3.4.1 The Compensatory Model of Second Language Reading

The first theory explored here is the *Compensatory Second Language Reading Theory*. For many years, theories and models in reading have been viewed as being more or less universal regardless of writing systems. In recent years, there has been increasing research in various writing scripts and also reading in a different orthography (Grabe, 2009; Bassetti, 2013). Bernhardt's (2005) *Compensatory Model of Second Language Reading* consists of three aspects of L2. The model proposes that 50% of second language reading development is associated with linguistic knowledge of the L2 (e.g., grammar and vocabulary) and reading proficiency in the L1 (e.g., knowledge of text structure). These two aspects make up for deficiencies in each other in the compensatory model (CM) which is similar to the simple view of reading. The remaining 50% of the reading process may include factors such as motivation, affect, and other unknown

ones. Bernhardt places text structure awareness (a discourse-level phenomenon) within the realm of L1 literacy.

This model of L2 reading (CM) is a new version of Stanovich's (1980) concept of compensatory processing, which is based on the idea that any difficulties in knowledge source may be sorted out by referring to other knowledge sources (e.g., learners use contextual knowledge to assist them with their poor decoding skills). CM reflects the past theoretical debates in this research area. For many years, researchers have studied the relationship between L1 and L2 and examined how one language can contribute to the reading ability of another. The compensatory model illustrates the association between L1 and L2 in learning a new language. In particular, it proposes that there is a shift which contributes to second language literacy, second language knowledge, first language literacy ability, strategic knowledge, and background knowledge. Bernhardt (2005) used interactive views to create formal models of L2 reading. For example, she suggested that readers applied contextual knowledge to assist weak decoding skills. She pointed out that although research in the field of second language reading had improved and picked up speed more recently, there were still challenges and dilemmas that needed to be dealt with before real progress could be made (Bernhardt, 2005). Despite the fact that the model provides important information on L2 reading, it does not cover all areas of second language reading. McNeil (2012) criticised the CM because of its limited emphasis on the impact of L2 *strategic knowledge or background knowledge* on literacy. These play a fundamental role in L2 reading. He argued that second language knowledge is generally based on such factors as semantic and syntactic knowledge, the influence of cognates, and the linguistic distance between first and second languages in other aspects. Therefore, he proposed his extended compensatory model. His model develops Bernhardt's (2005) model by including two extra vital components:

strategic knowledge and *background knowledge*. This modern model allows predictions (L2 language knowledge, L1 reading ability), to include the components of strategic knowledge and background knowledge.

Previous studies report that background knowledge plays a compensatory role in L2 reading. For instance, Yuet and Chan (2003) explored the influence of cultural background knowledge on reading. Their study sample consisted of 214 Chinese L2 learners, divided into two proficiency middle school groups. The authors reported that background knowledge had a crucial influence on one of the groups only. In contrast, the other second language readers' scores were not significantly higher when reading culturally familiar passages. Additionally, a study by Al-Shumaimeri (2006) indicated that background knowledge played a compensatory role in the reading process. Al-Shumaimeri (2006) studied the effect of content familiarity, i.e., the readers' prior knowledge of the content of the text, and language ability on reading comprehension of Low- and High- ability Saudi students of English as a foreign language. In his research, 132 male and female students performed two reading tests on familiar and unfamiliar texts. The findings indicated that reading comprehension was facilitated when students read the familiar text and their language ability had a major effect on their comprehension. The students' language ability also had a significant role in comprehending the unfamiliar text.

3.4.2 Dual Language Involvement

The second theory considered in this review is the *Dual Language Involvement*. Koda (2007) explains that traditionally there have been two opposing views of reading, as mentioned in Chapter Two: (1) reading is seen as an indivisible whole process: this idea is based on Goodmans' (1967) view of reading as a holistic natural process; and (2) reading is perceived as a

constellation consisting of many components (Stanovich, 2000; Koda, 2005, 2007; Grabe, 2009): this model regards reading as a set of multiple cognitive processes (e.g., decoding, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic processing, metacognition). It includes separate measurements of sub-skills of reading. Koda (2007) supports the componential view of reading because it provides a clearer picture of the reading process. Also, if reading is viewed as a multifaceted activity, it is possible to find out where the problem lies when there is a reading difficulty. Such an approach makes it possible to address reading problems and solve them instead of just stating that a person cannot read very well.

The above points lead to the following questions: how does reading differ from one language to another and how is it universal? For example, if people are poor L2 readers, does that mean they are poor L1 readers too? If this is the case, then is this a reading problem or a language problem? Hudson (2007) argues that it is essential to address these issues. He supports his view by quoting Alderson (1984) who contends that it is “necessary to address this because it is central to sorting out the causes and origins of second and foreign language reading problems” (Hudson, 2007, p. 60). Alderson (1984, as cited in Hudson, 2007) points out that many teachers consider their learners to be poor second language readers because they are poor first language readers, while others point to the fact that they do not know the second language well enough. Hudson (2007) emphasises that such models are developed to explain the reading processes. More importantly, he explains that bottom up, top down, and interactive approaches are put forward to describe the reading process. He argues that “many of the concerns for second language reading have evolved from initial research into first language model building” (Hudson, 2007, p. 31). Both Hudson (2007) and Alderson (1984) provide reference sources for both language teachers and trainee teachers who aim to improve their teaching techniques, the

reading strategies they encourage their learners to use in second language reading and their general understanding of the reading process. Although the current research does not specifically address why fifth and seventh Libyan learners are poor second language readers, it is reasonable, based on the above points, to assume that these learners' first language reading competence may have an impact on their decoding and comprehension skills.

3.5 Summary

To conclude, this chapter has provided some insights into the nature of the cognitive and psycholinguistic precursors of early reading acquisition in second language reading, specifically in the context of Arabic and English. It focused on two main theories about L2 reading. Additionally, this chapter has examined the association between phonological, morphological, semantic, syntactic and language components and reading outcomes at the word and text comprehension levels in L2 reading. Some of the findings analysed in this chapter reveal that there are associations between the phonological awareness skills in English and Arabic. These findings also indicate that correlations are found between Arabic and English, phonological awareness and some factors of English phonological processing.

Chapter Four

Reading Teachers' Practices and Attitudes

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the concepts of reading skills and reading strategies, selection (reading instruction, i.e., the techniques for teaching reading) and finally the teacher factors that influence the teaching of reading, i.e., attitude, experience and training. It establishes the importance of recognising and identifying EFL Libyan teachers' cognitions and discusses some theoretical definitions of teachers' beliefs within international contexts and the relationship between teachers' attitudes and practice. It also examines how teachers' attitudes and experiences may shape their thoughts towards their techniques for teaching reading and assesses whether teachers' reading practices may be influenced by their own cognitions. The influence of teacher education on teachers' cognitions is discussed. This is followed by an articulation of the rationale for studying EFL teachers' beliefs about reading.

4.1 Reading Complexity: Reading Skills vs Reading Strategies

It is important to clarify the distinction between the terms *reading strategies* and *reading skills* as there have been some inconsistencies in the way these terms have been used. The definitions adopted in this study are explained in this section.

Reading strategies are defined as “deliberate, conscious actions, which are used to achieve a goal”, while reading skills are understood as “automatic, unconscious abilities” (Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012, p.817). It is important that the terms *skill* and *strategy* be

adapted to differentiate between the unconscious function of reading and the conscious one. Afflerbach et al. (2008) believe that when learners have good background information about the reading passage, they can use their reading skills. On the other hand, when their knowledge is not sufficient, they may struggle with the reading process and they may need more reading strategies. Koda (2005) emphasises that children should be trained to first use decoding strategies before they learn to use reading strategies automatically. In other words, teachers may direct learners to become strategic readers, but they only become skilled readers when the adoption of the strategies has become automatic. When children are taught reading, they learn to utilise several approaches to develop their reading proficiency. According to Afflerbach et al. (2008), “one challenge for teachers of reading is fully investigating the strategy-skill connection and determining how an effortful strategy can become an automatic skill” (p.373). One way to overcome this problem is to develop a method that shifts from skills to strategies and vice versa.

4.2 Reading Strategies

The concept of strategies dates back to the teaching theories introduced by Baron (1985), Sternberg and Gardner (1982), and Pressley et al. (1989). Pressley et al. (1989) explained that during the process of thinking in problem-solving, competent thinkers were those pupils who had the ability to use strategies, such as identifying their goals, monitoring their progress, and evaluating evidence. Therefore, providing children with specific procedures they could use while reading could facilitate their comprehension. These initiatives led Pressley et al. (1992) to develop transactional strategies instruction, an approach through which the teacher illustrates, guides and models appropriate strategies and uses them to understand the text (McKeown, Beck & Blake, 2009).

Competent readers might use a range of strategies when reading a text. Egbert and Petrie (2006) explained the importance of learners' conscious selection and use of adequate reading strategies for comprehending texts and showed how this differentiated proficient language learners from the less proficient. Good readers demonstrated adequate usage of reading strategies according to the task at hand. This is in line with the observations of Ghafournia (2014), who emphasised that good readers were categorised according to their usage of metacognitive reading strategies. In contrast, poor readers were likely to have a very small repertoire of these reading strategies. Anmarkrud et al. (2014) explored the strategies used by skilled readers. Participants were 51 learners enrolled in undergraduate education at a university in southeast Norway. The vast majority (84.3%) spoke Norwegian as their first language and completed their secondary education in a Norwegian school, and most of the remaining participants had another Scandinavian language as their first language. The authors highlighted that strategic readers utilised a finite set of cognitive and metacognitive processes that contributed to their reading and comprehension ability. They found that these learners used a number of strategies, including using background knowledge, summarising, monitoring and evaluating.

According to Phakiti (2003), metacognitive reading strategies are the strategies that learners use to monitor their cognitive strategies. The cognitive strategies are "the notions of thinking" and can be defined as "planned, intentional, goal directed, and future-oriented mental processing that can be used to accomplish cognitive tasks" (Phakiti, 2003, p.29). Moreover, Phakiti (2003) explains that cognitive reading strategies differ from metacognitive ones in that they encapsulate one specific subject area (e.g., EFL) while the metacognitive reading strategies span different subject areas and are those mental activities which a reader uses when trying to solve a challenging task in reading. This mental activity relies on their use of language and world

knowledge. Cognitive reading strategies include: recognising words, using topics, asking and answering questions, using a dictionary, writing down, using background knowledge, using linguistic clues, skipping the difficult parts and repeating words or phrases. Metacognitive reading strategies are based on higher processes which require planning for learning, monitoring, summarizing, clarifying and remediating to the causes of comprehension failure or evaluating the success of a learning activity; that is, the strategies of self-planning, self-monitoring, self-regulating, self-questioning and self-reflecting (Ahmadi et al., 2013). Putting it differently, cognitive strategies are based on the integration of learners' background information with their ability to acquire, learn, remember, and recognise the material when they read. These strategies include rehearsal, elaboration and organisational strategies. Cognitive reading strategies are vital to complete a task. Metacognitive reading strategies are important to know how these tasks have been done (Schraw, 1998) because they include both the awareness and the conscious control of one's learning. Ahmadi et al. (2013) recommended the use of these reading strategies to facilitate the learner's comprehension. They stated that "metacognitive reading strategy awareness has become one of the effective ways to facilitate students' reading comprehension in area of L2 reading comprehension research" because "readers who are metacognitively aware know what to do when they face difficulty in learning" (p.236). Supporting this view, Kang (2014) believes that using appropriate metacognitive reading is useful in developing learners' fluency. He argues that these reading strategies can be used individually or together with each other.

According to Kuzborska (2011), there are two vital points in these reading strategies. First, learners are usually required to reflect on their cognitive functions, i.e., they "know about comprehension". In other words, they realise and know that they comprehend a specific word in the text. The second factor is metacognition, called "knowing how to comprehend", which is

when learners control or regulate their ideas while reading. In this reading strategy, the learners adopt a number of reading strategies when they have difficulty in understanding a passage.

According to FL reading research, learners employ a variety of reading strategies when interacting with written texts so that they can improve their comprehension and overcome any reading difficulty. These strategies include asking and answering questions to comprehend the word or text summarising, monitoring comprehension and looking for missing information. Such strategies allow the learners to be engaged with, and in control of, the reading passage (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989). In fact, research evidence has revealed that strategies can be taught to children (Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002), including learners who have been identified as struggling readers (Kim, Linan-Thompson & Misquitta, 2012).

To the researcher's knowledge, studies investigating the knowledge of reading strategies mostly stem from L1 research, specifically the report of the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000). The NRP was a United States government body. Formed in 1997 at the request of Congress, it was a national panel with the stated aim of assessing the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. In addition, several other studies investigating learners' strategy use have concentrated on L1 (Durkin, 1978-1979, Pressley et al. 1992; Ness, 2009; Spörer, Brunstein & Kieschke 2009). Indeed, there is currently a gap in the number of studies that focus on the teaching of specific reading strategies in an EFL Arabic context. Alternatively, there have been some relevant studies conducted in a foreign context. Plonsky (2011) conducted a meta-analysis in language learning on strategy instruction. The researcher analysed 95 samples from 61 studies on the effectiveness of strategy instruction in a foreign language. A number of variables were found to moderate that effect, including context, age, proficiency, educational level, setting, type and a variety of strategies used by learners, outcome

variable and duration of strategy instruction. The research also produced evidence to support claims of a relationship between certain methodological characteristics of primary studies (pretesting, random group assignment, reporting of reliability) and the effects of strategy instruction produced. Reading especially has been found to be the most frequently measured outcome in strategy instruction research (Plonsky, 2011). Examples of some strategies based on multileveled reading processes (decoding and comprehension) in L1 and L2 literature that learners should be encouraged (based on various studies, including NRP (2000), Grabe & Stoller (2002), Hudson (2007), Grabe (2009), McKeown, Beck, & Blake (2009)) are explained below:

(1) Isolating phonemes (recognising the individual sounds in words). For example, the first sound in <paste> is /p/.

(2) Blending phonemes. In this word level reading strategy learners listen to a sequence of separately spoken sounds and combine them to form a recognisable word. For example, the word <school> consists of the phonemes /s/ /k/ /u/ /l/ (NRP, 2000; Antonacci et al., 2011).

(3) Segmenting phonemes (break a word into its sounds is another word level strategy). For example, there are 3 phonemes in <ship> (/ʃ/ /I/ /p/) (NRP, 2000; Antonacci et al., 2011).

(4) Following a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units. I.e., working with syllables, then onsets and rimes, then phonemes, and blending before segmenting (NRP, 2000; Antonacci et al., 2011).

(5) Naming alphabet letters and sounding out words. Learners use this word level reading strategy when they do not know the alphabet letter name or word (Murray et al., 1996).

(6) Monitoring comprehension. In this metacognitive reading strategy readers learn to be aware of their understanding during reading and are able to monitor their own understanding of the text (NRP, 2000; Grabe and Stoller 2002; McKeown et al., 2009).

(7) Making predictions about the reading passage by using their own knowledge of the text (NRP, 2000; Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990) highlighted that “learners can actually understand a lot of language through systematic guessing, without necessarily comprehending all the details” (p. 90) in this cognitive reading strategy.

(8) Summarising in order to unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole. The purpose of this metacognitive reading strategy is to identify the main ideas in the passage and focus on the key details (NRP, 2000; McKeown et al., 2009).

(9) Asking and answering questions to comprehend the word or text (NRP, 2000; McKeown et al., 2009). In this cognitive strategy children ask questions when they are struggling to comprehend the text.

(10) Using their background knowledge to help find the meaning of words in a given text. Children are guided to make use of their prior knowledge in this cognitive strategy to link the events in the reading passage with their own experience (NRP, 2000; Graves, 2008; McKeown et al., 2009).

(11) Recognising story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters and themes). Learners use this metacognitive reading strategy to assist them in their understanding of the text’s structure (NRP, 2000; McKeown, et al., 2009).

(12) Using word maps to develop complete understanding of words. Learners use this metacognitive reading strategy to assist them in learning new vocabulary. For example, using four corner charts, they learn definitions, write sentences, can draw pictures, or write the word in the corner (Antonacci et al., 2011).

(13) Using external aids and writing to organise ideas about what they are reading. Such aids affect the internal metacognitive processing of text information during reading (NRP, 2000;

McKeown et al., 2009).

(14) Breaking down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning (White et al., 1989). In this process, learners use their knowledge of high-frequency root words to comprehend low-frequency words. For example, a popular root word can be used to understand a more difficult derivative word. This powerful metacognitive strategy can be very useful (Anderson & Nagy, 1992).

(15) Using more than one strategy to comprehend texts. In this reading metacognitive strategy, learners use more than one strategy to comprehend the meaning of a text. In this case, in comprehension instruction learners are encouraged to use two or more combinations of the following four strategies: monitoring comprehension, summarisation, clarification and prediction (NRP, 2000; McKeown et al., 2009).

Second language learning strategies refer to intentional, goal-oriented attempts made by learners to improve their knowledge and understanding of the target language (Oxford, 2011). Hence, one of the main concerns associated with the increased study on strategy instruction is identifying the main goal that reading teachers must establish for this kind of teaching process. The goal of reading instruction is to encourage learners to apply the strategies learnt in class independently as they read. Afflerbach et al. (2008) contend that over time and through teachers' effective teaching, these strategies become skills. They state that "readers are motivated to be skillful because skill affords high levels of performance with little effort whereas strategic readers are motivated to demonstrate control over reading processes with both ability and effort" (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 17). However, the use of reading strategies by itself cannot lead readers to proficiency (Koda, 2007) and help learners to comprehend texts (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984). Learners need to be taught how to comprehend passages according to their

background knowledge. This is important because of the fact that the meaning of the text will not always be directly found in the passage. Therefore, reading is viewed as a social cognitive process which takes place between the reader, the text and the classroom teacher (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984).

4.3 Techniques for Teaching Reading

To teach L2 reading in an appropriate way, teachers need to be familiar as much as possible with reading pedagogy and should know how to use their knowledge effectively in their classroom. First, we may assume that techniques of teaching reading include teaching a set of separate strategies which usually develop into fluent and skilled reading over time. In fact, teachers should work on linking the reading strategies and learners' pre-existing knowledge when teaching reading. For instance, readers may be encouraged to pronounce sounds to develop phonemic awareness early in kindergarten, but the teachers are also required to mix the learners' emerging phonemic awareness with their emerging letter background knowledge to encode and decode words in print. Likewise, when readers are practicing decoding strategies, the teacher needs to check that they understand the meaning of the words they read. Finally, as learners are practicing reading texts in primary and middle grades, they could be reminded to focus on both the skills of decoding and comprehension in order to develop and improve accuracy and fluency (Garcia, 2000; NRP, 2000; Janzen, 2007). The recent understanding of reading skill reveals that learners should learn many new things continuously and use specific strategies to progress in their reading development as they move from early to late elementary school and beyond. It is not appropriate to assume that we can stop teaching reading after third grade. Many students continue to need explicit and systematic instruction in increasingly complex skills in order to

move to higher levels of reading proficiency (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Griva & Chostelidou, 2017). Although reading strategies must be employed by readers in all middle grades, the teaching techniques and instruction needed can change significantly from the primary grades to middle and later grades. For instance, some instructional techniques are more common at the early stages of learning to read and the emphasis changes as children gain mastery over particular skills. In every grade level from kindergarten through seventh grade, teachers may offer a variety of instructional techniques to support their learners. However, the teaching process may vary according to the number of learners in a given classroom. Teachers may therefore adapt the instructional techniques depending on the stage at which the learner is and also the student population in their school (Griva & Chostelidou, 2017). Some of the teaching reading techniques that have been identified by scholars in both L1 and L2 as significant are as follows:

(1) Systematic phonemic awareness instruction: This refers to whether the teacher is teaching explicitly the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondence. According to the NRP report (2000), phonemic awareness “refers to the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words” (pp.2-1). This report highly recommends phonemic awareness instructions as early as the kindergarten stage to gain maximum benefits from it.

(2) Systematic phonics instruction: The NRP (2000) emphasises the importance of systematic phonics in teaching reading as it allows young learners “to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words” (pp.2-89).

(3) Use of graphic organisers and picture cues: Information from pictures is used by the teacher to instruct learners in identifying words in reading (Deford, 1985). Graphic organisers may be adopted whilst reading a passage or story. These graphic organisers are useful to engage

learners in the reading process and to facilitate their comprehension as they navigate through the text. (McKeown et al., 2009; Verhallen & Bus, 2011).

(4) Techniques which promote learners' fluency: Teachers help children to maintain reading fluency from word decoding to sight reading. Fluency is acquired when children move from learning how to decode words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight. This skill is obtained through continuous practice. When children repeat oral reading, their rate of fluency improves. Teachers may select books that children can read fluently. On the other hand, if the book is complex, the young learner's fluency will decrease (NRP, 2000). In fluency instruction, learners are taught decoding or word-attack skills which refer to their ability to recognise words in print. In addition, the teacher teaches the reader how to read the passage efficiently without any interruptions and develop a rich vocabulary. These interruptions take place because the reader struggles in pronouncing certain words or needs to read them more than once (Hudson, 2007). Moreover, the teacher may instruct learners to read both real words and nonsense words (pseudo- words) to enhance their decoding skill.

(5) Systematic instruction in vocabulary: Teachers also teach young learners sight word vocabulary explicitly, specifically when it is linked to their comprehension of the text such as a brief explanation of terms, phrases and definitions (NRP, 2000). Vocabulary is obviously an essential component of every reading instruction. Learners who have a rich vocabulary can easily master a range of reading passages when it comes to word-attack, comprehension and fluency (Grabe, 2009).

(6) Explicit translation instruction: Most of the teachers begin reading lessons by introducing the passage briefly and triggering students' prior knowledge and proceed to have

students read and translate the passage, focusing on vocabulary instruction, comprehension questions and task completion (Janzen, 2007; Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012).

(7) Use of word shapes technique: This approach which aids word recognition is based on the teacher drawing boxes around letters to teach learners more on the shape of the word (Deford, 1985, Nation & Newton 1997).

(8) Systematic instruction in morphological awareness: Morphological awareness enhances the inference of the meaning of complex words during reading (Zhang et al., 2013). With this teaching approach, the teacher focuses on base words and shows learners how the meaning changes depending on who is doing the action. Analysis is an important part of the process: students are taught more complex letter patterns, simple morphological units, and work extensively with decoding strategies for multi-syllable words (White et al., 1998).

(9) Explicit description of the strategy adopted: The teacher can explain to the learners when and how a specific strategy should be used (Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012). For instance, a teacher could explain in the following terms, “[p]redicting is making guesses about what will come next in the text you are reading. You can make predictions a lot when you read. For now, you should stop every two pages that you read and make some predictions” (Duke et al., 2002, p.2008).

In addition to encouraging learners to use the appropriate reading strategies to progress in the reading operation, teachers need to display the right attitudes towards the reading process. In fact, it is important that they hold attitudes that are grounded in experience and information, and understand how this development is affected by the knowledge, experiences and cognitive stage of children reading in L2 (Aebersold & Field, 1998). These points are discussed in the section below.

4.4 Teachers' Cognitions and Attitudes

As mentioned in Chapter Two, teachers play a fundamental role in the successful reading development of every child. Researchers emphasise that the way teachers teach reading skills and strategies is very important for reading acquisition (Braunger & Lewis, 2006; Snow et al. 2007), with many studies demonstrating that the most effective reading instruction focuses on the acquisition of reading skills and strategies. Successful teachers use many reading techniques to assist all learners in fulfilling their goals and becoming proficient readers. Teachers' attitudes are equally important in learners' reading acquisition. The teacher's role is determined and influenced by certain beliefs, attitudes and instructional skills (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). Rasinski and Padak (2000) highlighted the importance of teachers as models of reading behaviour. Teachers need to explain to learners how to read a passage and overcome a reading problem and also the value of reading in people's life. Such role modelling is essential in the development and maintenance of an effective instructional environment (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). For example, when teachers model reading strategies and assist learners through focused feedback and corrections, their pupils progress rapidly to become independent readers (e.g., NRP, 2000; Snow, 2002; Mckeown et al., 2009). It has been shown that many teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching reading and enjoy spending time teaching reading in L1 and L2 (Van Leirsburg & Johns, 1994; Giljie, 2014).

Teachers' thinking is now viewed as a major element in the study of language teaching. Numerous recent studies have focused on teacher cognition: in what languages teachers think, their feelings, perceptions and beliefs and how these relate to their teaching reading techniques (Ness, 2011). The term *teacher cognition* can be defined as the "unobservable cognitive

dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). In the last 25 years, a lot of attention has been given to mainstream educational research and its impact on teacher cognition and teachers’ careers. A number of studies have been carried out in this area (Meijer, 2001) based on the following widespread assumption: teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who develop their teaching techniques by focusing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs (Borg, 2003, p. 82).

Attitudes to second and foreign language learning have been an on-going concern in the area of language acquisition. As emphasised by Freeman and Johnson (1998), research on second language teachers’ thinking began in the 1990s. L2 language researchers started to figure out the importance of studying the cognitive dimensions of teachers’ beliefs and attitudes in addition to investigating the way these dimensions may affect their actual practice (several studies in this area are found in the volume edited by Borg (1998)). Borg (2003) points out that sixty-four studies have been published in this field between 1976 and 2002. An important factor in the area of teachers’ cognition and thinking is their attitudes. Defining teacher attitudes has been a challenge for researchers. This is complicated because throughout the literature, the terms attitude, belief, and perceptions are used interchangeably. Berube (1985) portrays attitude as a state of mind or feeling concerning some matter. In general, attitude means how an individual feel about something either in a positive or negative manner. Psychological scholars in education have defined and conceptualised the concept *attitude* in various ways. These definitions and conceptualisations carry different meanings according to the different contexts and perspectives adopted (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) define attitude as “a learned predisposition to react consistently in a given manner either positively, negatively to certain

persons, object or concept” (p. 6). So, attitude means a manner of feeling with regards to a person or thing. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) explain that people’s attitude reflects their behaviour towards objects and other people. This attitude which can be viewed *positively*, *negatively* or *neutrally* depends on the individuals and objects. Attitudes influence how individuals respond to a specific topic, in terms of good or bad behaviour. In the school context, attitude shapes pupils’ lives and impacts their behaviour.

Although attitudes and beliefs are different constructs, yet they seem to affect one another, i.e., what an individual believes is true about an object (belief) reflects how the person thinks about a specific object (attitude) (Koballa, 1988). Consequently, both attitudes and beliefs are crucial elements that may influence how teachers instruct their learners in a classroom. In this thesis, the term “attitude” has been defined in this broad way, referring to the psychological tendency to identify an object in terms of favourable or unfavourable elements (e.g. agree/disagree or strongly agree/ strongly disagree). Scholars typically portray attitude as a tripartite attitudinal structure, consisting of *cognitive*, *affective* and *conative* constituents (Baker, 1992; Howard & Sheth, 1969). The cognitive component refers to aspects such as beliefs and thoughts; the affective element refers to aspects of feelings and emotions; and the third conative part refers to the behavioural aspect of attitude. According to Baker (1992), the affective component reflects the emotional content of attitude which can be positive or negative. Cognitions are portrayed as the relationships between different aspects of objects of psychological significance. For instance, the cognitive element of our attitude towards university education can be centred around our perception of a correlation between higher education and future occupational success. The behavioural element acts according to our attitudes. For example, if a person likes reading books they are more likely to buy books and read them.

However, pupils do not always act according to their attitudes. These different elements may not reveal a clear expression of an attitude (Erwin, 2014). As he (2014) states that “prejudicial attitudes may not be expressed in some circumstances because the individual fears social disapproval and censure” (p. 14). Baker (1992) explains that these attitudes may vary in terms of such elements as norms, habits and expectations. If these three elements remain consistent, the connection between attitude and behaviour becomes strong. However, when the three elements are inconsistent, the relationship between attitude and behaviour becomes weak (Baker, 1992; Howard & Sheth, 1969). Despite the general acknowledgement of attitudes, there is much disagreement about their precise nature (Bartram, 2010).

Saidat (2010) highlights that recently in language attitude research, emphasis has been placed on the correlation between teaching and the nature of individuals. However, research concerning the teaching attitudes of Arab teachers is limited (Bamanger & Gashan, 2014). A number of studies have investigated the link between teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices. Some of these studies argue that the practices of teachers clearly echo their beliefs. Johnson (1994) explored the beliefs of teachers of English as a second language regarding classroom practices. The purpose of his research was to determine preservice ESL teachers’ beliefs from their narratives, intentions, instructional practices and teaching experiences. Moreover, Johnson’s study examined how these teachers’ beliefs shaped the ways in which they conceptualised their instructional practices, in addition to their evolving perceptions of themselves as second language teachers and of second language teaching. The paper investigated the experiences and views of the teachers, i.e. their perceptions, language, actions, thoughts and feelings about their experiences during the practicum. The participants were four preservice individuals enrolled in an ESL teachers’ course at an American university. None of the

participants had any teaching experience before their enrolment. This allowed them to investigate teachers' beliefs before these may be influenced by their experiences. A mixed method of data collection was used. These included journal entries, observation field-notes, post-observation interviews, conceptual memos, and teachers' stimulus recall interviews. Comments were categorised, compared and coded into conceptual taxonomies. Results revealed that the beliefs emerged were based on their formal language learning experiences which left lasting images of their teachers, the curricular used, the teaching techniques they used, and their L2 instruction. Such images, which were perceived positively or negatively, appeared to largely affect these preservice teachers' beliefs about L2 teachers and L2 pedagogy. Findings suggested that all four teachers evaluated their own teacher-directed instructional practices critically. In fact, they mentioned that they felt powerless to alter their instructional practices because they had very little, if any, equivalent images of teachers and teaching to act as a model of action. Also, the four teachers emphasised that they felt overwhelmed by classroom constraints, particularly issues related to instructional management. The preservice teachers' views were influenced by the previous images of teachers, specifically, traditional images of teachers as sources of knowledge and as figures of authority. More importantly, such traditional images seemed to dramatically influence these L2 teachers' beliefs of their second language pedagogy. In this study, all four preservice teachers appeared to be paying attention to what they were teaching. However, they struggled to observe how learners learned. These teachers confirmed that they paid less attention to ways of improving the learning process. In fact, they explained that when confronted with classroom issues, their instructional practices were due to circumstances beyond their control. Sometimes, their teaching did not match the image that they projected of themselves as teachers. Results also indicated that these preservice teachers did not

have adequate knowledge of classroom instruction, lacked sufficient exposure to, and an understanding of, alternatives images of teachers. Therefore, it was not that striking to find that they were teaching the way they did. The findings concluded that the majority of the teachers had clear beliefs which reflected their favoured techniques for teaching reading. Finally, the findings revealed that the teachers planned lessons and used teaching techniques according to their beliefs.

As mentioned above, scholars differ in conceptualising attitude and behaviour. Another component associated with teachers' views, attitudes or cognitions is motivation. Although attitudes and motivation are considered to be closely related and are frequently analysed together, they are two distinct variables of individual learners' differences. Attitudes play an important role in building motivation. While positive attitudes tend to increase the motivation to learn, negative attitudes tend to have a decreasing effect on learners' motivation. Scholars such as Masgoret and Gardner (2003) emphasised that attitudes and motivations are associated with behaviour. According to Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, motivation is an internal attribute of the individual that can be influenced by external forces. In fact, Gardner (1985) views it as a "goal-directed behavior" (p. 128). Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery or AMTB (Gardner 1985), was designed to elicit information regarding each learner's integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and attitude toward language learning. Most studies of the model have focused on integrative motivation as its central feature and key individual difference variable (see Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Additionally, Gardner (1985) thinks that attitude and other affective variables are as important as attitude for language progress. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 10). The

importance of motivation in facilitating L2 learning has been investigated from different perspectives. However, teachers' motivation has been studied in connection with the learners' motivation. Most research in language teaching has focused on second learners' motivation and has paid limited attention to the teaching process. However, understanding second language teachers' motivation is of utmost importance. This is because other studies confirm that teachers' motivation affects learners' motivation and attitudes in class (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei 2001). As Dörnyei (2001) states, "[b]roadly speaking, if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn" (p. 156).

The research on teachers' cognitions and practices relating to teaching reading is theoretically diverse, and difficult to capture into a single framework. This resulted in a framework focusing on two dimensions. The first dimension focuses on teachers' reading instruction practices. The framework was based on Ness's (2011) observation study which investigated middle grade teachers' attitudes and behaviours in the classroom. In this framework of teachers' practices, two main elements were studied: reading strategies and teachers' teaching techniques, which constitute the first dimension of the current study (further discussed in Chapter Six). The observation data in this thesis presents and illustrates the teaching behaviours identified by instructional elements that characterized Libyan teachers' practices in the classrooms observed. In addition, the audio-stimulated recall interviews with teachers sought to investigate the pedagogical practices which teachers used in the teaching of reading. Teachers' pedagogical practices are the reading strategies encouraged by teachers and their own teaching reading techniques. Therefore, these two elements were chosen to constitute the first dimension of the theoretical framework for this current study. The second dimension that this study focuses on is based on teachers' attitudes, derived from the framework of the theory of teacher's planned

behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). Facilitating teachers' attitudes is key to upholding the principles of inclusive education. In this theory, individuals either have positive or negative attitudes toward a specific object (as discussed in Chapter Seven). This could be obtained by enhancing teachers' views on preparation of teaching reading. So, this study employs a theoretical framework based on teachers' attitudes derived from the framework of the theory of teachers' cognitions and practices. The current study makes a contribution in this area by exploring the attitudes of EFL Libyan teachers towards their teaching practices generally, and their teaching of reading, specifically. The section below discusses some of the studies looking at EFL teachers' views.

4.4.1 International Studies

Several studies have examined teachers' cognitions about reading in EFL contexts. For instance, Gilje (2014) carried out a study on teacher cognition and the teaching of EFL reading in Norwegian upper primary classrooms. Her study explored upper primary EFL teachers' attitudes towards their reading practices and the reading course books they taught in this context. A qualitative method was used based on semi-structured interviews with 8 sixth grade EFL teachers. Results showed that in terms of their reading practices, four of the eight teachers had positive attitudes and beliefs towards frequently encouraging learners to use pre-reading strategies. For example, these teachers encouraged their learners to talk about pictures, make predictions about the plot or the characters of the text, or explore the learners' topical pre-knowledge. Moreover, although the teachers in this study had positive experiences with reading aloud of enjoyable texts, only four of the teachers actually used this technique for teaching reading in their EFL classrooms. Also, most of the teachers thought that it was essential that the

learners focused on comprehension rather than on decoding forms. In terms of the EFL curriculum it was highly used in addition to extra reading materials. Gilje's (2014) theoretical framework was based on the theory of teachers' cognitions. However, since this study included only a small sample of interviewees from a limited geographical area and explored only teachers' knowledge on their cognitions about materials and techniques, and the strategies they encourage their learners to use, it cannot be generalised.

Jamalvandi and Poursmaeil (2014) explored Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward reading strategies in both private and public schools. They also compared EFL Iranian teachers' practices in both types of settings to investigate if these teachers differed in terms of the reading strategies they encouraged their learners to use. An attitudinal questionnaire was distributed among 40 Iranian EFL teachers of different grade groups, educational qualifications and background experiences. The results indicated that all groups of teachers favoured the application of both cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. Regarding the exploitation of the different subclasses of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, Iranian EFL teachers revealed that they varied in their instruction use of such categories. They thought that some subdivisions of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies were more adequate and vital than others in specific contexts. That is, most of the teachers support previewing the material by thinking about the text, the title, and the pictures in the cognitive reading strategies. In contrast, the participants thought that the think aloud cognitive reading strategy was the least important (4.10 %). In other words, they did not believe much in thinking aloud while reading. In terms of the metacognitive reading strategies they viewed *having a purpose for reading* strategy as the most important metacognitive strategy while they perceived the *using graphic organizers* such as Venn diagram, as the least important. Moreover, no significant difference was found in respondents' degree of

using these strategies in public and private schools. In Jamalvandi and Poursmaeil's study (2014), proficient comprehension was attributed to encouraging and instructing learners to use different reading strategies. The authors urged their respondents to consider the importance of guiding learners to use these reading strategies and make them an essential part of their reading practices. Although this study makes a contribution to the field of EFL teachers' reading practices, it does not use qualitative interviews to support the findings and does not specify the grade group these teachers were teaching.

Alsamadani (2012) studied the attitudes of Saudi EFL teachers toward the explicit instruction of reading strategies. His research compared Saudi EFL teachers' actual practices with their attitudes toward reading pedagogy. He used Saudi teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward reading strategy instruction interchangeably. According to him, teachers' practices in their classrooms and their views regarding teaching are all influenced by what they personally believe. He referred to Squires and Bliss (2004)'s statement that "decades of research on the connection between teachers' theoretical beliefs and their practices yield a common theme: All teachers bring to the classroom some level of beliefs that influence their critical daily decision making" (p. 756). In his study, quantitative data were collected using an attitude questionnaire, qualitative data were collected by carrying out observation and semi-structured interviews. His attitude questionnaire was collected from 60 male teachers in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The quantitative data obtained were analysed by using means, standard deviations, and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Qualitative data from a semi-structured interview and observations were used to investigate teachers' knowledge about reading strategy instruction. Alsamadani (2012) observed the reading pedagogy of ten teachers according to their answers in the quantitative questionnaire and interviewed four of them. Results in his study

suggested that these Saudi teachers had positive attitude and strongly agreed on the importance of encouraging learners to use cognitive reading strategies such as asking questions and background knowledge. However, the teachers lacked sufficient knowledge of the necessity of using metacognitive reading strategies. While these teachers were familiar with the necessity of cognitive reading strategies, they relied heavily on silent reading and comprehension questions. Therefore, by understanding teachers' attitudes toward teaching reading strategies and their actual practices in classrooms, researchers can determine whether the reading instruction and teachers' attitudes are distant from each other. Consequently, this may reveal whether there is a problem in the process. As a result, Alsamadani (2012) suggests that the complete language instruction, development teacher programmes and in-service training programmes need to be reconsidered. He criticised the participants practices in favour of a stronger focus on more metacognitive strategies. Results in his study revealed that there was no significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and their attitudes. He recommended that Saudi EFL teachers got proper training in teaching effective metacognitive reading strategies to enhance learners' ability to plan, monitor, evaluate and regulate their learning. One of the limitations of Alsamadani's study (2012) is that it focuses only on metacognitive reading strategies and does not examine other important decoding reading strategies such as phonics reading strategies or pseudo decoding reading using nonsense words reading strategies. Also, no explanation was given as to why these teachers favoured the encouragement of cognitive reading strategies and no details were provided on the criteria used in the interviews. Finally, the small sample size affects the generalisability of the study.

Due to the limited number of studies investigating Arab EFL teachers' attitudes, as mentioned in section 4.4. The researcher thought it would be useful to look at studies focusing on

teachers' views and behaviour in teaching more generally, not necessarily focusing on attitude when such studies are not available. This was done as thoughts, beliefs and attitude are different but all reflect individuals cognition towards a specific object or thing. Beliefs and attitudes are important elements in the planned behaviour theory.

The only study, to the researcher's knowledge, on EFL Libyan teachers' attitudes and reading practices in the Libyan context is recent research by Ibrahim (2015). His study investigated teachers' thoughts in teaching reading comprehension at preparatory level and the teachers' and their learners' opportunities to innovate in learning the language. His research revealed that the Libyan English language teachers were trying to use communicative learning approach in teaching reading comprehension passages. However, according to his findings those teachers struggled in using the communicative method in teaching reading and in motivating their learners to adapt to this approach. He argued that recently Libyan teachers have tried to use new methods in teaching reading comprehension, but they still seemed to adhere to the traditional way of teaching this skill. In fact, they favoured the traditional approach. Although the study contributed to the limited studies on EFL teachers' perceptions in a Libyan context, it did not focus in detail on the teachers' perceptions of the appropriate techniques they used in teaching reading or the adequate reading strategies they encouraged their learners to use. None of the reading strategies were discussed. Moreover, essential information on the number of participants, the type of instrumentation applications was missing and their attitudes; thus affecting the reliability and validity of the study.

In his seminal work on reading instruction, Durkin (1978) indicated that the teaching of comprehension strategies in middle grade classrooms at that time was based on decoding instruction. Following this publication, research on reading comprehension instruction (Block &

Laciana, 2009) and several studies on teaching reading comprehension emerged (Raphael & McKinney, 1983; Brown, Pressley, Van Meter & Schuder, 1996; Guthrie, Anderson, Alao, & Rinehart, 1999). However, relatively less attention has been given to teaching comprehension instruction in the early stage classrooms. Taking these factors into consideration, one can infer that Libyan English teachers entering the profession today do not take into account the importance of comprehension strategies and that they have been exposed to little direct comprehension instruction in their primary and middle grades.

Another study measuring EFL Arab teacher's beliefs about their reading instruction was conducted by Sarairah (2003). He explored Jordanian middle grades EFL teachers' beliefs about three basic theoretical orientations to reading instruction: skills, phonics strategies, and whole approach. His aim was to find out if an association existed between the teachers' beliefs and education level and between their beliefs and their gender. The instruments used to determine which approach was most favoured was Deford's (1985) *Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile* (TORP). He assumed that this questionnaire indicated that theoretical orientation affected teachers' reading pedagogy. Deford's (1985) questionnaire was designed to categorise teachers and to provide them with the chance to investigate in depth theories and practices. Moreover, Deford (1985) emphasised that the questionnaire was designed to link both teachers' and instructors' reading pedagogy with research and theory. The participants recruited included 229 randomly chosen male and female teachers holding varied qualifications. Data analysis was conducted via SPSS descriptive and statistical procedures such as means, standard deviation and two-way ANOVA. Results in his study indicated that more than half of the teachers (56.8%) preferred skills and techniques for teaching based on decoding, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension. These techniques were taught individually. The participants agreed with some

statements from TORP, for example, fluency, glossary and word repetition over time. According to Sarairah (2003), such results were suggested due to the foundation of EFL teaching in Arab countries who teach form parts rather than wholes in reading related knowledge. Moreover, the results indicated that 31% of these middle grade teachers favoured the phonics instruction approach and using the letter-sound instruction in decoding. 87.8% of teachers preferred using both vocabulary, decoding, grammar skills and phonics, thus showing that there is a strong agreement from the teachers to use these techniques for teaching these skills individually. As for the whole language approach, only 12.2% of the teachers agreed on the importance of a whole language approach. Last but not least, the results suggested that there was a significant difference between teachers' beliefs and their gender. The majority of female teachers preferred phonics, skills, and whole language approach. This large-scale study was carried out in Jordan an Arab country, which contributes to the field because as previously mentioned EFL studies in this area are limited. Sarairah (2003) explained that his study could provide some insight into how teachers think and clearly identified his theoretical framework. Like any other research his study had some limitations: his questionnaire focused only on public middle grade school EFL teachers in Jordan. Therefore, most of the findings and recommendations were useful for the Jordanian context only. His study did not explore why the majority of teachers preferred the skills approach.

4.5 Teacher Characteristics

From the above section, it is clear that teachers' attitudes are significant in ensuring the successful acquisition of reading by their learners (Dupoux et al., 2006). There are great variations and individual differences in teachers' beliefs, attitudes and confidence in moving

towards inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). It is essential to study teacher characteristics since beliefs mould thoughts and resultant instructional behaviours that can subsequently facilitate learners' outcomes. For example, the nature of teachers' work within specific schools, their teaching practice and professional development allow some teachers to cope with their learners' individual differences and requirements. Also, teacher characteristics can reveal the association between such characteristics and attitudes towards learners' needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Educators have focused on a number of teacher characteristics or variables which might have an impact on teacher practice. These teacher variables include gender, age, years of teaching and training (Kyriacou, 1998; Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). The next section examines the role of the following teacher variables on teachers' beliefs and practices: gender, years of experience and training.

4.5.1 Gender

Many studies conducted in the Libyan context revealed that there were substantially more female than male teachers (Shihba, 2011; Al-Hadad, 2015; Bagigni, 2016). In the current research, the female teachers outnumber their male counterparts. This is not unusual as in most schools in Libya and around the world, female teachers tend to outnumber their male colleagues (Drudy, 2008). Teaching English as a foreign language in Libya is a popular profession among women. The latest statistics of the GPCE was in (2008) due to the civil unrest in Libya and most recent scholars e.g (Abosnan, 2016; Aloreibi & Carey, 2017) used this report as evidence in their literature about the education system in Libya. This report showed that for 2008, 79.38% of the teachers in kindergarten and basic and secondary education were female (GPCE, 2008). In fact, teaching is generally viewed as a female profession in Libya. Metcalfe (2006) points out that in

Arab countries women share the same rights in education but not in employment. This is associated with their cultural and ethical values which heavily define gender occupations in these regions (Metcalf, 2006).

Researchers have mentioned that attitudes of teachers can differ according to their gender. In fact, gender differences have been viewed as an important variable in influencing teachers' attitudes and their teaching practice (Vauhan, 1977). For instance, Sharbain and Tan (2013) studied the effect of the gender variable on attitudes to teaching. They pointed out that female teachers of English are likely to be more positive in their teaching profession than their male counterparts. This may be due to the widespread view that teaching is a female profession. However, due to the scarcity of studies investigating EFL Libyan teachers' primary and preparatory reading instruction and cognition and due to the unequal number of male and female teachers, it has been difficult to assess this point specifically in the Libyan context. However, this point has been studied in other countries.

Lam et al. (2010) found in a survey that male and female primary school teachers in Hong Kong differed in their teaching of reading techniques and the strategies they encouraged their learners to use. They reported that, for instance, female teachers were interested in learners' thoughts about reading, they asked their learners to explain what they had comprehended through picture illustrations, they usually encouraged learners to read passages in groups and to use questions and answers, and encouraged them to use complex reading strategies by themselves. Moreover, they encouraged learners to read long chapters on their own in the books they read. In contrast, male teachers tended to take control of everything in the reading lesson. Additionally, male instructors adopted formal tests more regularly, explained to learners at every level of reading what the aim of the reading task was and tried not to interrupt their reading process. On

the other hand, the female teachers tended to use a variety of teaching reading techniques in their reading instruction. For example, they used systematic vocabulary instruction, they gave their learners time to read books of their own choice and used picture cues to clarify meaning.

Although the main objective of both male and female teachers in the study was to encourage their learners to enjoy reading, results from the teacher questionnaire indicated that female teachers seemed more willing than their male counterparts to motivate their readers and heighten their interest in reading. The female teachers had a positive attitude to reading, were keen to find out what their learners comprehended in the passage, required the learners to mention what they had read through illustrations and allowed whatever reading process was easiest for their learners. Also, the female teachers encouraged their learners to manage their own time and to read longer passages. The study carried out by Lam et al. (2010) indicated that male teachers tended to engage more in traditional approaches to teaching reading. Their teaching relied on a series of textbooks and they instructed their learners to read at the same time. The female teachers taught reading techniques for pleasure and adopted a number of strategies to enhance comprehension whilst reading. It should be noted that these techniques were not exclusive to female teachers but tended to be more frequently used by them than by the male teachers. Lam et al. (2010) stated that female teachers' expertise in the pedagogy of reading was understandable and had a significant impact on the learning process in classrooms. However, researchers might argue that differences in teaching techniques are derived from what teachers actually claim they do in the classroom (see Cole's (1997) review of gender differences).

The findings in the above study are consistent with the study on constructing "feminist" pedagogy (Chen, 2000). The author claimed that female teachers of English were likely to be supportive and guide learners to work in pairs and groups in their instruction. In contrast, male

teachers were likely to be more authoritative and to choose traditional methods of teaching. These findings are further supported by Van Houtte's work (2007). He observed that female teachers were more patient, calm and positive in dealing with problems in class.

In terms of the Libyan context, the scarcity of studies investigating Libyan EFL primary and preparatory reading practices and cognitions, more specifically attitudes, makes it challenging to study gender differences in attitudes and practices. However, Pathan & Marayi (2016) carried out a study about the issues and challenges primary, preparatory, and secondary teachers face in teaching the English language including reading, listening comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and writing skills. Their data sample was gathered from thirty-five EFL Libyan teachers from twelve different schools (primary, preparatory and secondary levels), from different cities in the country (Tripoli, Sebha, Taraghen, Obari, Zawila, Al-Shati and Ghodwa). There were 8 males and 27 females aged between 22 to 49 years old. Most of the teachers held a Bachelor of English language degree and graduated either from the Faculty of Arts or Faculty of Education. Results revealed that 91% of the participants had a negative attitude towards teaching reading. Some of the reasons were: the "texts are long" and "the topics are boring for most of the students" (Pathan & Marayi, 2016, p.26). Since the female teachers significantly outnumbered the male ones, it was difficult to investigate gender differences in teaching practices or cognitions.

4.5.2 Training

It has been observed that teachers do not become reliable reading teachers unless they have been specifically trained in a teacher preparation programme (Strickland & Riley, 2006). Cantrell et al. (2009) claim that teachers' attitudes may change depending on the workshops and training programmes they attend. Moreover, according to a report by the NRP published in 2000,

teachers who graduate from education programmes have a positive attitude towards reading instruction. The report also explains that training and professional development programmes for teachers in literacy instruction have a positive impact on progress in reading instruction. As a result, the reading development of both teachers and learners is enhanced. Additionally, Strickland and Riley (2006) explained that untrained teachers and those who have not attended any development or training programmes may not have the necessary skills to successfully teach reading instruction, thus leading to learners' failure. Consequently, teachers and learners can develop a negative attitude towards the reading instruction process.

Saleh (2015) believes that training Libyan English language teachers and developing their qualifications is an important step towards improving educational institutions in Libya. The author highlights the need for well-trained teachers and instructors who can apply English language teaching methodologies successfully. The above points show that training and professional development programmes are necessary and have a strong influence on improving teacher attitudes towards teaching reading. In addition, these training programmes can help teachers learn new techniques for teaching reading in their classroom setting.

4.5.3 Experience

Experience is also an important factor which may influence teachers' cognitions. In our current study it was interesting to note, based on the questionnaire, that most fifth and seventh grade Libyan English teachers had more than 11 years of experience. Teacher qualification and effective classroom practice are a concern in much of the literature on teacher quality, including NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB, 2004). Studies comparing experienced and less experienced English teachers showed that teacher cognition can change over time. Nunan (1991)

explained that experienced language teachers focused more on teaching the language whereas less experienced teachers paid more attention to classroom management. This implies that as teachers gain in experience, they may devote less time to class management and more time to the actual teaching of contents.

Wray et al. (1999) carried out a study in the UK to determine the beliefs and practices of teachers regarded by the Local Education Authority (LEA) as effective in teaching reading. They chose 26 participants from a group of 228 primary teachers who were nominated by the LEA as effective teachers of reading development. A comparison was made between those 26 teachers and 10 others who had not been nominated by the LEA. From observing and interviewing this sample, the authors found that the effective and experienced teachers:

1. The teachers thought that the aim of the lesson needed to be made explicit from the start.
2. The teachers made their reason for teaching certain aspects of reading clear to their learners.
3. The teachers' beliefs, practice and knowledge of the subject provided a coherent approach to teaching reading.
4. The "effective teachers" had been involved in and/or led reading professional development in their school.
5. The teachers argued that well-developed systems of monitoring students' progress were required and these data should be used to plan further teaching.

Wray et al. (1999, 2000) also found that teachers had developed their own methods in choosing passages and materials to suit their learners' reading levels and choices. Such informed choices helped the children in their acquisition of reading. The data from Wray et al. (1999, 2000) show that it is essential to get an insight into what really happens in primary and middle grade EFL classrooms and assess how much time is devoted to reading instruction, thus

confirming Alvermann and Hayes' (1989) point that any "attempt to intervene in instructional practices must begin with an examination of what those practices are" (p.307). According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), the "effectiveness of reading instruction is dependent on a large number of instructional and motivational factors including: appropriateness of lesson objectives; sequencing of classroom activities and tasks; clarity of instructions, suitability of materials and corresponding tasks; teacher flexibility and responsiveness to student needs; student attitudes, interest and motivation; pacing and time allotments; and teacher/student preparedness" (p.226).

Gilje (2014) also noted the importance of experienced and qualified upper primary grades in making independent decisions about the curriculum. According to her, those qualified teachers seemed to reflect their background knowledge about reading, attitudes and beliefs (teacher cognition) and these impacted on their reading instruction. She recommended in her study that EFL teachers need to be familiar with reading instruction and had to be well-prepared to understand the background for their instruction and cognitions. Experience gives the teachers more insight into the reading process and allows them to adapt their reading practices to the different demands of their learners.

Studies focusing on the effect of EFL Libyan and Arab teachers' cognitions and experience on their reading practices are limited. In Ibrahim's study (2015), the Libyan English language teachers struggled in using the appropriate techniques for teaching reading and in motivating their learners to read. According to the author, the culture of teachers, classrooms and schools has to be changed so that teachers can develop their teaching techniques and gain experience. He noted that Libyan English language teachers have tried to use new techniques for teaching reading and curriculum in their teaching programmes. However, the teachers tended to favour the traditional systems of teaching which they believed were more efficient. Such an

attitude prevented them from applying the communicative methods appropriately. Ibrahim (2015) further argued that the Libyan education suffers from in-experienced teachers. According to him, learners are learning English in highly populated classes and most of the learners lack the knowledge of English language interaction in the classroom. Although Ibrahim's study (2015) is insightful, it is limited to teachers' experience in teaching reading comprehension to preparatory learners through the communicative approach.

Elhensheri (2004) conducted a study to measure EFL Libyan teachers' cognitions towards their pedagogic aspects and training programs. Her study was based on data gathered through mixed methods: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Although her study was not specifically examining EFL reading teachers' cognitions and practices, it revealed that Libyan trained teachers lacked sufficient experience in teaching EFL. Results showed that several constraints prevented the education programme from being successful, such as the overpowering communicative approach used in the EFL course books, and the fact that the teaching materials were not discussed in either the EFL teacher education programme or the teachers' instruction of EFL teaching. Also, findings drawn from questionnaires indicated the trained teachers and university tutors' negative attitudes towards the educational and teaching English programmes in Libya.

4.6 Summary

This chapter explained the difference between reading strategies and reading skills. It included a detailed discussion of teachers' reading practices in terms of the reading strategies they encourage their learners to use and the teaching techniques they use. Those reading strategies include: isolating phonemes, blending phonemes, following a development pattern,

sounding out letter names and words, monitoring comprehension, making predictions about the reading, and using background knowledge. The teaching techniques include: systematic phonemic awareness instruction, systematic phonics instruction, use of graphic organisers and picture cues, techniques which promote learners' fluency, systematic instruction in morphological awareness. The metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies were both explained. Moreover, teachers' cognitions and attitudes about reading in other worldwide EFL contexts were discussed. The studies were critically assessed. Although teaching reading and teachers' attitudes as a field of study has a rich history in many parts of the world, it is still insufficiently researched in the Arab region, particularly in Libya. This research gap on teaching English as a foreign language in the Arab world has led many researchers to rely on L1 literature in this field of study. In brief, there have been several studies into teachers' attitudes to reading practices. It would be interesting to see teachers' attitudes towards their own use of teaching reading techniques and which reading strategies they encourage their learners to use. Such research would be useful for teachers to develop their teaching of reading techniques in order to improve their learners' reading proficiency.

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will explain the research methodology, i.e., the data collection approaches and methods (Cohen et al., 2011), adopted in this study. It discusses the research instruments used in this study. Research instruments are generally grouped into three categories: quantitative, qualitative and mixed (Creswell et al., 2008). As will be shown in this chapter, the choice of research instruments and data collection methods tend to be affected by the research area, the sample included in the study, the characteristics of both the hypotheses and variables and the research questions (Bryman, Becker, & Sempik 2008; Creswell, 2014).

The chapter starts with a reiteration of the research aim and questions. It then briefly describes the quantitative and qualitative methods and explains their respective advantages and disadvantages. It also provides the justification for using a mixed method design. Next, each of the three methods of data collection adopted in this study, i.e., the systematic observation sessions, the stimulated recall interviews and the questionnaires, is discussed in detail. Other issues relevant to the data collection, such as the translation of the instruments, their reliability and validity, the piloting of each instrument and ethics, are also addressed in this chapter. The final section consists of a brief summary.

5.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the research is to investigate EFL Libyan fifth primary and seventh preparatory English teachers' reading practices and attitude towards teaching reading itself. The thesis investigates the following questions:

(1) How much approximate total instruction time do fifth and seventh grade English teachers typically spend teaching reading and encouraging learners to use reading strategies and in teaching English language lessons?

(2) What reading strategies do teachers encourage students to use in fifth and seventh grade English language classrooms, what teaching techniques do they use to teach reading and are there any grade differences?

(3) What are the English teachers' general attitudes towards teaching reading of English in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting?

(4) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of English word reading and comprehension?

(5) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension?

(6) Is there a statistically significant difference in the Libyan English teachers' attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques across grade groups?

5.2 Design of Study

5.2.1 Timing

The fieldwork lasted sixteen weeks. Head teachers consent forms were signed in the first week followed by around an eleven-week observation, interview period. The systematic observations and interviews were followed by a four-week questionnaire completion period, as illustrated in table 5.1.

Table 5.1.

Field work

Tasks	Weeks
Consent Forms from head teachers	One
Observation Task, Stimulated Recall	Two – Twelve
Including teachers consent forms in each phase	
Interviews & Attitude questionnaire	Thirteen-Sixteen

5.2.2 Participants

The participants included in this research were chosen based on purposeful sampling. According to Babbie (2010, p.193), purposive sampling provides the opportunity to choose the subjects based on the researcher's information about population. Purposive sampling is a "sample selected because the individuals have special qualifications of some sort, or because of prior evidence of representativeness" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996, p.111). The participants in this study were recruited from both private and public schools and were teachers of fifth and seventh grades. The aim of this research was to observe and interview a total of 40 participants, i.e., 20 teachers from each grade. However, the researcher managed to observe and interview 34 teachers from both grades: 18 fifth grade primary teachers and 16 seventh grade teachers from 6 private and 3 public schools in Benghazi City. The grade 5 learners at the age of eleven had been exposed to no hours of English education prior to this study, while grade 7 learners at age thirteen had been exposed to the language for around two years. Also, 380 fifth and seventh

grade teachers from different schools were randomly chosen to fill out the questionnaire.

However, the researcher received 308 paper copies completed, out of which 292 were adequately completed.

The participants in this study have Arabic as their L1 and teach English in different primary and preparatory schools in Libya. As mentioned in Chapter One, English is taught in Libya as a foreign language, with fifth and seventh grade pupils typically spending 3 hours weekly learning the language. These 3 hours represent 4 lessons of 45 minutes each week.

5.3 Research Methods

In this research, a mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative approaches is used. Qualitative methods differ from quantitative ones in that unstructured or semi-structured techniques are used for data collection. The most popular qualitative methods adopted are focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews and participation/observations. According to Lincoln and Denzin (1994), in qualitative methods the researcher investigates a phenomenon in its “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.3). Usually, the sample of the study is small and respondents are chosen to meet a given quota. Qualitative methods provide rich, in-depth investigations of specific social or educational issues, providing valuable insights and meanings of the subject matter at hand. However, qualitative methods have their own disadvantages: they are time-consuming, they rely on the researcher’s own interpretations, they are usually based on small samples, thus making generalisations and quantification difficult (De Vaus, 2013).

In contrast, quantitative methods are used to quantify the research problem by using and generating numerical data. The data can be transcribed and generated into statistics such as

descriptive statistics, thus facilitating data analysis (Verma & Mallick, 1999). Such methods are apt to quantify attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and many variables and can be used for large samples of populations. Quantitative data methods are regarded as more structured. Examples of quantitative research methods include various forms of surveys (e.g., online surveys, paper surveys), longitudinal studies and systematic observations (Cohen et al., 2011). In terms of their drawbacks, Baker and Charvat (2008) claim that quantitative instruments may receive low response rates from the participants. Also, the design of quantitative studies are more complex than that of qualitative studies because they require a more categorical description of the of data to be gathered. In order to overcome these limitations and those of the qualitative methods, while enjoying as many as possible of the advantages of both, a mixed method was adopted for this study.

Creswell et al. (2008) describes ‘mixed research designs’ as “procedures for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study” (p.66). The mixed method provides the researcher with a chance to elaborate, establish, describe and confirm the data (Jang, 2008). In addition, the workability of this method and the number of instruments involved may allow a better interpretation of the study under investigation (Bryman, Becker & Sempik, 2008). The rationale for using a mixed methods approach in this study is to gain a valid, comprehensive and accurate description of teachers’ behaviour in teaching reading and their attitudes towards the skill since each method has its own drawbacks and limitations (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, the use of data triangulation for evaluating the teachers’ techniques of teaching reading and reading strategies can be systematically justified as each method complements the limitations of the other. The term *triangulation* refers to mixed research methods as it includes adapting more than one method for collecting data on the same phenomena (Cohen et al., 2011).

However, Bryman et al. (2008) contend that it is not possible to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods effectively as each method involves different ethical considerations. But in this study, such a mixed method is deemed useful for identifying and investigating the teachers' techniques of teaching reading, and teachers' encouragement of reading strategies. This mixed approach enables us to answer the research questions put forward in Chapter One. The methods adopted for collecting data are explained in detail in the section below.

5.4 Data Collection Methods

The current research comprised three stages of data collection: systematic observations, stimulated recall interviews and questionnaires. This section provides an overview of these methods.

5.4.1 Quantitative Systematic Observation

Observation is one of the main methods of data collection in this study. Because this research focuses on the techniques of teaching reading and the reading strategies teachers encourage learners to use, teachers were observed in their teaching setting, i.e., in school classrooms. Observations in second language research usually take place in the classroom context. Gass and Mackey (2007) define classroom observations as “one of the most commonly employed data collection procedures in classroom research as they allow researchers to gather detailed data on the events, interactions, and patterns of language use within particular foreign and second language classroom contexts” (p.165). Second language researchers typically depend on a number of procedures in observations in collecting data, such as field notes and mechanical means of recording the lesson (e.g., audio and video recordings). The latter method is reliable in

less simple environments because it helps the researcher to review the lesson and concentrate on both the learners and teachers. However, these mechanical means of collecting data are sometimes problematic. The researcher needs to keep in mind the type of data gathered when choosing an audio or video recording device. One of the advantages of using digital devices in observation is the better sound quality and durability. Moreover, these devices can be manipulated.

For this study, the audio system of recording was used. The researcher audio recorded the lessons through a MP3 voice recorder. Participants were asked to wear the MP3 around their necks to improve the quality of the recording. In addition, participants were shown how to start and end the recording session. Following this, the researcher chose a quiet place at the back of the classroom and started her observation. After each observation session, the data from the MP3 voice recorder was transferred to the researcher's personal laptop.

The primary reason for the observational study was to investigate whether fifth and seventh grade classrooms provide reading instruction and, if they do, to find out the time that is allocated to it. Since less time has been devoted to comprehension instruction in primary grade compared to middle grade classrooms as mentioned in previous studies (Durkin, 1978; Taylor et al., 2002), fifth primary grades and seventh preparatory grades were selected for the observations. The purpose of this observational study was to investigate the time spent on reading instruction in both grades.

In relation to the reading instruction studies in L1 that occurred in the classroom, Ness (2011) initially carried out a study regarding teachers' reading instruction for English at middle grade levels. All teachers carried a state certification, with two holding certifications from birth through Grade 6, five certified for grades 1 through 6, three held dual certification in grades 1

through 6 and special education, and 10 held certification for kindergarten through Grade 8. By using direct observation, Ness (2011) and a doctoral student observed 3,000 minutes of classroom instruction to understand how instructional time was used in 20 first through fifth grade classrooms. Classroom observations focused on teachers' instructional choices. The main aim was to gauge how frequently middle grade teachers use explicit reading instruction in their language instruction. In addition, in her observational study, Ness (2011) took field notes for a five-minute episode. She recorded the behaviours that took place in the classroom. Speeches between teachers and learners were recorded. At the end of the note-taking stage, she recorded the number of learners who were involved in the reading task (i.e., doing what they were supposed to be doing). The overall reliability co-efficient in her study was higher than 0.70.

Moreover McNinch et al. (1998), carried out a study investigating the time allocated for reading instruction. Twenty elementary school classrooms (eleven 3rd grade, four 4th grade, and five 5th grade) teachers were used as the sample in their study. The main aim of their study was to determine the amount of time that teachers spent on different reading activities. Observation protocols were coded by one minute to profile the teacher and learner's activity actually occurring in the observed reading sequence. Results suggested that 35.47% of the instructional time was spent on reading. In the current research, the systematic observation protocols were modified from both Ness's (2011) and McNinch et al's. (1998) observational frameworks.

5.4.1.1 Data collection: Observation. For this study, data was gathered from 4080 minutes of observed lessons that were intended to focus on techniques for teaching reading used by teachers and reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use. 4080 intervals of 1 minute each

were coded across thirty-four teachers. It should be noted that each teacher was observed three times (40 minutes x 3= 120 minutes).

A predefined systematic observation coding scheme was created to obtain information about the types of reading instruction used in the English language. The researcher aimed to observe the reading practices involved in both fifth seventh grade classrooms and to determine whether the teachers' practices were based on phonics or on comprehension, previously known as the whole approach. It was equally important to investigate whether the learners were encouraged to use bottom up reading strategies or top down reading strategies in their learning. For instance, it would be interesting to observe whether fifth and seventh grade teachers encouraged their learners to use their background knowledge and their own L1 knowledge to compensate for or overcome any reading difficulties. These elements can be observed through a focus on the reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use and the teaching techniques they use in their own classrooms. This observation was the first phase of the study. The coding scheme was based mainly on modified reviews of studies in L1 reading instruction (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009; Ness, 2011) and items added from L2 literature (Cook, 1992; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011; Alsamadani, 2012). The categories were chosen in order to have an appropriate level of detail for this descriptive study. The coding scheme developed for the current study consisted of three main categories: (1) reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use (2) teachers' techniques used in teaching reading, and (3) non-teaching techniques for reading/non-reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use. They are based on the NRP (2000) taxonomy of reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading and include prediction strategies, background knowledge strategies, asking and answering questions strategies, recognition of story structure strategies, monitoring strategies, sound out letter names,

systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic instruction in phonics, systematic instruction in morphological awareness and other reading techniques, as illustrated in Table 5.2 (see also Deford, 1985; McKeown et al., 2009; Murray et al., 1996; Janzen, 2007).

In order to recode the teachers' reading instruction in encouraging the use of reading strategies, each strategy in the proposed taxonomy was given a unique code. The first main category included seventeen subcategories of strategies teachers encourage learners to use. Every time a code for the subcategory within the main category of reading strategies focus was recorded, the interval was also coded within the main category. This main category of reading strategies included subcategories of strategies learners are encouraged to use to develop their decoding and comprehension skills. These subcategories are based on the reading strategies reviews (Deford, 1985; NRP, 2000; McKeown et al., 2009, Janzen, 2007). Each subcategory within the main category of reading strategies is described in Table 5.2 on the next page.

Table 5.2

Subcategories within the main category of reading strategies and their coding scheme

NO	Sub-Categories (Main category: reading strategies)	Code
1	Isolate phonemes (recognise the individual sounds in words, for example, the first sound in <paste> (/p/)).	IPH
2	Blend phonemes (listen to a sequence of separately spoken sounds) and combine them to form a recognisable word.	BPH
3	Segment phonemes (break a word into its sounds. For example, the number of phonemes are in ship (three: /ʃ/ /I/ /p/)).	SPH
4	Follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units (i.e., work with syllables then onset and rimes.	FDP
5	Sound out letter names and words when they do not know the them.	SOLW
6	Monitor comprehension in which they learn how to be aware of their understanding during reading.	MC
7	Read the alphabet forms.	RAL
8	Translate words into Arabic to assist their comprehension.	TWAC
9	Predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text.	PRP
10	Ask and answer questions to comprehend the text.	AQ
11	Use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning words in a given text.	BK
12	Recognize story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes) to assist their understanding of the text.	RS
13	Summarize in order to unite ideas in a text.	SUM
14	Use word maps to develop complete understandings of words	UWM
15	Use external aids and writing to organize their ideas in reading.	UEM
16	Break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning.	BDM
17	Use more than one strategy to comprehend texts.	MSC

Also for the teaching reading taxonomy, each technique in the proposed taxonomy was given a unique code. This main category of techniques for teaching reading included eleven subcategories of systematic instruction such as phonemic awareness technique, systematic instruction in phonics, identifying letter knowledge, translating words to assist comprehension and seven other techniques that the researcher observed, as shown in Table 5.3. Most of these codes were taken directly from different sources in L1 (Deford, 1985; Murray et al., 1996; NRP, 2000; White, et al. 1989) and largely based on the NRP (2000) taxonomy of reading instruction. Also, codes focusing on phonological awareness instruction, systematic vocabulary instruction, explicit translation instruction were based on L2 studies investigating EFL teachers' instruction and EFL reading teachers' practices (e.g., Cook, 1992; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011; Alsamadani, 2012).

Table 5.3

Subcategories within the main category of teachers' techniques for teaching reading and their coding scheme

NO	Sub-Categories (Main category: reading strategies)	Code
1	Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness. For example, teaching the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondences.	SIPA
2	Systematic instruction in phonics. For example, to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.	SIPHS
3	Both sense words and nonsense words (pseudo-words) to enhance readers' decoding skill. Teacher exposes children to both real and non-real words.	RWNSW
4	Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading	PC
5	Techniques which promote learners' fluency such as by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.	FLU
6	Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.	SIVOC
7	Explicit translation instruction.	EXTR
8	Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.	WST
9	Systematic instruction in morphological awareness.	SIMA
10	Explicit description of the learners' strategy and when and how it should be used.	EXSLT
11	Identifying letter knowledge.	ILKN

Routine classroom instructions were also included, e.g., instructions for the completion of homework, teachers' presentations, and transitional behaviour in classroom activities. The Assignment code (AS) refers to the time when the teacher asks learners to complete in- and out-of-class assignments. The Transition code (TR) refers to "when teachers give transitory directions, involving taking out or putting away materials and shifting instructional topics" (Ness, 2009, p.150). NTS refers to the instance when the teacher was doing something other than teaching reading or a reading strategy such as correcting or marking grades, behavior management, or an off-task conversation as shown in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4

Subcategories within the main category of non-techniques of teaching reading/ non- reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use

NO	Techniques	Code
1	Assignment	NRTS- AS
2	Transition	NRTS-TR
3	Non- teaching technique/ Non – reading strategy	NRTS

Since the observation codes were modified from those of Ness (2009, 2011) and McNinch et al. (1998), it was important to conduct a pilot study to check that the observational codes were appropriate and effective for the purposes of this research.

5.4.1.2 Pilot study of observation. Researchers must guarantee that their instrumentation tools are reliable. It is very important to consider conducting a pilot study in any data gathering

procedure. Gass and Mackey (2007) define the pilot study as “a small-scale trial of the proposed procedures, materials, methods, and (sometimes) coding sheets and analytic choices of a research project” (p.3). The main reason for a pilot study is to find out any problems or obstacles the researcher might confront from the very beginning of the research and to solve them. Therefore, it is regarded as a crucial way to revise, adjust and develop the research instrument before data collection and starting field study. Additionally, it allows the researcher to measure the feasibility of the data sample and data measurements. In the area of research on teaching, Walford (2011) and Sapsford and Jupp (2006) explain that pilot studies allow the researcher to gather a picture of the teachers’ quality of teaching, specifically when the pilot is rich it helps researchers to evaluate their work.

The participants included in this pilot study were randomly chosen based on purposeful sampling. The pilot study was conducted in November 2015 at one private school. On the day of the pilot study, the participants were required to fill in the consent forms. Four private school teachers, 2 from each grade, agreed to participate. To maintain confidentiality, the participants were given numbers and the data was kept in a safe secured place on the researcher’s computer. Before carrying out the pilot study, the researcher explained the objective of the study and requested the participants to be honest and cooperative during the observation sessions. All the observations and interviews were audio-recorded.

There were two pilot rounds. Adjustments were made to the coding scheme after the first round to test that the codes were appropriate to capture efficiently the descriptive information of each observed interval in the classrooms. The first round of pilot work was based on a two-minute interval recording carried out with two teachers, one in fifth grade and one in seventh grade. This time sampling technique proved to be unsatisfactory as various behaviours, hence

codes, were observed during one interval. The complexity of behaviours made it difficult for the researcher to tally all the codes in a single interval. Therefore, the observation protocols were modified and only one-minute intervals were coded to profile the actual teacher activity as in McNinch et al.'s research (1998).

The second pilot round was then conducted based on a one-zero-time sampling technique where within each set time interval of one minute, the researcher observes for example, the first 40 seconds and completes the coding in the last 20 seconds based on a retrospective judgement of the most frequent activity observed during the first 40 seconds (modified from McNinch et al., 1998; Ness, 2011)). The second pilot study captured the occurrence of all events of interest in the study, including brief activities which would not have been accounted for in the previous pilot. This time sampling technique proved to be satisfactory. Another new reading strategy was observed. It involved the teachers encouraging their learners to read in alphabet letter forms and not their sound forms, for example, "A" for "apple" "B" for "book". This reading strategy is vital as children's unfamiliarity with the names of letters might impede the development of their phonics and decoding skills. Moreover, learners may not be able to comprehend and utilise the alphabetic principle until they are able to decode and name letters (Murray et al., 1996). Also, it was observed that the identification of letter knowledge was an important teaching reading technique frequently used in fifth grades, for example, explaining and naming upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet and divide them among English reading lessons. Therefore, additional teaching reading techniques were added to the teaching reading taxonomy.

Furthermore, it was observed that teachers actively encouraged learners to use new reading strategies which were not included in the initial taxonomy, such as encouraging learners to translate words from English into Arabic to assist their comprehension. For example, the

words “book” and “bag” were translated into **كتاب** and **شنطة**, respectively, during class. Moreover, teachers also relied frequently on explicit translation instruction in the observed sessions. For example, when they started reading the key words in a session, they immediately translated into Arabic to assist their learners’ comprehension.

Therefore, on the basis of the pilot observations, the following two reading strategies: RAL and TWAC and teaching reading techniques were added to the proposed taxonomy: ILKN and EXTR (see tables 5.2 and 5.3). The use of these reading codes has also been reported in the literature. For example, Cook (1992) emphasises that a majority of L2 learners refer to their first language when they process their L2. She states that “the L2 user does not effectively switch off the L1 while processing the L2, but has it constantly available” (Cook, 1992, p.571). Moreover, she clarifies that in their teaching, teachers are not encouraged to separate each language from one another. She states that the “L1 is present in the L2 learners’ minds, whether the teacher wants it to be there or not. The L2 knowledge is being created in them in all sorts of ways with their L1 knowledge” (Cook, 1992, p.584).

As a result, in the second pilot, the following four codes were added, RAL, ILKN, TWAC and EXTR. The original coding scheme included encouraging learners to use same techniques in reading in English as in Arabic (RASE). However, the pilot study showed that the participants did not encourage their learners to use the same reading techniques in Arabic as in English reading lessons. The reason was that English teachers do not teach Arabic reading lessons. Therefore, this initially proposed code had to be excluded from the main study. The modified coding plan system was easy to utilize and accessible within the one-minute coding intervals (see tables 5.2 and 5.3). It could efficiently capture the required data to attain the objectives of this research. Consequently, it was chosen as the coding scheme for the actual observations in the

main study. An interrater reliability analysis was performed through the pilot study which will be explained in the next section.

5.4.1.3 Data analysis of the intra-rater reliability (IRR). Two researchers took part in the pilot observation sessions to measure the intra-rater reliability. The principal researcher was the PhD researcher conducting this study. A doctoral student in second language reading served as the secondary researcher. Both researchers were former primary and middle grades classroom teachers, with a combined 10 years of experience. Each rater independently coded the same session in each individual observation and then the two researchers reviewed and discussed the significance for their coding.

The use of percentage agreement has been a subject of debate among statisticians. This method does not consider the proportion of agreement that may take place between different raters because even the random ratings may appear to be “good” (Wood, 2007, p.5). Cohen’s kappa, which takes into consideration the percentage of two parts of ratings that may occur due to chance alone, is viewed as a reliable indicator of intra-rater reliability. The equation used here to calculate Cohen’s kappa is: $Kappa = \frac{PAO - PAE}{1 - PAE}$ where PAO represents “proportion agreement, observed” and PAE represents “proportion agreement, expected by chance” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.151).

The data collected in classroom observations were tallied, analysed and disaggregated in multiple steps. SPSS analyses by using descriptive statistics were used to enable the researcher to look at the means and standard deviations for the total number of techniques of teaching reading, reading strategies encouragement, as well as disaggregating the data by grade level. The data was studied to understand the time devoted in reading and which teaching reading techniques and

reading strategies were least and most prevalent in classroom instruction. These allowed the researcher to measure the Cohen's kappa reliability. Kappa levels at or above 0.70 are considered to be acceptable. The intra-rater reliability for all of the different sub-categories in the coding system established an interrater reliability of 0.837 ($p < 0.000$) in the fifth grade classroom and 0.868 ($p < 0.000$) in the seventh grade classrooms, respectively. As Landis and Koch (1977) have described kappa values above 0.61 as "substantial" and those above 0.81 as "almost perfect". The intra-rater reliability score for the pilot study was, therefore, very good and dependable.

5.4.2 Qualitative Stimulated Recall Interviews (SRI)

This section considers all aspects of the interview phase of data collection: the use of stimulated recall interviews, translation and piloting, validity, and data analysis.

5.4.2.1 Stimulated recall interviews. According to Kumar (2014), interviews are regarded as discussions performed by researchers to address questions which stimulate conversation. It is one of the most popular methods used in social science research due to its low cost and production of rich data although as a qualitative method, it is time consuming. Supplementing quantitative data with qualitative ones (in this case, interviews) can help overcome some of the limitations of quantitative research (Dörnyei, 2007). Gillham (2008) advises researchers to conduct interviews to accompany other methods of collecting data so that they can develop a better understanding of what the numerical responses refer to. He states that interviews can bring "research to life" (Gillham, 2008, p.101). Hence, for this study, follow-up stimulated recall interviews with an individual format were conducted. The purpose of the interview is to ask the teachers observed to clarify any patterns, which were not clear in the observation sessions.

Stimulated recalls have been chosen as they are an important tool in second language research and allow the investigation of different cognitive processes by encouraging participants to recall their immediate thinking during an event. This occurs by promoting a video or audio recall (Fox-Turnbull, 2009). These stimulated recalls include the use of a stimulus (e.g., of audiotapes or videotapes of recorded behaviour or of lesson transcripts), which assist “a participant’s recall of his thought processes at the time of that behavior” (Calderhead, 1981, p.212). In this method, the participants, in this case the teachers, are usually video or audio taped in their lesson. Following this, they are given the time and space to listen to their recording and comment and explain their ideas about instruction. Gass and Mackey (2000) state that stimulated recall is “one subset of a range of introspective methods that represent a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity” (p. 1). It is a retrospective tool developed on retrieval cues. In previous L2 research, stimulus recalls were adopted to describe teachers’ concurrent thought processes during lessons (Gass & Mackey, 2016). Currently, however, stimulated recall is utilised for many reasons. For instance, Borg (2006) in his study on teachers’ cognition and language education used this method as “the basis of concrete discussions of what the teachers were doing, their interpretations of the events represented in the stimuli and of their reasons for the instructional decisions they were taking” (p.219). Additionally, Ness (2009) supports the idea of supplementing observation data with interviews to allow the participants to comment on the reason for implementing a particular behaviour in their observation sessions. Moreover, Kuzborska (2011) used this method in her study about reading teachers’ beliefs about their instruction. To ensure that the data collected was complete and accurate, to maintain descriptive validity and to avoid bias, interviews were audio-recorded in her study. Recording interviews also enhances the research process as it allows the researcher to re-read the interview during the

writing process and interpretation (Orafi & Borg, 2009). The procedures conducted for stimulated recall interviews in many non-experimental mixed studies focusing on teachers' instruction and strategies such as Ness (2009, 2011) and Borg (2006) are as follows. The individuals or participants verbally report their ideas on a given task (e.g., writing a composition or solving a problem) and are asked to say what is going through their minds as they are working their way through the task by watching their own video-recordings or by listening to their own audio recording. Additionally, interviewers from time to time, can stop the video-tape and ask the interviewee to clarify specific points (Gass & Mackey, 2000). All participants are required to pause the video-tape whenever they want to report the reasons for their choices and behaviours. Also, Kuzborska (2011) stated that "teachers are video or audio taped in a series of lessons and they view or listen to the tape and explain what they were thinking or doing at the time" (p.107). It is highly recommended that participants are interviewed as soon as possible to avoid memory loss.

In this current study, the key objective of running stimulated recall interviews is to establish insights into the reasons why teachers acted in a particular way. The aim of stimulated recall interviews was twofold: (1) to validate the interpretation of observable techniques of teaching reading and reading strategies; and (2) to measure the reliability of the designed observation schedule and understand the observational data from the teachers' perspectives instead of depending on the researcher's own interpretations. All the stimulated recall interviews were conducted within five days of the relevant observations. The researcher interviewed the 34 teachers who had already participated in the observation phase (first phase) of this study on specific sessions. In other words, these were fifth and seventh grade Libyan English teachers

who had already been observed and whose practices had already been coded using the systematic classroom observation coding system.

5.4.2.2 Pilot study of stimulated recall interviews. The key objective of running stimulated recall interviews was to gain personal insights from the teachers regarding the techniques they used to teach reading and the reading strategies they encouraged children to use. The interviews enabled the researcher to understand the observational data from the teachers' perspectives instead of depending on her own interpretations. Once all the pilot participants had signed the consent forms, the pilot interviews were run with fifth and seventh grade English teachers from the target schools. The interview was trialled with four teachers who were not included in the main study. The purpose of the pilot was to ensure that all questions were clear, to remove items which did not yield usable data and to draw out useful responses from the teachers. The teachers were asked to give their comments and feedback about the clarity of the questions in the interviews. During the pilot data collection, the researcher conducted 4 stimulated recall sessions (2 for each grade) soon after the relevant reading lessons were recorded, thus ensuring that there was a short time gap between the observation and the interview, as suggested by Gass and Mackey (2007). The questions were presented in Arabic to help with teacher understanding and the researcher received useful responses as a start. However, the researcher struggled in terms of time. Most of the participants preferred short stimulated audio recall interviews, were very brief in answering questions and preferred to listen to short extracts from the interviews. Feedback from the teachers suggested that the questions were clear and that they could remember the parts of the lesson that related to the researcher's questions. For example, some of the prompt questions that were used to help the teachers recall their thoughts of events were:

- (1) Why did you start your lesson with this technique of teaching reading: e.g., identifying letter knowledge?
- (2) What do you think of the importance of the reading strategy sound out letter names or words?
- (3) Is there any obstacle with this reading strategy: e.g., ask and answer questions?
- (4) Why did you use this technique of teaching reading: e.g., picture cues?
- (5) Why did you use this technique of teaching reading: e.g., explicit translation instruction?
- (6) What do you think of the importance of this reading strategy: e.g., translating words to assist comprehension?
- (7) Is there any obstacle with these reading strategies: e.g., isolating phonemes, segmenting or blending?

The teachers who participated in the pilot stimulated recall interviews had all been observed previously in the pilot study. The researcher chose specific and random segments from the audio-recorded lessons related to reading instruction and presented these to the participants as the specific points to talk about what they thought was happening there, whether their use of specific techniques for teaching reading and their encouragement of the reading strategies under discussion was their preferred one and what their rationales were for using those.

Additionally, with the method adopted in the pilot study, the researcher could focus more clearly on certain aspects of the learning process while concurrently reducing the duration of the stimulated recall (Peterson & Clark, 1978). An alternative approach to this could be to play the complete lesson and to give the respondents greater role in determining which instructional episodes to discuss. However, this method would require more of the participants' time. One lesson lasts 40 minutes and the researcher would often observe at least two classes of one

participant on the same day. This means that she would have to replay a 40-minute long mp3 recording to a teacher who has an already heavily loaded schedule. As a result, in order to be considerate of the teachers' busy schedules and their comfort, the researcher decided to play extracts from the audio recordings that related to the teaching of reading and used open-ended prompt questions based on the audio-recording with teachers. The teachers' answers were also audio recorded. The pilot stimulated recall interviews lasted between 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the participants' willingness to elaborate on their answers. Following these initial interviews with the four teachers, it was found that the prompt stimulated recall questions were clear and straight forward. Thus, the questions were deemed satisfactory and appropriate for use in the main study.

5.4.2.3 Conducting the stimulated recall interviews. As in the pilot study, the stimulated recall interviews in the main study were used to help determine what reading strategies Libyan teachers encourage their learners to use and what teaching reading techniques these teachers use in fifth and seventh grades. Thirty-four interviews were carried out in Arabic, the teachers' first language, to allow them to explain their views clearly. In fact, the teachers were given the choice of either Arabic or English. They all chose Arabic which created a rapport between the participants and the Arabic-speaking researcher (Gass & Mackey, 2011), facilitated communication and avoided misinterpretation. The teachers were individually interviewed.

The criteria used in the stimulated recall are based on Peterson and Clark's framework (1978, as cited in Gass & Mackey, 2016). Peterson and Clark (1978) used stimulated recall interviews in their study on observing teacher's trainers' effectiveness. In their study, they played four short

segments (1-3 minutes) representing the beginning and the ending of the class and two random sequences during the class.

In addition, the researcher used questions based on the observation extracts from the audio recordings of their teaching to prompt the participants' memories after they listened to the relevant segments of their classes. The selected extracts chosen to guide the teachers' focus in the stimulated recall sessions were each based on a minute (could be either specific or random) highlighted in the observation checklist. To identify these, the observer looked for the selected minute-long intervals in the observation checklist, which she recorded and coded in the checklist, and then played the selected minute on the mp3 recording device. For instance, the researcher looked at Minute Interval Two in the observation checklist and then played that section, to have the participant to listen to the selected segment. The researcher then asked the participant to comment on the selected minute interval. Stimulated recall sessions were arranged soon after each of the three successive lessons were recorded, to ensure that they were conducted within as short a time interval as possible because, according to Gass and Mackey (2000, p. 105), stimulated recall generates more valid data when the time lapse between the event and the recall is minimised. In the present study, all stimulated recall interviews were conducted within five days of the observations. It is worth mentioning that between these stages the researcher had time to listen to the relevant audio recording tracks and check the observation schedule while waiting for the teachers, because the stimulated recall sessions were conducted after classes ended. After listening to the audio recorder and checking the observation checklist, the researcher was able to make a list of questions that would assist in prompting discussion relating to the teachers' reading behaviours observed during the lesson. The teachers were given time to listen to the audio recording and to comment on their lessons. The researcher also prompted their memory

with questions (i.e., provided them with prompts based on the observation schedule and asked them to comment). Below are some of the prompt questions and comments based on audio-stimuli that were used to help the teachers recall their thoughts of events on what was observed:

(1) First of all, you started with the systematic vocabulary instruction teaching reading technique. Why?

(2) Why did you encourage your learners to use their background knowledge while reading the words in the sentences? For example, you explained to them “uncle” in the passage and you related it to their own uncle and asked one of the students to tell them about his uncle. You asked, “Who is your uncle? Your father has a brother?”. So, you were trying to relate the learners’ own background knowledge with the words in the passage.

(3) Why did you use explicit translation instructions as a teaching reading technique? That is, you explained to them and translated the word “grandfather” into **جدى** and “uncle” into **عمى**. Do you think that this might assist the comprehension?

(4) Did you find any of those teaching reading techniques and reading strategies difficult to use with the learners? For instance, the sounding out letter names and words or asking and answering question strategies and the explicit translation instruction teaching reading techniques.

(5) You started with the explicit vocabulary instruction teaching technique. For instance, you explained to them the meaning of family members and said that they had cousins, grandfathers and uncles. So, what do you think is the importance of this teaching reading technique?

(6) From the recordings, it can be observed that you encouraged your learners to break down complex words. Why did you encourage your learners to use this reading strategy?

These prompts helped the teachers to discuss their use of reading techniques and strategies and provided rich data for analysis, as will be shown in the following chapters.

5.4.2.4 Translating the stimulated recall interviews. An important procedure before the coding process was to translate the Arabic transcriptions verbatim into English and back-translate them. Researchers, such as Dorneyei (2010), in the area of second language research encourage researchers to translate their instrument. However, it is not enough to translate these cross-cultural studies into one language only to validate the instrument. Such instruments need to be culturally acceptable and appropriately translated and one way to establish this is by back-translating the stimulated recall interviews for their validation and using them in a cross-cultural study. This method needs a number of independent bilingual translators (Triandis & Brislin, 1984). The bilingual translator blindly translates the transcript from the original language to the target language, then a second bilingual translator independently back-translates the script from the target language to the original language. Following that, the two versions of the instrument (original language and back-translated versions) are compared to establish concept equivalence. If an error is spotted in the back-translated version, another translator should retranslate the item.

In order to minimise possible linguistic and cultural discrepancies between the original interview transcriptions and the new English versions, a back-translation procedure was conducted. The back-translation method was deemed as an essential requirement in order to establish equivalence between the original stimulated recall interview transcriptions and their translated versions. The 34 stimulated interview transcriptions were translated using a three-stage translation-back-translation procedure: (1) the translation from Arabic to English was conducted by the researcher; (2) the back-translation from English to Arabic was performed by an expert in the field of translation; and (3) the back-translation was compared with the original transcriptions to check out any discrepancies by the researcher and the expert (see appendices 1-4). Although

this process of translating and back translating was time-consuming and took around two months, it was an essential step in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data.

5.4.2.5 Reliability and validity. Reliability is an essential element to consider in that it may be a useful indicator of the quality of the research (Seale, 1999). According to Joppe (2000), reliability relates to the consistency and accuracy of the study findings. Merriam (1998) explains reliability in terms of “the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (p.205). The interviews were carried out and recorded and listened by the researcher. The codes derived from the thematic analysis of the stimulated recall data were also cross-checked with a PhD student in this research area to avoid any discrepancies and differences of coding opinion, and to establish consistency and validity.

5.5 Trust

Research should be built on trust. In order to arrange appointments with the participants in this study (Libyan English teachers), trust had to be established between them and the researcher. In fact, having a relationship based on trust was essential in conducting the stimulated recall interviews. The researcher assured the 34 participants that the interviews would be used only for the purpose of this study. Additionally, the participants were informed that only the voice tracks and teacher numbers would be used in the thesis and that the researcher was the only one with access to these.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam (1998) and Long and Johnson (2000), the findings of a research are considered as trustworthy when the principles of validity and reliability are met. Golafshani (2003, p.602) further explained that four requirements have to be met for a

study to be deemed trustworthy: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and consistency. These are discussed in turn in the sections below.

5.5.1 Credibility

Glesne (1999) believes that “the credibility of findings and interpretations depends upon careful attention to establishing trustworthiness” (p.151). Establishing the validity of results could be done through the triangulation of the data instruments (Miles & Huberman, 2013). For this purpose, the present study used three main methods of data collection: stimulated recall interviews, systematic observations and a teachers’ reading attitude questionnaire. Therefore, the “teachers’ voices” were taken into consideration in three different ways and these three elements should contribute to the final interpretation of the findings. Patton (1999) explains the importance of triangulation of methods in these terms:

As with triangulation of methods, triangulation of data sources within qualitative methods will seldom lead to a single, totally consistent picture. The point is to study and understand when and why there are differences. (...) Consistency in overall patterns of data from different sources, and reasonable explanations for differences in data from divergent sources, contribute significantly to the overall credibility of findings (p.1192).

Through the use of different methods, the study aims to provide a stronger base for the findings and a more thorough discussion of the research questions.

5.5.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the researcher’s ability to transfer the findings of the study into another context. In other words, the findings are applicable to other groups of people or settings.

This is particularly relevant for this study as the literature on teaching reading to young learners in Libya is scarce. Also, this study might be applicable to other second language teachers in other settings similar to that in Libya. Therefore, the findings of this study may be adapted to provide researchers with information on some of the teaching reading techniques and reading strategies EFL teachers encounter in Arab contexts, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Oman and the like. In addition, the observations in this thesis may provide useful information for comparison with other contexts.

5.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to a situation when a specific researcher and other researchers reach similar interpretations, observations and conclusions in the same research. In other words, if the work was repeated with the same methods, the same participants and within the same context, similar findings would be obtained. In this study, the researcher established the dependability of her findings by cross-checking and confirming her observation and stimulated recall codes data with other colleagues in the field and they came to similar conclusions.

5.5.4 Confirmability

A study that meets the confirmability requirement is one that is not limited by the researcher's bias and takes other people's views into consideration – even if these might differ from the researcher's own views. In taking participants' views into consideration during the stimulated recall interviews and not the researcher's own assumptions, this study meets the confirmability requirement. The findings have indeed been established through interpretations of the participants' interviews. In fact, it was the researcher's aim to focus on the participants' own data

(observations and interviews). Such data might agree or disagree with what the researcher had already proposed about the problem of the study.

5.5.5 Consistency

Consistency was one of the major challenges encountered while interviewing the participants of the study. Teachers from both grades differed in their English proficiency; hence the stimulated recall interviews had to be conducted in Arabic. Moreover, some of the teachers did not have a pedagogical background or knowledge of teaching reading techniques and the required reading strategies the learners need. Therefore, the researcher was not always fully consistent in posing the same questions to the participants. Some of the participants addressed several issues within the same answer. Other participants digressed or provided irrelevant answers. For consistency among participants, the researcher decided to focus only on the observation follow-up questions in the stimulated recall interviews to cover topics required for the observation study.

5.6 Transcription and Data Immersion

All the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and checked more than once to ensure accuracy and avoid any misrepresentations. Any irrelevant pauses, fillers or non-verbal forms of communication which did not add to the findings were excluded. The principal focus in the current stimulated recall interviews was on main themes. The whole process of transcribing audio data was time-consuming and took several months. One of the most challenging steps in the transcription stage was the process of making all scripts anonymous. The names of the participants were changed to numerical codes. This made the reporting on the data easier, the

discussion more reader-friendly and comparisons between answers simpler, and guaranteed anonymity.

5.7 Methods of Performing Qualitative Data Analysis

Wellington (2015) states that an analysis means “breaking down of a topic or object into its component parts and understanding how those parts fit together” (p.9). In addition, Offredy and Vickers (2013) explain that qualitative data analysis involves the process of moving from the raw data that was collected in the research study to the provision of clarifications, and interpretations of the phenomena, people and situations under investigation. In the current study, ‘thematic analysis’ was considered as an essential method of analysing and making sense of the data. Thematic analysis is an exploratory approach where the researcher codes or marks their extracts in a text according to the relevant patterns in the themes (Schwandt, 2007). In the same vein, Braun and Clarke (2006) define it as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting (themes) within data” (p.79).

5.7.1 Rationale for Thematic Analysis

Some researchers argue that “thematic analysis should be considered a method in its own right” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.78). It can be defined as “a process for encoding qualitative information” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.vi). The focus is on classifying data according to a theme which “is a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.vii). Thematic analysis is often regarded as a generic approach, which is compatible with most qualitative research traditions and fields (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) listed the

advantages of this analysis as: flexibility, richness in describing data, possibility of effectively reducing large data sets and generating “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). One of the main reasons for choosing thematic analysis for this study was the large data set obtained from the transcription of the interviews and descriptions of the observations. Thus, such analysis was used as it generates themes inductively from the main data or deductively from theories and prior literature (Boyatzis, 1998). The qualitative approach used is based on the constructivist paradigm known also as the interpretivism framework. According to the constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially negotiated, rather than inhering within individuals (Burr, 1995). Therefore, thematic analysis carried out within a constructionist framework does not aim to focus on motivation or individual psychologies. Instead, it aims to theorise the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enhance the individual aspects that are provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The stages followed for the thematic analysis are described in table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Phases of thematic analysis (Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87))

Phase	Process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

5.7.1.1 Familiarization with data during collection. The researcher was familiar with the data collected from the stimulated recall interviews: she had time to listen to the relevant audio recording tracks and check her observation schedule while waiting for the teachers until they finished their other classes. After listening to the audio recorder and checking the observation

checklist, the researcher was able to make a list of questions that would assist in prompting discussion relating to the teachers' reading instructions observed during the lesson. This stage in collecting data was very useful as it provided the researcher with the opportunity to prepare focused questions for the stimulated recall interviews and thus facilitated the interview process.

5.7.1.2 Generating initial coding. This phase takes place when the researchers have read and familiarised themselves with the data, and listed a number of ideas relevant to the data gathered. In this phase, initial codes are generated from the data. These codes represent an important basic segment in the data to the smallest element generated from the raw data regarding the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher in this study proceeded in generating initial codes presented in main themes and sub themes to organise her data into groups. The codes were derived inductively and deductively. In addition, these codes were produced manually, i.e., the researcher coded her data by writing notes on the texts while analysing by using coloured pens to indicate specific patterns of data and electronically by writing notes through the NVIVO software programmes. These codes known as nodes in NVIVO were highlighted in the data that carried depth meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

5.7.1.3 Searching for themes. This stage involves categorising the different codes into themes and adding the relevant coded extracts to the specific themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Attride-Stirling (2001) explains that the researcher should “go through the text segments in each code (or group of related codes) and extract the salient, common or significant themes in the coded text segments” (p.392). Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that during the coding process, “researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological

commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (p.12). These “codes” are labels which the participants’ quotes are attached to in order to form clusters in a theme or to break them down into sub themes according to the data. In this thesis, the threads appear in Chapter 6 as Teaching Reading Techniques and Reading Strategies and under sub threads, for instance, *SIVOC*, *PC*, *FLU*, and *SOLW*. The codes used are both deductive and inductive as the research questions and the relevant literature both had an impact on the generated coding of the data.

An inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data itself (Patton, 1990) (as such, this form of thematic analysis bears some similarity to grounded theory). Inductive analysis “is therefore a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions”. That is to say, this type of thematic analysis is driven from the data. As for a deductive thematic analysis, it “would tend to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst driven” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.83). This form of thematic analysis is likely to offer a less detailed description of the data overall, and rather more analytic detail of specific aspects of the data.

5.7.1.4 Reviewing themes. The researcher in this phase had already developed a set of themes and reviewed them. She had also checked the identification of these themes generated in the study, assessed whether these themes could not be categorised as real themes (e.g., if there were not enough data to support them, or the data were too diverse) or collapsed into each other (e.g., two apparently separate themes might form one theme), and whether other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes. Patton’s (1990) dual criteria judging categories (internal

homogeneity and external heterogeneity) were considered. The themes in this study were clear and distinct from each other. Braun and Clarke's (2006) instruction regarding when to stop coding was followed: they stated "when your refinements are not adding anything substantial, stop!" (p. 92). Indeed, the researcher stopped coding her data when she noted that no new themes were developing from the data and being added to the existing ones.

5.7.1.5 Defining and naming themes. The researcher at this stage developed her own thematic map from her data (Section 6.5 in Chapter Six provides the final thematic maps for reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading). The researcher at this stage was able to define and name the themes as presented in the next chapter. In other words, the researcher was able to identify the 'essence' of what each theme was about and what themes were revealed in each part of the interviews. The themes were defined according to word level and text level sub categories which reflect whether these teachers were instructing and encouraging their learners to use more top down or bottom-up reading models through the teaching techniques and reading strategies they encourage. For example, whether these teachers were encouraging their learners to use their L1 when reading words to compensate for any comprehension difficulties in a given text. Some of these strategies are based on the learner's compensatory model discussed in chapter two. Such themes are likely to capture and reflect the complexity of the reading process.

5.7.1.6 Producing the report. After having identified the main themes and sub-themes, the researcher started the write-up of the analysis chapter. The thematic analysis chapter sheds light on the data obtained from the stimulated recall interview extracts. The themes are presented and analysed in Chapter Six and supported by evidence from the data.

5.8 Phase Three: Questionnaires

Before deciding on the design of the questionnaire, the researcher reviewed the literature on teachers' cognitions, attitudes and motivations towards their reading practices in general and in a EFL context in particular. In doing so, she was unable to find an existing questionnaire fitting the aims of the current study and its context of the Libyan EFL primary and preparatory settings, whilst taking into account a wide-ranging set of L1 reading instruction and teachers' beliefs referred to in the literature (e.g., Deford, 1985). In fact, few studies have used a teaching reading attitude questionnaire in a FL to investigate teachers' thinking towards their teaching of reading practices in a classroom (Anigbogu, 2006). However, a number of studies in L1 have used a teachers' teaching reading attitude or perception questionnaire (Vaughan, 1977; Deford, 1985; Ness, 2009; Martin, et al., 2012). These studies either focused on teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards their teaching reading techniques or the reading strategies they encouraged their learners to use. Given the scarcity of data on teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading in a EFL primary and preparatory level, it was essential to design a new teachers' reading attitude questionnaire fitting the Libyan educational context for both fifth and seventh grades.

After discussing and following advice from the TAP experts and data analysis from a second questionnaire round pilot study, the researcher decided to use a self-designed questionnaire to measure three dimensions: (1) teachers' general attitude toward teaching reading; (2) teachers' thinking about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of word reading and comprehension; and (3) teachers' thinking about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension. This self-designed questionnaire comprised four sections. Section A consisted of five (closed ended) questions requesting demographic information such as the teacher's gender,

training status and years of experience. Section B included an 11-item Likert type scale aimed at determining the teachers' general attitudes towards teaching English reading in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting. The items in this section were based on previous literature sources from different questionnaires (Kyriacou et al., 1999; Bakari, 2003; Hall, 2005; Powers, et al., 2006). Section C consisted of a 17-item Likert type scale aimed at determining the different reading strategies that teachers thought they should encourage learners to use. In specific, the survey items were based on research literature on first and foreign language reading instruction (Freyd & Baron, 1982; Deford, 1985; Anderson & Nagy, 1992; NRP, 2000; Graves, 2008; McKeown et al., 2009; Antonacci et al., 2011; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011 and Alsamadani, 2012). Section D comprised a 11-item Likert type scale aimed at determining what English teachers thought about the teaching techniques they could use in class. Items in this final section were taken from these reviews: Deford (1985), White et al. (1998), NRP (2000), Duke et al. (2011) and Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou (2011). Additional questions were created and added to the questionnaire (Questions 27 and 37) selected from Cook (1992) and Janzen (2007).

In addition, the content of sections C and D in the questionnaire were built according to the two models of EFL reading instruction: word level-based and whole language-based. As mentioned in chapters two and three, these two models have been previously examined in EFL reading research by (Goodman, 1967; Gough, 1972). According to the history of EFL reading instruction research, there have been two general models of reading for providing different teaching principles of reading: bottom-up and the top-down. These have been influential in producing sections C and D of the questionnaire. The word-based approach was popular in the 1960s (bottom-up), while the whole-language based approach (top-down) was prevalent in the 1970s (Grabe, 2009; Kuzborska, 2010). These instructional models have also been used as a

framework for developing and constructing these specific questionnaire items to determine whether Libyan EFL teachers hold certain attitudes towards teaching reading. For sections B, C and D, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the various items by selecting one of the following options: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*. A-priori weights of one integer differences were assigned in descending order (4, 3, 2, 1). These weights were used as the basis of coding the data collected from the subscale. It is worth noting that all items were positive and did not require reverse score.

5.8.1 Piloting the Questionnaire

As for the observation sessions and stimulated recall interviews, the questionnaire was first piloted to ensure that it was fit for use in the main study. In the sections below, the procedures for piloting the questionnaire are explained.

5.8.1.1 Procedures for piloting the questionnaire. There were three pilot rounds.

Adjustments were made to the items included after the second round to test that the items were appropriate to measure adequately fifth and seventh grade teachers' attitude towards teaching reading. The first round of pilot work was collected from 26 fifth and seventh grade participants. The researcher tested the reliability of the fifth and seventh grade questionnaires by using the Alpha formula (Cronbach's Alpha) and obtained reliability scores of .814 and .797, respectively; thus showing that the questionnaire was reliable. In this round, the teachers' attitude questionnaire was piloted online. It was carried out as a web-based questionnaire and used the Qualtrics Survey Methods software. The survey was emailed to 46 teachers in both grades. 15 participants out of 25 teachers from fifth grade and 11 participants out of 21 teachers from

seventh grade completed the questionnaire. This version of the questionnaire consisted of 36 questions across 2 pages. It included information to reveal the progress on completion and duration of the questionnaire. For example, “Next”, “Previous” and “Sent” were included to help completion. The aims, contact details of the researcher and a statement of confidentiality were included in the questionnaire. The teachers were instructed to click on a specific link in their emails. The survey was conducted over a one-month period. All teachers were informed about the main objective of the research. To meet ethical requirements, a consent form explaining that participation was voluntary and ensuring anonymity was added to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Part A was based on demographic questions, Part B consisted of teachers’ attitude towards teaching reading questions and Part C included specific reading instruction strategies questions. In this section, the items were rated and measured by focusing on the frequencies of reading instruction only, as an aspect related to their attitude. Such a division made the data analysis and interpretation easier and more organised for the researcher. However, there were issues with the structure of the questionnaire: it was not clear how this questionnaire measures attitudes to the teaching of reading. In addition, there was a need for a clearer link between the literature review on the key components of reading and the questions that tapped into this on the questionnaire, i.e., there were no questions looking at morphological awareness in reading as in the literature review. Moreover, it had to be assessed whether the questions formed distinct clusters, i.e., reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading.

In the second pilot round, the researcher visited a summer school in Benghazi. She made an appointment to meet the head teacher of the school to discuss the aims and requirements of the study. The head teacher was cooperative and spoke to the teachers who met the requirements of

the study. A day later, she called to inform the researcher that she could come any day between 12 00-13 00 in break time and distribute her questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed to twenty teachers from both grades over a period of four days. Twenty extra copies were left in the head teacher's office. It is worth noting that the teachers in this summer school were not teaching the fifth and seventh grade curricula at that specific moment. However, although they were just teaching general English courses, they had taught the fifth and seventh grade curricula before. The second pilot round was carried out at a time when schools were shut because of Ramadan, the month of fasting. For this reason, the researcher was only able to trial her observation and interview instruments from October 2015 when schools opened again. At the end of the week, the researcher came to collect the questionnaires from the head teacher's office: only eighteen questionnaires from fifth grade and sixteen from seventh grade were returned. Because of the relatively low response, the researcher decided to conduct another electronic version survey through the Qualtrics online software. Twenty-eight more questionnaires were received this way: nine from fifth grade and nineteen from seventh grade, giving a total of twenty-seven questionnaires for fifth grade and thirty-five for seventh grade. Two questionnaires from fifth grade and three from seventh grade had to be eliminated because three respondents had only completed the first page (two from fifth grade and one from seventh grade) and two respondents from seventh grade did not complete section A.

Before piloting the questionnaire, four teachers were asked to provide feedback about the survey and to comment on any concerns and issues with the questions. They used the think-aloud protocol and gave feedback on the coherence and structure of the questions. Those participants were chosen randomly for this protocol study. Think-aloud protocols are utilised in psychology cognitive studies (McDonald et al., 2012). Researchers have explained that using think-aloud in

research may result in better designed products. Schriver (1984, 1989), for instance, used think-aloud data to improve the readability of written documents. Similarly, Camburn et al. (2000) and Nolin and Chandler (1996) carried out a think-aloud experiment while developing a questionnaire and adapted data to improve the readability and accessibility of these questionnaires. Think-aloud techniques do not take the place of other evaluative ones such as sensitivity reviews or statistical analysis of results. However, they identify untapped points concerning the test design and participant performance.

For this study, teachers' comments on the questions were helpful in refining the questionnaire and making sure difficult and unclear questions were modified. For instance, through this method, it was possible to simplify part of the questionnaire: The first questionnaire draft consisted of 46 items. However, after the think-aloud procedure, the researcher eliminated four questions (43- 46) concerning reading in Arabic. Three primary and preparatory teachers participated in this method. Two of the teachers in the pilot study mentioned that questions in sections A and B were clear and straightforward. They advised the researcher to make some adjustments concerning item 20 and to add words in a text because this item should be useful for fifth graders also. The third teacher pointed out to the words "low frequency and high frequency" in item 26 and mentioned that they were unclear. So, the researcher added examples to clarify this point before piloting. They also mentioned that teachers may not necessarily encourage learners to use the same reading strategies in English as Arabic since teachers usually teach either English or Arabic reading. They explained that the research questions were clear and encouraged the researcher to provide a back-translated Arabic version of the questionnaire for the actual pilot study.

The researcher tested the reliability of the second pilot fifth and seventh grade questionnaires by using the Alpha formula (Cronbach's Alpha) and obtained reliability scores. SPSS reliability analysis was conducted on data gathered from the attitude scale in sections B, C and D. Cronbach's Alpha data was used to determine internal consistency for fifth and seventh grade. The second pilot scale revealed that for fifth grade sections C and D, the scale would benefit from the deletion of items 12, 23, 24 and 36, and for seventh grade section C item 15 and section D item 36 should be deleted. These items either had a negative correlation with the mean score (fifth grade section C item 23, seventh grade section C item 15) or had a coefficient below .1 (fifth grade section C items 12 and 24, section D item 36). When faulty items were deleted, for fifth grade the reliability coefficient rose slightly from .814 to .843 for section C and from .896 to .903 for section D. For seventh grade section C, the reliability coefficient rose slightly from .870 to .888 and for section D from .676 to .713. However, TAP members advised the researcher that some specific points and issues may appear during the pilot of the observation study and may need to be added to the observations and questionnaires in the main study or addressed before the main study. From the pilot observation study, it was clear that the following points, reading strategies and teaching reading techniques had to be added to both the observation sessions and the questionnaire.

As an English teacher, you should teach reading using:

35. explicit translation instruction. For example, focusing on translating the vocabulary words from Arabic into English.

39. techniques which identify the learners' letter knowledge. For example, explaining and naming upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

As a teacher of English, you should encourage your learners to:

18. translate words or sentences into Arabic to assist their comprehension.

28. read alphabet letter forms and words.

5.8.1.2 Validity of the questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the views and opinions of the experts from different fields of study and different backgrounds were taken into account. The experts included staff from the Education Department and PhD colleagues from different fields of study. Feedback from the supervisor at the University of York was also taken into account in the production of the final version of the questionnaire. Gray (2013) has highlighted important aspects that may affect the validity of the questionnaire, for example, the language and expressions used in the questions, the inclusion of questions not related to the objectives of the study, and poorly organised, structured and designed questions. All these points, together with feedback from the teachers, were taken into consideration in the development of the final version of the questionnaire. To conclude, face and content validity could be established because the items in the questionnaire were generated based on a detailed review of associated literature and consultation with experts in the field.

5.8.1.3. Reliability of the scale. The researcher tested the reliability of the third and final fifth and seventh grade questionnaires pilot round by using the Alpha formula (Cronbach's Alpha) and obtained reliability scores. This study was conducted with ten EFL Libyan teachers from each grade. SPSS reliability analysis was conducted on data gathered from the attitude scale in sections B, C and D. Section B consisted of 11 items measuring teachers' attitude to the teaching of reading, section C consisted of 17 items designed to measure their thoughts towards the reading strategies they encouraged their learners to use, and section D consisted of 11 items

designed to measure their thoughts towards the teaching reading techniques they used in the classroom.

Cronbach's Alpha data, used to determine internal consistency for fifth and seventh grades, are provided in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7. The reliability of each section of the fifth-grade questionnaire was thus determined by using the SPSS programme to calculate Cronbach's alpha. The values of the coefficient were .892 for the teachers' general attitude section B, .804 for reading strategies section C, and .849 for the techniques for teaching reading section D (Table 5.6). The reliability of each section of the seventh-grade questionnaire was also determined by using the SPSS programme to calculate Cronbach's alpha. The values of the coefficient for this grade were .966 for the teachers' general attitude section B, .868 for reading strategies section C, and .672 for the techniques for teaching reading section D (Table 5.7). The overall reliability coefficient was higher than 0.70 which implies that there is a good consistency of scale. Subsequently, the researcher decided to proceed with the actual study as the pilot results showed that the questionnaire was valid for full investigation.

Table 5.6

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the fifth grade teachers' teaching reading attitude questionnaire

Sections	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
B	11	.892
C	17	.804
D	11	.849
All	39	.864

Table 5.7

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the seventh grade teachers' teaching reading attitude questionnaire

Sections	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
B	11	.966
C	17	.868
D	11	.672
All	39	.914

Since Cronbach's Alpha is used to judge reliability, it requires a uni-dimensional scale in which items hinge on one underlying construct. A factor analysis could yield some insights into the nature of the scale and the constructs it actually measures. De Vellis (2003) explains that factor analysis is an important tool in any scale development, that is because it may enhance the process of detecting the number of factors underlying a latent variable in the absence of strong guidance from theory. An important advantage in factor analysis is that it may provide greater insights into the latent variable than the reliability analysis can. This type of analysis requires a larger sample. Therefore, it was only conducted in the main study with the 292 teachers from both grades (see Chapter Seven) to assess how the scale was divided into successful constructs.

5.8.1.4 Translating the questionnaire. An important procedure before conducting the third pilot round was to back-translate the questionnaire. To measure both fifth and seventh-grade Libyan teachers' attitude towards teaching reading, a new Arabic translation of this 44-item questionnaire was developed. In order to minimise possible linguistic and cultural discrepancies between the original scale and the new scale, a back-translation procedure was conducted. For this study, the back-translation method was deemed as an essential requirement in order to establish equivalence between the original scale and its translated version (Brislin, 1970). The teachers' teaching reading attitude survey was translated using a three-stage translation-back-translation procedure: (1) the translation from English to Arabic was conducted by the researcher and a post-graduate student; (2) the back-translation from Arabic to English was performed by both a fluent Arabic-speaking English doctoral student in the field of reading and a fluent English-speaking Arabic researcher in the area of educational methodology; and (3) the back-translation was compared with the original scales to check out any discrepancies by an American reading researcher at the University of Benghazi who agreed that there were only minor differences which did not affect the meaning.

5.9 Questionnaire Sample and Administration

This section discusses the principles of sampling, their application to the main questionnaire survey and its administration and conduct. Due to the large number of teachers required to conduct this study, the attempt to conduct the main study online via Qualtrics was unsuccessful. In addition, due to the social unrest in Libya which left many people without electricity and internet access for long hours, the researcher in consultation with her supervisor decided to use a

paper version of the questionnaire. The completion of the paper-based questionnaire took around four weeks while keeping the Qualtrics online through the whole third year of the PhD.

The participants recruited for the questionnaire were chosen based on purposeful sampling (as mentioned in section 5.2.2). These participants came from twenty private and public schools in Libya. The questionnaire was completed by teachers in small towns including Benghazi city and towns namely; Rajma, Emeraj and Elbeyda located in the east side of the country, to obtain a larger number of participants from both grades.

In order to reach out to these teachers, I visited these schools, met the head teachers and teachers, and asked them to fill out a hard copy of the questionnaire. A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed to both fifth and seventh grade teachers from different schools in Libya, of which 292 were fully completed and returned, achieving a response rate of 77%.

5.10 Analysis of Quantitative Data

The researcher coded all the data gathered in response to the questionnaire, then recorded them electronically, using the SPSS programme, as reported in Chapter Seven and discussed in Chapter Nine. As for the statistical analysis techniques used, they were as follows: Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire items. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages and means were used in order to interpret and draw comparisons about the groups' responses and how they were distributed in the questionnaire. Also, a t-test analysis was used to determine statistically significant differences in attitude across groups of teachers. Factor analysis was performed in order to reduce the questionnaire variables to a smaller number of factors. The standard adopted for the level of statistical significance was .05. The questionnaire data is fully discussed and analysed in chapters Seven and Nine. The next

section examines the ethical issues arising from this research and discusses how these were addressed prior to, during and after data collection and analysis.

5.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a vital consideration in all kinds of research. Ethical concerns are usually discussed according to the problematic issues the research investigates and through the methods used to gain reliable and valid information. That is to say, each procedure in the research may carry its own ethical problems. For this study, approval had to be first obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Education at the University of York. Upon approval of the research project, a consent form was provided to all participants and the head teachers in Libyan schools. The teachers also signed the consent forms included in the observations and interviews: they were informed that their participation was voluntary and any information (included school names) provided would remain confidential and solely for the purpose of academic research (Walford, 2011). Once the consent forms had been duly filled in by the head teacher, the pilot studies and main studies were conducted and data, in the form of observation sheets and stimulated recall interview forms, were collected from grades five and seven English teachers of the target schools. During the questionnaire data collection, each questionnaire included a consent form section informing the participants that the information gathered from the questionnaire was confidential and that they would remain anonymous and voluntary. It was crucial for the teachers to know that measures were taken to ensure their confidentiality and anonymity (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005).

Confidentiality issues were also taken into account when handling the data. For example, the audio recording system was secured with a password only known to the researcher. The data was

then loaded and saved into a password-secure computer programme at an offsite location for reference and analysis purposes.

5.12 Summary

This chapter explained the different research methods used in this study and provided a rationale for their choice. It described in detail the three instruments used in collecting the data, highlighting briefly the advantages and disadvantages of each instrument used. It also explained the design of the research in terms of the timing and type of sample. The current research is a descriptive study combining the use of systematic observations to determine the frequency of reading instruction (reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading), stimulated recall interviews to collect qualitative data and a questionnaire to gather quantitative data. The importance of piloting the study and the outcomes of the pilot studies conducted in connection with this research were also explained. In addition, the chapter discussed the significance of validity and reliability in ensuring the quality of a study. In this regard, the reliability and validity of the research instruments adopted in this study were tested and deemed reliable and valid. In the last section, the chapter explored the ethical issues associated with this research. Using all the above information as background, the next chapter presents the results and findings obtained from both the systematic observations and stimulated recall interviews.

Chapter Six

Analysis of Systematic Observations and Stimulated Recall Interviews

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the observations of the techniques for teaching reading and teachers' encouragement of reading strategies in fifth and seventh grade Libyan settings. It describes two sets of results from the two phases of data collection. The first section reports the results of the analysis of the data based on the systematic observation coding system used during the first phase of the study (research questions 1 and 2). The second section reports the results of the stimulated recall interviews which served to supplement the observation findings and provide further insight into the teaching of reading in English in Libyan classrooms (research question 2). The findings are presented according to the main categories of the coding system. The data collected from the classroom observations were initially studied and analysed in isolation. The observation data was then validated with the data from the teachers' stimulated recall interviews. Additionally, the demographic data of the main participants, i.e., gender, years of experience and qualifications, is presented at the beginning of the chapter.

6.1 Demographic Data

In the data-collection stage, 34 teachers from both grades were observed and interviewed: 18 fifth grade primary teachers and 16 seventh grade preparatory teachers from 6 private and 3

public schools in Benghazi City. As mentioned in the previous chapter, all the participants have Arabic as their L1 and teach English (see tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3).

6.1.1 Gender

As shown in Table 6.1, the majority of the participants in both grades were females (88.9% and 87.5 %).

Table 6.1

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to gender

		Fifth Grade		Seventh Grade	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	2	11.1	2	12.5
	Female	16	88.9	14	87.5

6.1.2 Teaching experience and qualifications

Results in table 6.2 reveal that the participants teaching experience ranged from 1 to 15 years, with most participants in both grades having 1-5 years of experience (44.4% for fifth grade and 56.25% for seventh grade). In terms of qualifications, 44.4% of fifth grade teachers had specialised in Education and 62.5% of seventh grade teachers had specialised in Applied Linguistics. Some teachers had gained qualifications in Translation. Further, the Bachelors' degree was the highest degree obtained by most participants: above 80% in each grade. Moreover, table 6.2 shows that most participants worked in private schools: 55.55% of fifth grade teachers and 75% of seventh grades teachers. While 44.44 % of fifth grade teachers and 25% of seventh grades teachers worked in public schools. The next sections will explain these teachers' classroom practices and their responses in both the systematic observation and stimulated recall interview phases.

Table 6.2

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to years of teaching, qualification, highest degree and school type

		Fifth Grade		Seventh Grade	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Years of Teaching	1– 5	8	44.4	9	56.25
	6 – 10	7	38.9	5	31.25
	11 – 15	3	16.7	2	12.5
Qualification	Applied Linguistics	6	33.33	10	62.5
	Education	8	44.44	4	25
	Translation	4	22.22	2	12.5
	BA	15	83.33	14	87.5
	Diploma	3	16.66	2	12.5
School	Private	10	55.55	12	75
	Public	8	44.44	4	25

6.2 Phase One: Systematic Observation

The overarching aim of the classroom observations was to objectively gather information about actual classroom practices using a systematic coding system in order to triangulate with information gathered from the teacher stimulated recall interviews and teacher self-reports in the questionnaire used during the third phase of the study. A total of 4080 minutes of lessons that were intended to focus on the teaching techniques used by teachers and reading strategies

teachers encouraged their learners to use were observed and 4080 intervals of 1 minute each were coded across thirty-four teachers. It should be noted that all teachers were observed three times (40 minutes x 3= 120 minutes). To be precise, English language lessons in each grade consisted of different activities in addition to reading, i.e. dictation, discussions on specific topics, writing activities, speaking skills and grammar lessons. The observer's focus was only on the reading related activities observed during these sessions. As explained in the earlier methodology chapter there were three main categories in the systematic coding system: (1) reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use; (2) teachers' techniques of teaching reading; and (3) non- teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use.

In this section, the results of the classroom observations are presented according to the main categories of the systematic coding system and further described by exploring the occurrence of subcategories in each of the main categories. Moreover, the section will investigate if there are any statistically significant differences between the teaching reading techniques used and the reading strategies encouraged in the two grades.

6.2.1 Time Spent on Reading Instruction in an English Lesson

The amount of instructional time teachers devote to teaching reading (decoding and comprehension) skills in the whole curriculum has been a research question ever since Durkin's 1979 report. More recently, Ness (2011) found that elementary grade teachers spent less than 1% of the total observed time teaching comprehension. In response to the first research question for this study, the quantitative data analysis provided numerous insights into the amount of reading

instruction (teaching reading techniques used and reading strategies primary and preparatory grade teachers encourage their learners to use).

6.2.2 Research Question One

The first research question relates to the total instruction time fifth and seventh grade English teachers typically spend in teaching reading and encouraging learners to use reading strategies in teaching English language lessons. Results indicate that less time was spent on teaching reading in terms of both the teaching techniques the teachers used and the reading strategies they encouraged learners to use than on the non-teaching reading techniques/non-reading strategies from the systematic observation checklist, as shown in the Tables 6.3 and 6.4.

Table 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 show that the amount of school time that the teachers spend in teaching the reading skill which can be calculated in two different ways: (1) as the percentage of English instruction time (i.e., the time available in the school week in which to teach reading in English) that teachers devote to the reading lessons, or (2) as the proxy number of total minutes that teachers spend on reading instruction. Proxy i.e. value of an interval in a calculation. This section discusses the percentage of school time spent on teaching reading.

Table 6.3 demonstrates only the reading strategies from the teaching techniques taxonomies. It shows the percentage obtained for each reading strategy construct (i.e., each interval construct multiplied by 100 divided by 2160 intervals for fifth grade/1920 intervals for seventh grade). The mean was established by dividing the total count of each interval by the number of teachers in each grade (18 for fifth grade and 16 for seventh grade).

Based on the observations, the most frequently encouraged reading strategy by fifth grade teachers was the *sounding out letter names and words* reading strategy: it was encouraged during

216 of the 2160 intervals (10% of the intervals). This strategy was coded for proxy minutes when the teacher encouraged learners to read and repeat specific alphabet letter, such as “repeat after me pee /p/ for “*people*”. The teachers encouraged learners to *translate words to assist comprehension* during 35 of the 2160 intervals (1.62%). For example, a teacher persuaded her learners in a lesson to read the word “pencil” and encouraged another learner to translate it into Arabic. Also, the *read in alphabet letter forms* reading strategy was encouraged during 27 intervals (1.25%). This strategy was observed when teachers encouraged learners to decode alphabet letter forms only. The use of this reading strategy was demonstrated when for instance a teacher asked a learner to read the letters “a” to “z” while pointing to each letter. Therefore, the researcher coded it as read alphabet letter forms reading strategy per proxy minute. The eighteen participants usually encouraged their learners to use these reading strategies in conjunction with each other. Additionally, they encouraged learners to *monitor their comprehension* during 9 intervals (0.42%). For instance, a fifth-grade teacher encouraged learners to read specific sentences and to pause and check whether they comprehended the meaning of words such as “The cat sat on the mat”. The participants encouraged their learners to use the three reading strategies *asking and answering questions, using background knowledge* and *breaking down words to construct meaning to comprehend the text* during 8 intervals (0.37% of 2160 intervals). Moreover, they encouraged their learners to *segment phonemes*, i.e., break down words into sounds. For example, during a session, a teacher guided her learner in decoding the word “ship” into three phonemes (/ʃ/ /i/ /p/). Teachers got learners to *predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge* of the text during 6 of the 2160 intervals (0.28%). A striking finding was that fifth grade teachers did not encourage their learners to use any of these reading strategies based on phonic decoding skills: *isolate phonemes/individual sounds in words, blend*

phonemes and *follow a developmental pattern*. It seems that fifth grade Libyan teachers focused mainly on the alphabetic knowledge. Also, the following strategies were not observed at all: *recognise story structure, use external aids, use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts*. It is possible that these strategies are too advanced for young learners since they are based more on metacognitive reading strategies.

Similarly, for seventh grade participants, the most frequently observed reading strategy was the *sounding out letter names and words* strategy i.e. naming the letter, ‘b’, they practice saying ‘bee’, encouraged during 120 of the 1920 intervals (6.25%). The learners were persuaded to use the *translating words to assist comprehension* strategy when reading words during 89 of the 1920 intervals (4.64%). The sixteen teachers encouraged their learners to *monitor their comprehension* during 80 of the 1920 intervals (4.17%). Also, during the observation, the participants encouraged their learners to *ask and answer questions to assist their comprehension* during 29 of the 1920 intervals (1.51%). For instance, the seventh grade teachers at specific intervals encouraged their learners to ask and answer relevant questions about given parts of the text. Also, the *read in alphabet letter forms* strategy was encouraged during 22 of the 1920 intervals (1.15%). Additionally, the participants urged their learners to *break down words to construct meaning* during 20 intervals (1.04%). Such a strategy was observed when a seventh grade teacher encouraged a learner in her EFL lesson to read the word “unhappy” and explained the meaning of “happy” first and then moved on to clarify the use of the prefix “un”. Moreover, the teachers encouraged their learners to only use the *predict* reading strategy during 19 of the 1920 intervals (0.99%) and to *use more than one reading strategy* during 9 of the 1920 intervals (.47%). This was demonstrated when a teacher in a specific interval encouraged a learner to use both her background knowledge reading strategy and monitor reading comprehension strategy.

One of the least frequently used reading strategies by the learners was the use of *background knowledge* reading strategy (used during 7 of the 1920 intervals (0.36%)). Interestingly, the *isolating phonemes* reading strategy was encouraged by the teachers only during 5 of the 1920 intervals (0.26%). The *use external aids* reading strategy was encouraged by the teachers during 2 of the 1920 intervals (0.10%). For instance, a teacher helped the learners to take some notes to facilitate their comprehension. The following reading strategies were the least frequently used by the learners or encouraged by the teachers: *blend phonemes*, *follow a developmental pattern*, *recognise story structure*. They were each used during 1 of the 1920 intervals (0.05%). Finally, the *segment phonemes* strategy was not observed at all. The fact that phonics were not used in seventh grade could be because at this stage learners are expected to focus on more metacognitive reading strategies to develop their comprehension skills. However, the limited use of reading strategies in middle grades is an ongoing concern. Results obtained from the systematic observation data (Table 6.3) reveal that the total (that is all interval minutes in each grade) instruction time spent by EFL Libyan teachers on reading strategy teaching was 14.96 % for fifth grade and 21.09 % for seventh grade.

Table 6.3

Fifth and seventh grades' Reading strategy frequencies (34 participants) over 4080 intervals (2160 minutes for 5th grade =18x 120) of observation intervals (1920 minutes for 7th grade =16x120)

Code	Fifth Grade Total Intervals out of 2160	Mean Per Minutes	Percent	Seventh Grade Total Intervals Out of 1920	Mean Per Minutes	Percent
IPH				5.00	.31	.26
BPH				1.00	.06	.05
SPH	6.00	.33	.28			
FDP				1.00	.06	.05
SOLW	216	12.00	10.00	120	7.50	6.25
MC	9.00	.50	.42	80.00	5.00	4.17
RAL	27.00	1.50	1.25	22.00	1.38	1.15
TWAC	35.00	1.94	1.62	89.00	5.56	4.64
PRP	6.00	.33	.28	19.00	1.19	.99
AQ	8.00	.44	.37	29.00	1.81	1.51
BK	8.00	.44	.37	7.00	.44	.36
RS				1.00	.06	.05
UEA				2.00	.13	.10
BDM	8.00	.44	.37	20.00	1.25	1.04
MSC				9.00	.56	.47
Total	323		14.96	405		21.09

Key: IPH = Isolate phonemes, BPH = Blend phonemes, SPH = Segment phonemes, FDP = Follow a developmental pattern, SOLW = Sound out letter names or words, MC = Monitor comprehension, RAL = Read alphabet letters, AQ = Ask and answer questions, BK = Use their background knowledge, RS = Recognise story structure, SUM = Summarise in order to unite the other ideas or meanings, UWP = Use word maps, UEA = Use external aids, BDM = Break down morphologically complex words, MSC = Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts, SIPA = Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, SIPHS = Systematic instruction in phonics, RWNSW = Both real words and nonsense words.

In addition, Table 6.4 illustrates only the teaching reading techniques taxonomies. It shows the percentage obtained for each teaching reading technique construct (i.e., each interval construct multiplied by 100 divided by 2160 intervals for fifth grade/1920 intervals for seventh grade). The mean was established by dividing the total count of each interval by the number of teachers in each grade (18 for fifth grade and 16 for seventh grade). For the teaching reading technique group, the most frequent technique was the *picture cues techniques*. It was used by fifth grade teachers during 122 of the 2160 intervals (5.65 %). This technique was coded when a teacher at a specific proxy minute was using flash cards to illustrate the meaning of a word to her learners. The teachers *identified letter knowledge* during 91 intervals (4.21%). The *systematic vocabulary instruction* was given by fifth grade teachers during 90 intervals (4.17%). Also, they used the *explicit translation instruction* teaching reading technique to assist their learners' comprehension during 41 intervals (1.90%). The *promoting learners' fluency* teaching reading technique to help learners decode words until they become confident readers was implemented during 29 intervals of the 2160 intervals (1.34%). *Explicit description of the learners' strategy* teaching reading technique was used during 8 of the 2160 intervals (.37%). This strategy was coded by the researcher when she observed a teacher explaining to her learners the metacognitive and background knowledge reading strategies – although when she was interviewed, the teacher was not aware that these were reading strategies. *Systematic instruction in morphological awareness* was used during 5 of the 2160 intervals (.23%). For example, teachers focused on reading word roots in a given lesson. Moreover, *systematic instruction in phonics* was only used during 3 of the 2160 intervals (.14%). The use of the strategy was observed when teachers explained to learners how to pronounce the schwa sound and how it differed from the /a/ sound. The *systematic instruction in phonemic awareness* was used during 2 of the intervals (.09%). The

least frequently used technique was *word shapes (word configuration)*: it was used during 1 interval (.05%).

In the seventh grade teaching reading technique group, the most frequent technique was the *systematic vocabulary instruction*. It was given during 105 of the 1920 intervals (5.47%). Also, both the *explicit translation instruction and systematic instruction in morphological awareness* techniques were used to assist learners' comprehension during 70 intervals (3.65%). *Picture cues* were used during 67 of the 1920 intervals (3.49%). The *promoting learners' fluency* teaching reading technique to help learners decode words until they become confident readers was used during 54 of the 1920 intervals (2.81%). For instance, this technique was observed when teachers instructed their learners to read wh-questions with a falling intonation. Moreover, the *identifying letter knowledge* teaching reading technique was used during 21 intervals (1.09%). For instance, a teacher corrected a learner when he incorrectly identified the first letter in the word "vegetables" as /w/. The *word shapes (word configuration)* was used during 10 of the intervals (.52%). Both *systematic instruction in phonics* and *systematic instruction in phonemic awareness* teaching reading techniques were used during 6 of the 1920 intervals (.31%). The *explicit description of the learners' strategy* teaching reading technique was used during 4 of the 1920 intervals (.21%) The least frequently observed technique was *both real words and nonsense words*: it was only implemented during 2 of the 1920 intervals (.10%).

Results obtained from the systematic observation data (Table 6.4) reveal that the total (all interval minutes in each grade) instruction time spent by EFL Libyan teachers on teaching reading technique was 18.15 % for fifth grade and 21.62 % for seventh grade.

To conclude, results gathered from the systematic observation data (Table 6.3 and 6.4) reveal that the total (All interval minutes added together in each grade) instruction time spent by

EFL Libyan teachers on teaching reading in an English lesson were less than half (14.96% + 18.15% = 33.11% for fifth grade and 21.09% + 21.62% = 42.71 % for seventh grade).

Table 6.4

Fifth and seventh grades' teaching reading technique frequencies (34 participants) over 4080 intervals (2160 minutes for 5th grade = 18x 120) of observation intervals (1920 minutes for 7th grade = 16x120)

Code	Fifth Grade Total Intervals out of 2160	Mean Per Interval	Percent	Seventh Grade Total Intervals out of 1920	Mean Per Intervals	Percent
SIPA	2.00	.11	.09	6.00	.38	.31
SIPHS	3.00	.17	.14	6.00	.38	.31
RWNSW				2.00	.13	.10
PC	122	6.78	5.65	67.00	4.19	3.49
FLU	29.00	1.61	1.34	54.00	3.38	2.81
SIVOC	90.00	5.00	4.17	105.00	6.56	5.47
EXTR	41.00	2.28	1.90	70.00	4.38	3.65
WST	1.00	.06	.05	10.00	.63	.52
SIMA	5.00	.28	.23	70.00	4.38	3.65
EXLST	8.00	.44	.37	4.00	.25	.21
ILKN	91.00	5.06	4.21	21.00	1.31	1.09
Total	392		18.15	415		21.62

Key: PC = Picture cues, FLU = Techniques which promote learners' fluency, SIVOC = Systematic instruction in vocabulary, EXTR = Explicit translation instruction, WST = Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique, SIMA = Systematic instruction in morphological awareness, EXLST = Explicit description of the learners' strategy, ILKN = Identifying letter knowledge.

Table 6.5 indicates that for the fifth grade teachers, the most frequent code used in the taxonomy NRTS was NRTS-NST, utilised during 1377 of the 2160 intervals (63.75%). This was recorded when the participants were teaching dictation, writing lessons, playing songs to their learners, i.e., when they were not directly involved in the reading task. *Transitory directions* were given during 55 of the 2160 intervals (2.54%). This was recorded when the teachers gave transitory directions, including taking out or putting away materials and shifting instructional topics. Moreover, learners were asked to *complete in- and out-of-class assignments* during 13 of the 2160 intervals (.60%). It is an unexpected finding that foreign language teachers are so taken up with non-reading instructions. As a result, time spent on *Non-Reading Strategies/Non-Teaching Reading Techniques* consumed a large part of the observed periods.

Similarly, the most frequent code for the seventh grades was the NRTS-NST, used during 1065 of the 1920 intervals (55.47 %). This was recorded when the participants were teaching grammar lessons, writing lessons and having discussions on some topics, i.e., when they were not directly involved in the reading task. Additionally, the learners were asked to *complete in- and out-of-class assignments* during 28 intervals (1.46%). These teachers turned out to be assignment-givers. Finally, the learners were given *transitory directions* during 7 of the 1920 intervals (0.36%). Consequently, sizeable time was spent on teaching non-reading lessons. Completing and checking assignments also consumed a large part of the observed periods. Furthermore, the limited amount of time devoted to reading instruction may be due to the lack of training of Libyan EFL teachers.

Taking the above data into consideration, it can be seen that besides being encouraged to monitor comprehension and use the translating words to assist comprehension reading strategies, the learners in this study were encouraged to use more decoding reading strategies. That is, the

lessons became spaces for focusing on alphabetic knowledge and sounding out letter names and words rather than phonics where learning focuses on decoding sounds by blending, segmenting and following a developmental pattern in sounding out phonemes.

Table 6.5

Fifth and seventh grades' non-reading strategies/non-teaching reading techniques frequencies (34 participants) over 4080 intervals (2160 minutes for 5th grade =18x120) of observation intervals (1920 for minutes 7th grade =16x120)

Code	Fifth Grade Total Intervals	Mean Per Interval	Percent	Seventh Grade Total Intervals	Mean Per Interval	Percent
NRTS-TR	55.00	3.06	2.54	7.00	0.44	.36
NRTS-AS	13.00	.72	.60	28.00	1.75	1.46
NRTS-NST	1377.00	76.50	63.75	1065.00	66.56	55.47
Total	1445.00		66.89	1100.00		57.29

Key: NRTS-AS = Non- teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies: Assignment, NRTS-TR = Non- teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies: Transition, NRTS-NTS = Non-teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies; Non- reading technique/Non- reading strategy.

Table 6.6 provides a summary of the grand total of the different activities involved in both fifth and seventh grade English language lessons. The table suggests that both fifth grade and seventh grade teachers were spending some time (14.9. %, 21.09% respectively) on reading strategies in their EFL lessons. The total time spent on the teaching reading techniques for fifth and seventh grade teachers was 18.15% and 21.62 % respectively. Thus, their grand total was 33.11% for fifth grade and 42.71% for seventh grades respectively. In addition, the grand total for the non-reading activities (i.e. (transitions, assignments and other non -reading skills) for fifth and seventh grade was 66.89 % and 57.29% respectively.

Table 6.6

Grand totals of the different types of activities including non-reading activities

Activity	Fifth Grade		Seventh Grade	
	Total Intervals	Percent	Total Intervals	Percent
Total Strategy	323.00	14.96	405.00	21.09
Total Teaching Reading Technique	392.00	18.15	415.00	21.62
Time Spent on Reading	715.00	33.11	820.00	42.71
NRTS-TR	55.00	2.54	7.00	.36
NRTS-AS	13.00	.60	28.00	1.46
NRTS-NST	1377.00	63.75	1065.00	55.47
Time Spent on Non Reading	1445.00	66.89	1100.00	57.29
Total	2160.00	100	1920.00	100

Key: NRTS-AS = Non- teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies: Assignment, NRTS-TR = Non- teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies: Transition, NRTS-NTS = Non-teaching reading techniques /non-reading strategies; Non- reading technique/Non- reading strategy

6.2.3 Research Question Two

The second research question investigated the reading strategies teachers encouraged their learners to use, the techniques they used to teach reading and the differences between the two grades. To address this issue, descriptive statistics and a chi-square analysis for goodness of fit were used.

As seen from the systematic observation checklist in tables (6.3 and 6.4), the fifth-grade teachers' most frequently used reading strategies were the naming letters and sounding out words reading strategy and the read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy. These strategies are based more on decoding skills (see Section 6.2.1). However, these teachers also encouraged their learners to use comprehension strategies such as get learners to ask and answer questions to assist their comprehension and translate words to assist comprehension (see Section 6.2.2). Similarly, the most frequently observed reading strategies in seventh grade were the sounding out letter names and words strategy and the read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy. Moreover, the learners were persuaded to use the translating words to assist comprehension strategies, monitor their comprehension, and ask and answer questions to assist their comprehension. In terms of the techniques for teaching reading, the most frequent techniques teachers were using were the systematic instruction in vocabulary techniques, picture cues to assist learners in identifying words, and techniques which promote learners' fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.

Therefore, the researcher decided to study the grade differences among groups in reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading to divide the differences in reading strategies and teaching reading techniques into combined decoding and combined comprehension categories as

illustrated in Table 6.7. A chi-square was conducted to compare the relationship between the grades and combined decoding skills and comprehension skills.

6.2.3.1 The chi-square formula. Essentially, there are four steps to the chi-square procedure: (1) Find the difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies for each of the categories. (2) Square the difference for each (eliminating the negative values). (3) Divide the squared difference by the expected frequency for each category. (4) Finally, sum all the values from all the categories. Two assumptions and restrictions must be met to assure confidence in the results of the chi-square test: (1) independence of observations and (2) size of expected frequencies. Independence was met since individual strategies/techniques were counted only once in the categories. With regard to frequency size, a chi-square test is not appropriate when the expected frequency of any cell is fewer than five.

The chi-square test used frequency counts from the decoding and comprehension skills (i.e. rate of the reading strategies/teaching reading techniques) coded and compared them to the frequency counts in both grades. The chi-square formula measured any discrepancy between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies. If the chi-square value was small, it concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between the combined decoding/comprehension skills and rate of the grade (Gravetter & Walnau, 2016). If, on the other hand, the chi-square value was large, it suggested a statistically significant difference between the dropout rate of the reading combined strategies/teaching reading techniques and the rate of the grade.

Moreover, to answer the second research question, a null hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis were developed:

Null Hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference between the grade and combined decoding skills and combined comprehension skills.

Alternative Hypothesis: there is a statistically significant difference between the grade and combined decoding skills and combined comprehension skills. A chi square test provides a p-value. The p-value suggests if the test results are significant or not.

Table 6.7

Results of chi-square for combined decoding skills and combined comprehension skills

Criteria	χ^2	N	Df	P
Combined Decoding Skills: Reading Strategies	18.279	34	20	.569
Combined Decoding Skills: Techniques	11.991	34	15	.680
Combined Comprehension Skills: Reading Strategies	26.97	34	18	.079
Combined Comprehension Skills: Techniques	22.627	34	23	.483

Combined Decoding Reading Strategies: IPH= Isolate phonemes, BPH= Blend phonemes, SPH= Segment phonemes, SOLW=Sound out letters names and words, and RAL= Read alphabet letters. Combined Comprehension Reading Strategies: TWAC= translate words to assist their comprehension, MC = Monitor comprehension, AQ= Ask and answer questions, BK= Use their background knowledge, PRP = Predict in the reading passage, RS= Recognise story structure, UEA= Use external aids, BDM= break down morphologically complex words, and MSC= Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts.

Combined Comprehension Techniques: PC= Picture cues, SIVOC = Systematic instruction in vocabulary, EXTR = Explicit translation instruction, and EXLST = Explicit description of the learners' strategy.

Combined Decoding Techniques ILKN = Identifying letter knowledge, FLU = Techniques which promote learners' fluency, WST = Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique, and SIMA = Systematic instruction in morphological awareness.

From the above table, it is seen that the overall chi-square did not reveal any statistical differences. There is evidence that there is no significant relationship between the grade and combined decoding skills and comprehension skills. For the combined decoding skills: reading

strategies ($\chi^2= 18.279$, $df= 20$, and $p = .569$) and combined decoding skills: teaching reading techniques ($\chi^2= 11.991$, $df=15$, and, $p = .680$). Additionally, for the combined comprehension skills: strategies ($\chi^2= 26.97$, $df=18$, and $p = .079$) and combined decoding skills: teaching reading techniques ($\chi^2= 22.627$, $df=23$, and $p= .483$) variables. Thus, the data support the null hypothesis that fifth and seventh teaching reading techniques and reading strategies do not differ on the basis of the grade.

6.3 Phase Two: Stimulated Recall Interviews (SRI)

The findings presented here are based on the analysis of the second phase of this study, which involved stimulated recall interviews. The interviewees consisted of 18 participants who taught reading in fifth grade and 16 participants who taught reading in seventh grade in Libyan primary schools. This section comprises a thematic analysis of the interviews with the teachers in both grades and is presented as a follow-up to the observation study. The stimulated recall interviews are analysed under the relevant themes associated with the second research question. These interviews with the teachers sought to investigate their use of techniques for teaching reading and the reading strategies they encourage learners to use.

The research questions as well the relevant literature on the study of teaching reading and reading strategies have impacted on the coding of the data. Extracts from the interviews are included to support and exemplify the points put forward, in line with Braun and Clarke's recommendation (2006) to "choose particularly vivid examples, or extracts which capture the essence of the point you are demonstrating" (p.23). Also, this point was mentioned by Hatch (2002) who argued that "researchers should provide excerpts from their data to give the reader a real sense of how what was learned played out in the actual settings examined" (p.225).

Based on the literature review and my research hypothesis regarding the teaching of reading in primary education, it was expected that all the teachers would know and use decoding skills, but preparatory grade teachers focusing more on comprehension skills in reading. Also, through the process of coding and thematic clustering, two main themes with sub-themes were identified: teaching reading techniques and reading strategies. This phase of the study adopts the conceptual framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the researcher needs to develop a satisfactory thematic map of the data, and then they need to define the themes that will be presented for the analysis. Therefore, each theme and sub-theme in this study were conceptualised for a clear and organised analysis. Moreover, these themes and sub-themes were kept simple in order to avoid any jargons and assist the reader.

Furthermore, through coding and transcribing the data and reading through each transcription in its entirety, a general understanding of the material is obtained (Creswell, 2003), as explained in Chapter Five. The coding process was based on manually taking general and specific notes when themes started to emerge. The second phase was again reading through the data, but with the use of NVivo. Categories, relevant threads and themes were then generated and adopted. Such themes were separated into main themes and sub-themes. This phase of using the NVivo coding software was to code a chunk of data in a project document under a particular node: the researcher highlighted the text via the mouse and pulled the highlighted text to the identified node (AlYahmady & Alabri, 2013).

The thematic analysis aimed at grouping clusters of common reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading researched throughout the 34 interviews. The intention was to identify frequent themes associated with the teachers' answers and related to their observation sessions. The initial codes were developed by reading the transcribed data and attaching category

labels for each theme. The codes were given names which were closest to the meaning they described. For example, in the category of the techniques for teaching reading, when the teacher started the lesson with new words depending on the vocabulary knowledge of her learners, this was called “systematic vocabulary instruction” (SIVOC). Another example, in the reading strategy category, was when the teacher encourages her learners to determine whether they understand what they are reading in a lesson, it was labelled as “monitor comprehension” (MC). These sub-themes were coded inductively and deductively, i.e., generated thematically from the actual data, research question and based on previous literature sources (Deford, 1985; White et al., 1989; NRP, 2000; Janzen, 2007; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011; Ness, 2011; Alsamadani, 2012). Therefore, these themes were considered crucial, and specific sub-codes were assigned to capture them. The same procedure was followed for the thirty-four interviews and applied to all the interview data. This function of coding and retrieving allows the researcher to organise and retrieve the important aspects in the text and enhances the move between a view of coded categories identified in the data and the raw data itself (Richards, 2003).

At the final stage of this qualitative thematic analysis phase, 36 codes in total were created across the thirty-four transcripts. Other codes emerged during the data analysis process but were either excluded due to their irrelevance to the research questions or collapsed into other codes, as explained in Chapter Five. The analysis proceeded individually with respect to generating themes from techniques for teaching reading and reading strategies groups. The researcher also studied the comparisons between the themes which emerged. The findings revealed different levels of theme – main overarching themes and sub-themes within them. Themes are portrayed as coding “something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82)

while sub-themes are “themes-within-a-theme” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92) which provide structure to larger themes. The following table provides an illustration of the coded main themes.

Table 6.8

Fifth grade main themes clusters for teaching reading techniques and reading strategies

Theme	Theme description
Teaching Reading Technique	The teaching reading techniques used by the teachers.
Reading Strategies	The reading strategies they encourage their learners to use.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) encourage using the frequency of certain words or phrases as a critical factor for the selection of relevant themes. The above table provides a brief description of the two main themes. Interviews were coded for each theme via NVivo.

6.3.1 Theme One: Teaching Reading Techniques in Fifth Grade

Responses from teacher stimulated recall interviews provided a wealth of information to explain what teaching reading techniques are present in these Libyan English classrooms. The analysis reveals that teachers used a variety of teaching reading techniques under this main theme. The theme of techniques of teaching reading consisted of eight sub-themes including picture cues, systematic instruction in vocabulary, identifying letter knowledge, and explicit translation instruction, techniques which promote learners' fluency, systematic instruction in phonics, systematic instruction in morphological awareness, explicit description of the learners' strategy, as shown in the table 6.9. These sub-themes were generated thematically from the actual

data, research question and based on previous literature sources (Alsamadani, 2012; Cook, 1992; Deford, 1985; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011; Murray et al., 1996; NRP, 2000; White et al., 1989

Table 6.9

Fifth grade sub-themes of theme one (teaching reading techniques)

Sub-theme	Sub-theme description
PC	Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading.
SIVOC	Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.
ILKN	Identifying letter knowledge.
EXTR	Explicit translation instruction.
FLUC	Techniques which promote learners' fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.
SIPHS	Systematic instruction in phonics. For example, to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.
SIMA	Systematic instruction in morphological awareness.
EXLST	Explicit description of the learners' strategy and when and how it should be used.

Table 6.9 shows that there were eight sub-themes to the main theme “teaching reading techniques”. In the section below, each main theme along with its sub-themes are discussed in relation to fifth grades.

Sub-theme one: Picture cues (PC)

Several fifth-grade teachers declared that they taught reading comprehension through picture cues. Two teachers believed that picture cues assisted the decoding process. Moreover, one of the teachers said that picture cues helped avoid the use of Arabic and facilitated comprehension. On the other hand, another teacher (Teacher 7) declared that she preferred translating words to using picture cues.

When the interviewees were asked about the importance of picture cues by the researcher (R), they (T) put forward the following responses:

R: You relied on picture cues to assist their comprehension in the lesson “My house”, for words such as “sofa, chair, table”. Why did you use this technique of teaching reading: picture cues?

T 1: To assist their comprehension: when they see the picture, they will not need any translation into Arabic.

T 6: So they can practice reading and pronouncing letters and words, especially for those who struggle in reading.

T 15: It helps the learners to understand and not only decode words.

T 7: I prefer not to use them. I just translate at the moment.

T 8: It is important.

T 13: It's very important for them to know the types of rooms and the directions for upstairs and downstairs. That's why I use picture cues to clarify the meaning of words.

T 14: The flash cards are very important. I want to use them more frequently in future classes: I'll show them the letter and tell them the first letter of the picture. For instance, when I asked them to read the letter <a>, I associated it with the picture of an apple. This strategy is very important because it helps them to understand words.

T 17: To facilitate the decoding process.

T 18: To clarify the meaning. Yes, that's what I was intending to do during that lesson.

Two teachers claimed that picture cues had a positive impact on the memory:

T 9: Picture cues are very important; they refresh the learner's memory and we know that visuals stick to the memory. The learners enjoy them more than just relying on words.

T 10: Its importance is that it sticks to their memory and attracts their attention. They really like the use of picture cues; and also as a revision.

Sub-theme two: Identifying letter knowledge (ILKN)

Nine fifth grade teachers said that they used this technique and that it was important. The teachers claimed that the identification of letters was challenging as a significant number of children entered fifth grade primary know less than half of the letter names and letter forms and understand the way in which letters differed from each other. They had to be taught how to differentiate between the upper and lower-case letters. Teachers emphasised that the learners needed to know the alphabet letter system in addition to the basic sound system of letters which can be difficult to learn. Therefore, some teachers preferred to spread the teaching of the letter

forms over several reading lessons to facilitate the learning process. Other teachers used this technique as a revision.

When the interviewees were asked about the importance of the “identifying letter knowledge” technique, they put forward the following responses.

T 2: The learners do not know when to use capital and small letter forms. For instance, I teach learners to start their names with the capital forms. The majority of learners still do not know how to read the alphabet forms.

T 3: Most learners come from public schools and do not know the letters or words. I try to make them love reading and develop the skill. It is important at this stage to teach them to recognise the letters first as in their book “English for Libya”. For example, they learn how you spell <red> r- e - d. I also prefer to teach the vocabulary and then move to grammar, yes and no questions.

T 10: Since we're dealing with 5th grade, the knowledge of letters is still incomplete. So, I have from time to time to remind them of the letters.

T 11 and T 12: As a revision.

T14: To make sure that they know how to recognise the letters and identify them and differentiate between the upper and lower-case letters, such as capital “H” and small “h”.

T 16: It is recommended in the curriculum.

A further purely realistic reason for finding it difficult to teach learners the alphabet was that they were not taught it before fifth grade in Libyan schools. Regarding the obstacles in teaching this reading technique, respondents put forward the following responses.

T 7: Most learners do not know the letters. Also, I find it difficult to encourage learners to read by themselves the letter alphabets. Most of the learners did not take English classes before.

T 9: The problem is that some or most of the learners don't know the alphabetic system so they keep on asking me how to read this, then how to read that. Basically, they come or they start fifth grade without any basic alphabetic knowledge. So, this is a very big problem that I need to work on.

Sub-theme three: Vocabulary instruction (SIVOC)

Eleven participants pointed out that they provided systematic vocabulary instruction. This teaching technique largely included discussion of the meaning and translation of words. Only one primary fifth grade teacher provided no systematic vocabulary instruction during class. Self-report data suggest that teachers regularly spent time on vocabulary instructions with all their students. The participants felt that any reading lesson should be tackled using systematic vocabulary instruction. They mentioned that vocabulary and reading were basic interrelated skills. Therefore, they had to start their lessons with key words. Moreover, the vocabulary knowledge helped the learners to clarify and express their ideas in the lesson.

When the interviewees were asked about the importance of systematic vocabulary instructions, they put forward the following responses (more detailed responses can be found in appendices 1-4).

T 1: It is a good way for them to practice their vocabulary skills. I taught them the days of the week, basic colours and numbers.

T 2: I think it is important to start teaching them the key words and then some examples to clarify the meaning. After that, we move to the reading passage.

T 3: These are very important. We all start with vocabulary instruction.

T 4: It is important so that they can familiarise themselves with the key words of the lesson.

T 5: To clarify the ideas about the lesson; what it is about and as an introduction before I start to read or before they start to read.

T 6: As revision and to assist them in learning the vocabulary in the reading lesson.

T 7: To make the reading process easier.

T 8: So that they can read sentences.

T 9: Because they will be happy to learn new words.

T 12: Yes, first of all, these words are found in the book; so they need to know how to pronounce them and understand their meaning. And still I will teach them after the class more words because they said that they needed to know more about these words.

T14: That's very important before any reading process. I have to familiarise my learners with the systematic vocabulary instruction and tell them that the subject topic, for instance, is myself. I explain the words "pencil, paper and rubber" in Arabic so that the learners will be able to understand the meaning before reading them.

However, one of the interviewees mentioned that she faced some obstacles with this teaching technique. According to her, learners found it difficult to read geographical terms:

T2: I taught them the geography of the country today, the directions "south, north, east", then I merged them together. Yes, I found the terms quite complex. Maybe because it focused on geography. I also find it quite difficult when they deal with new words. They sometimes struggle with reading complex words. I encourage them to sound out letters and words during the class so that they master these words.

Sub-theme four: Explicit translation instruction (EXTR)

The analysis revealed that some teachers were aware of using this teaching technique. They believed that explicit translation instructions were vital and assisted the comprehension process. For example, when they started reading the key words in a session, they immediately translated into Arabic to assist their learners' comprehension. Interestingly, one teacher argued that this technique was not appropriate and should not be used.

When the interviewees were asked about the importance of explicit translation instructions, they put forward the following responses.

T 1: To make the reading process easier.

T 2: Yes, I like to translate the words by letters.

T 9: It clarifies the meaning of words.

T 13: It helps them to understand the meaning of words.

T 16: [I use it] but I am not supposed to do that.

Sub-theme five: Fluency (FLU)

Two teachers highlighted the importance of the fluency technique and said that they used this teaching technique. Fluency is acquired when children move from learning how to decode words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight. This skill is obtained through continuous practice. When children repeat oral reading, their rate of fluency improves. Most participants believed that fluency helped in the development of the reading process. However, one of the teachers found this technique difficult to use as the learners "can't read sentences and do not have books".

When the interviewees were asked about the importance of the fluency teaching technique, they put forward the following responses.

R: Why did you use in your lesson this technique of teaching reading: fluency? That is, teaching them to decode words by sight until they become automatic.

T 5: It is important.

R: You also used the teaching reading technique “fluency”, meaning that you showed the learners how to decode some letters, such as the /p/ sound and the /b/ sound, and then got them to practice those sounds until they became automatic.

T9: Yes, this all helps in the development of the reading process.

Sub-theme six: Explicit description of strategy (EXLST)

Interestingly, only one teacher claimed that she provided her learners with the explicit description of a strategy and when and how it should be used. It was indeed observed that she showed her learners to use their own background knowledge and to think about the meaning of family members before reading the words. She said, “I did it without thinking or wanting to show them reading strategies... not at this stage”. One can notice that teachers’ scaffolding as a teaching reading technique was not relevant to her here. This claim is interesting because it indicates that she is explaining to her learners the metacognitive background knowledge reading strategy without being aware that it is a reading strategy itself.

Sub-theme seven: Systematic instruction in morphological awareness (SIMA)

Only one teacher revealed that the systematic morphological awareness teaching reading technique was essential. She declared that reading and grammatical awareness were interrelated.

When asked about the impact that grammatical skills had on the reading process, she said “in my classes I like to teach them or I think it's important to focus on grammar with the reading because if they do not know the basic grammar they will not be able to read and write”. It seems that the teacher here identifies morphological awareness as grammar.

Sub-theme eight: Systematic instruction in phonics (SIPHS)

Only one fifth grade teacher mentioned that this teaching reading technique was important. It was observed that she used the systematic instruction in phonics teaching reading technique when she explained how to pronounce the schwa sound and how it differed from the /a/ sound. The teacher (Teacher 3) said, “it's very important for the learners to be confident while reading. When [the learners] master the phonics, they will be able to read such words as “father, mother” with the correct pronunciation”. Another teacher (T 16) specifically claimed that phonics was difficult.

6.3.2 Theme Two: Reading Strategies

As for the main theme “teaching reading techniques”, the second theme “reading strategies” was also divided into sub-themes. The eight sub-themes under “reading strategies” are presented in Table 6.10 and discussed in the paragraphs below.

The analysis reveals that several teachers encourage their learners to use a specific number of reading strategies. The theme of reading strategies included eight sub-themes: sounding out letter names and words, translating words to assist comprehension, reading alphabet forms, ask and answer questions, monitor comprehension, background knowledge, segment phonics and predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge. These sub-themes were also

thematically generated from the actual data, research questions and based on previous literature sources (Deford, 1985; NRP, 2000; Mckeown et al., 2009; Murray et al., 1996; Janzen, 2007).

Table 6.10

Fifth grade sub-themes of theme two (reading strategies)

Sub-theme	Sub-theme description
SOLW	Sound out letter names and words
TWAC	Encourage learners to translate words in Arabic
AQ	Ask and answer questions to assist meaning
RAL	Read alphabet words
MC	Monitor their comprehension
BK	Encourage learners to use their background knowledge
SPH	Segment phonics (break a word into its sounds. For example, there are three phonemes are in ship: /ʃ/ /I/ /p/).
PRP	Predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text

Sub-theme one: Sound out letter names and words (SOLW)

The analysis revealed that several teachers encouraged their learners to sound out letter names and words when they struggled to read. Some participants argued that the sounding out letter names and word reading strategy influenced the learners' pronunciation and memory and this reading strategy can be maintained by repetition. One of the teachers interviewed reported that fifth grade learners had no previous experience of reading in English. It seems that most teachers encourage their learners to use this reading strategy and use repetition to decode words, phrases or sentences in a reading text. The strategy of repeating involves reading an alphabet letter or a word more than once to decode it more completely. These issues were specifically addressed in the interviews through the questions: "How do you encourage your learners to overcome any reading problem, i.e., what reading strategies do you encourage them to use?", "Why did you encourage learners to name letters and sound out words when they struggled in decoding them?" and "You also encouraged your learners to sound out words and name letters when they did not know how they to read them as we can see in the recording. Why did you encourage learners to use such a reading strategy?" The following responses were put forward:

T 1: I ask them to circle the words they do not know. As a matter of fact, I keep on encouraging them to repeat and repeat until they know the word. I found that they made a lot of progress when they were encouraged to sound out letter names and words since they had not learnt English before.

T 2: It helps them to learn how to read a word. I keep on repeating or sounding out the letter names during the lesson until they manage to read the words.

T 3: This is an important strategy in reading. Also, so they can practice reading the words. I think that this reading strategy helps them to overcome any reading problem in the colours lesson.

T 5: I encourage the learners to repeat words while reading, such as “on the table, in the book”. This will help them to decode, recognise the words and allow them to remember the words.

T 6: So they can practice reading and pronouncing letters and words, especially for those who struggle in reading.

T 7: Repetition will allow them to pronounce and decode the words. It affects their pronunciation when they read words. For example, my learners sometimes might misspell the word “toilet” in English; so they are given a chance to listen to the word before reading it and then sounding it out properly.

T 8: To make sure that they can read the words and that they remember the information.

T 12: As a repetition and practice.

T 13: I do that as a repetition. It helps them to identify the items when I tell them to repeat after me, for example, book, pencil and bag.

T 14: For practicing the pronunciation.

T 17: It is very important.

T 18: So that they can build their confidence instead of reading it by themselves silently.

It seems that most of the teachers encourage their learners to be exposed to new vocabulary word receptions.

Sub-theme two: Translating words to assist comprehension (TWAC)

Four participants declared that they encouraged their learners to translate words to assist their comprehension and to save time. However, they did not elaborate on their answers. The majority of teachers considered translation to be an appropriate reading strategy for their primary level learners as it could help them comprehend the words in a text better. As one teacher puts it, translation “helps them to understand and the more they repeat, the more they understand”. Some illustrations in this regard are provided when participants were asked questions like: “What do you think is the importance of this reading strategy?” “You also encouraged them to translate words”.

T 5: Yes, it saves time.

T 8: Yes, it helps them to understand the words.

T 13: Yes, this is important because it helps them to understand.

Sub-theme three: Asking and answering questions (AQ)

Five fifth grade teachers mentioned that they encouraged their learners to use the strategy of asking and answering questions. This strategy involves reading a text and checking with the teacher by asking and answering questions associated to the comprehension of the text. These issues were specifically addressed in the interviews through the questions: “Why did you encourage your learners to use this reading strategy?” and “What do you think is the importance of this reading strategy?”. The following responses were obtained:

T 1: To make them confident about reading.

T 2: This helps the learners to feel good about themselves in the reading process and to show that they are engaged with the teachers when they ask and answer questions. And of course, this will show that they understand the words they read.

T 3: I enjoy doing that and explain to them the meaning sometimes individually. I think it is very important.

T 7: I think this is an important reading strategy because it gives the learner a chance to find out whether he has understood the meaning of the words.

T 8: First of all, to make sure that they remember what they have learnt in the previous class and to develop their knowledge.

Sub-theme four: Reading alphabet letters (RAL)

RAL involves the teachers encouraging their learners to read in alphabet letter forms and not their sound forms, for example, “A” for “apple”, “B” for “book”. This reading strategy is vital as children’s unfamiliarity with the names of letters might impede the development of their phonics and decoding skills. Moreover, learners may not be able to comprehend and utilise the alphabetic principle until they are able to decode and name letters (Murray et al., 1996). Five participants mentioned that they did encourage learners to read the alphabet form which involved the process of using letter correspondences to recognise words. Interviewees did not give detailed responses regarding the importance of this strategy. One of the teachers interpreted the reading alphabet strategy as phonological awareness reading instruction. She said, “sometimes my learners ask me: when do we read “s” letter as /c/ or /s/? The reading process progresses and develops when they are given phonological awareness instruction”. These issues were specifically addressed in the interviews through the researcher’s questions and the answers obtained:

R: Also, you encouraged the learners to read the alphabet letters. Why did you encourage them to use this reading strategy?

T 3: As revision.

T 4: Yes, because they do not know them.

R: We can observe from the recordings that you encouraged your learners to read the alphabet letter forms. Why was that? Why do you think this is an important reading strategy?

T 15: Yes, I have to make sure that the learners are able to identify the letters by themselves before reading the words.

R: As we noticed in the audio recordings that you encouraged learners to use the reading alphabet letters strategy. Why was that?

T16: Yes, because their book starts with reading the alphabets and identifying them.

Sub-theme five: Monitor comprehension (MC)

Only two teachers claimed that they encouraged their learners to monitor their comprehension and understand the meaning of words while reading.

Sub-theme six: Background knowledge (BK)

The analysis reveals that only one participant encouraged her learners to use the strategy of associating background knowledge with remembering and understanding the meaning of words in a text.

Sub-theme seven: Segment phonics (SPHS)

One teacher highlighted the importance of this reading strategy. According to her, this strategy “plays an important role as it shows them how to pronounce both sounds /p/ and /b/, for example blowing some air in a /p/ sound and closing your mouth in a /b/ sound”. However, most fifth grade teachers did not support the use of phonics. It seems that there is a belief that decoding skills are developed by the alphabet letter system only rather than phonics.

Sub-theme eight: Predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text (PRP)

Two teachers encouraged their learners to predict the meaning of a word in a given text. According to them, this strategy would “facilitate their comprehension”.

We now turn to the sub-themes within the two main themes in seventh grade.

Table 6.11

Seventh grade main theme clusters: Teaching Reading Techniques and Reading Strategies

Theme	Theme description
Teaching Reading Technique	The teaching reading techniques used by the teachers.
Reading Strategies	The reading strategies they encourage their learners to use.

6.3.3 Theme One: Teaching Reading Techniques in Seventh Grade

The analysis reveals that many teachers used a variety of teaching reading techniques in this main theme. The theme of techniques of teaching reading consisted of six subthemes including systematic instruction in vocabulary, picture cues, explicit translation instruction, techniques which promote learners' fluency, systematic instruction in morphological awareness, and identifying letter knowledge and, as shown in Table 6.12. These sub-themes were thematically generated from the actual data, research question and based on previous literature sources (Alsamadani, 2012; Cook, 1992; Deford, 1985; Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou, 2011; Murray et al., 1996; NRP, 2000; White et al., 1989).

Table 6.12

Seventh grade sub-themes of theme one (teaching reading techniques)

Sub-theme	Sub-theme description
PC	Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading.
SIVOC	Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.
ILKN	Identifying letter knowledge.
EXTR	Explicit translation instruction.
FLUC	Techniques which promote learners' fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.
SIMA	Systematic instruction in morphological awareness

Table 6.12 provides a brief description of these sub-themes. The paragraphs below further explain the use of these techniques in seventh grade on the basis of the interviewees' responses. Some excerpts of the interviews are included to illustrate the points made.

Sub-theme one: Systematic vocabulary instruction (SIVOC)

Many teachers pointed out that they provided systematic vocabulary instruction. This teaching technique largely included discussions of the meaning and translation of words. Self-report data suggest that teachers regularly spent time on vocabulary instruction with all their students. The participants felt that reading lessons should be tackled using systematic vocabulary instruction. Three teachers mentioned that it could be used as a revision. Others mentioned that it helped the learners to familiarise themselves with the lesson. Another teacher mentioned that he focused on key words of the lesson and this helped the learners to quickly understand the words. One teacher mentioned that this teaching technique was linked to other teaching techniques such as explicit translation instruction. Interestingly, Teacher 4 said, "most of them have not studied for the last 2 months. Therefore, it's important for me to underline the key words in a passage, practice reading them and then move to the reading passage". The teacher is here referring to the social unrest in Benghazi which has had a negative impact on children's educational progress.

The following answers were put forward in response to the interview question (for more detailed answers, see appendices (1-4), "Why did you start your lesson with this technique of teaching reading: systematic vocabulary instruction?")

T 1: Yes, it was like a revision for the preview class.

T 3: It is very important as they need to know what the lesson is about, for instance, family members like “father, sister, mother”. They need to know all these words before reading the passage.

T 4: This will assist the comprehension process while reading. Most of them have not studied for the last 2 months. Therefore, it's important for me to underline the key words in a passage, practice reading them and then move to the reading passage. It's very important for the learners to practice reading the vocabulary. As they practice reading the words, they will build their confidence and they will start even to look for words on the iPad, and sometimes in the movies, and listen to them and understand them.

T 5: I did this as a revision for the previous lesson. I wanted to make sure that they all did their homework and learnt their vocabulary. I mentioned their name and age in a way that they were able to introduce themselves and describe themselves.

T 6: Yes. It is very important for me to use flash cards in my reading class because it helps me to not rely on Arabic and any translation of the vocabulary. This is what I did when I taught them about the clothes “jeans, jacket, trousers”. You can also use this method with fruits and with animals. The use of flashcards or picture cues is a very important teaching reading technique that helps learners to understand more.

T 7: Yes, I started teaching my class with vocabulary in order to explain to them the meaning of the words and to show them how to read and pronounce the words, for instance, today we talked about jobs. One of the questions in the reading passage was based on jobs: “what does your uncle do?”

With regards to the specific example of family members, Teacher 2 explained that she used systematic vocabulary instruction so that her learners “can identify the family members and

understand the meaning of those words and then start to read them. They still need to know words such as “father, mother”. It is very important to repeat them and they need to understand and translate them. They are all important for the reading process”.

R: I observed that you started your class with vocabulary reading instructions, such as terms for family members. So, why did you start with this teaching reading technique?

T 9: Just because all of them know what family members are and they all like this lesson.

According to one teacher, systematic vocabulary instructions are the first step in understanding a lesson:

T 10: It assists with the sequence of events. It is done step-by-step for the reader. I need to avoid that traditional way in teaching.

Other teachers answered in the following terms:

T 11: Yes, so that they can learn and understand the words.

T 12: Yes, it was like a revision.

T 13: It is very important for the learner to get some background of what the lesson is about before reading and know what the keywords are.

Sub-theme two: Picture cues (PC)

Five of the 7th grade participants mentioned that they use picture cues and some of them linked the use of pictures to meaning. One of the teachers said that these cues prevented the pupils from using Arabic and facilitated comprehension. Others mentioned that they helped learners to remember words.

The interviewees put forward the following responses with regards to the importance of picture cues.

T 2: I agree they are very important and help the reader to be interested.

T 5: So that they can associate the meaning of the words with the pictures, such as cooking, riding a bike, watching TV.

T 6: It is very important for me to use flash cards in my reading class because it helps me to not rely on Arabic and any translation of the vocabulary. This is what I did when I taught them about the clothes “jeans, jacket, trousers”. You can also use this method with fruits and with animals. The use of flashcards or picture cues is a very important teaching reading technique that helps learners to understand more.

T 7: Using such teaching reading techniques as picture cues will help the learners to remember the meaning of words and they will stick to the memory, such as the meaning of the word “door”, when the learner sees its picture, he or she will remember it. But if I just explain the meaning to them, they will forget it.

T 15: Yes, I did that and I found it a very useful technique.

Sub-theme three: Explicit translation instruction (EXTR)

Some teachers who used this teaching technique said that it was vital in assisting the comprehension process. These views are illustrated in the extracts below.

T 1: [Explicit translation instruction] is important because it assists the comprehension and affects the meaning when I translate the words. I also encourage the learners to translate the words. It allows them to know the meaning and affects their comprehension.

T 2: To make sure my learners understand.

T 8: This [technique] helps them in understanding the words and the passage.

T 9: Explicit translation instruction helps them to read and understand the meaning, of course and assists their comprehension.

T 12: It is important to explain to them the meaning of the words and to also ask them to discuss with each other the meaning of the words.

Sub-theme four: Systematic morphological awareness (SIMA)

Some teachers believed that teaching systematic morphological awareness was essential. Almost all these teachers seemed to interpret morphological awareness teaching reading technique only as grammatical instruction. Others highlighted the importance of root forms in reading. The teachers put forward the following answers regarding the importance and use of systematic morphological awareness and the understanding of the root forms of words, e.g., “I’ve stands for I have”.

T 2: It is very important to familiarise the students with the grammar while reading because this affects the reading. When you tell them that all these grammatical rules such as “I’ve = I have; she’s = she is”, it makes them happier and more confident in the knowledge that they understand these rules while reading. In fact, till now unfortunately there are learners in secondary school who do not know these basic grammatical rules.

T 3: Yes, I use this teaching reading technique even with other classes. It's important and I'll show them also the contraction forms, for instance, “she's got = she has got”.

T 8: Yes, it's important for them at this stage to know the roots of the words before reading them.

T 10: It helps them to understand the word based on its grammar, then they pronounce it and understand.

It is worth mentioning that one of the teachers explained that the seventh grade curriculum focuses more on grammatical derived forms than that of other grades:

T 13: Seventh grade is regarded as the first grade where learners are taught grammatical rules. They need to familiarise themselves with words they come across, what they read and write from the internet, what this does as a past form or third form, or contraction of these words, combiners. These of course are mentioned in the book, in the lesson, the boxes they read focus on word roots.

Sub-theme five: Fluency (FLUC)

Only four teachers claimed that they taught learners how to be fluent and argued that this was an important teaching technique. Two out of four affirmed that they regularly used this teaching reading technique. They believed that it was important for learners to develop their sight vocabulary by repetition and also to learn to read with the proper pronunciation. For instance, T 1 said, “it's very important to teach the learners to pronounce correctly. For instance, I told my learners to read wh-questions with a falling intonation”.

The other teachers explained the importance of this teaching technique in the following terms:

T 11: Yes, by repeating and sounding out the words they will be able to read them.

T 12: This is very important. Even repetition makes them fluent reader.

Sub-theme six: Identifying letter knowledge (ILKN)

Only two seventh grade teachers said that they used this technique and that it was important. Teachers emphasised that this teaching reading technique was used only when some learners struggled in decoding specific letters. When the interviewees were asked about the importance of the “identifying letter knowledge” technique, they put forward the following responses.

T 4: You know that not all learners are perfect in English.

T 6: Yes, I did that with one learner when he read the word vegetables incorrectly. He thought it was the letter /w/.

These excerpts above show that the teachers had a variety of reasons for using the various teaching techniques. They also had several reasons for encouraging the use of specific reading strategies, as will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.4 Theme Two: Reading Strategies in Seventh Grade

The analysis reveals that several seventh grade teachers encouraged their learners to use a specific number of reading strategies. The theme of reading strategies was divided into ten sub-themes: sounding out letters and words, translating words to assist comprehension, reading alphabet forms, ask and answer questions, monitor comprehension, background knowledge, predict in the reading passage, break down words, recognise story structure, use more than one reading strategy, as shown in the table 6.13. Similar to the coded fifth-grade reading strategies, these sub-themes were thematically generated from the actual data, research questions and based on previous literature sources. Most of these sub-themes were taken directly from different sources (McKeown et al., 2009; Janzen, 2007) which were in turn based on the NRP (2000) taxonomy of reading instruction, as mentioned in Chapter Five.

Table 6.13

Seventh grade sub-themes of theme two (reading strategies)

Sub theme	Sub-theme description
SOLW	Sound out letter names and words
TWAC	Encourage learners to translate words in Arabic
AQ	Ask and answer questions to assist meaning
RAL	Read alphabet words
MC	Monitor their comprehension
BK	Encourage learners to use their background knowledge
PRP	Predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text
MSC	Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts
RS	Recognise story structure
BDM	Break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning.

Sub-theme one: Sound out letter names and words (SOLW)

The analysis reveals that many of the seventh grade teachers encouraged their learners to sound out letter names and words when they struggled to read. Moreover, they declared that this strategy was useful as a revision exercise. Additionally, in this grade it seems that most of the teachers interviewed relied on SOLW to repeat words, phrases or sentences in a reading text. The strategy of repeating involves reading a word more than once to decode it more completely.

To assess the use and importance of this strategy, interviewees were asked questions like: “How do you encourage your learners to overcome any reading problem, i.e., what reading strategies do you encourage them to use?”, “Why did you encourage learners to sound out words when they struggled in decoding them?”, “You also encouraged your learners to sound letter names when they did not know how to read them. Why did you encourage learners to use such a reading strategy?”. Some of the responses put forward were as follows (for more detailed responses, see appendices (1-4):

T 1: As a repetition.

T 2: It's really important to encourage learners to sound out the letter names because this is what makes them very good readers.

T 3: This is important for them to pronounce the words properly while reading.

T 4: It's very important to use this reading strategy: repetition, repetition, repetition. By repeating the words, they will master how to read them – especially for English, the more they hear, the more they read, the more they can speak the language.

T 5: It is very important. It allows the learners to read and practice reading. I give them a chance to read once, twice. They should be able to read automatically. For instance, the word

“drink”, I give them some time to read it, sound it out “drink, drink, drink” and I will correct their reading.

T 6: As a kind of revision and to help them read and pronounce the words. Also, I can encourage them to break down the words into small sounds such as in two syllables. As an example, for the word “beautiful”, I asked them to divide it into small parts to make it easier for them.

T 7: This helps struggling readers to read and pronounce the words when they don't know their meaning or the alphabet.

T 8: They will learn the words and they will find it easy to read words without breaking them into smaller units.

T 11: By repeating and sounding out the words they will be able to read them.

T 15: Yes, we use [this strategy] with all learners. All the schools use this reading strategy. The more they hear, the more they learn.

T 12: As a revision.

Interestingly two teachers (T 5 and T 13) mentioned that there were obstacles to using this reading strategy because it had to be done through school labs, for instance, as a listening comprehension technique, as explained below.

T 5: The most important obstacle which I observed is the issue of listening comprehension because both reading comprehension and listening comprehension are closely related to each other. So, in the English class which is only 40 minutes, it's very difficult for me to read all the lesson and to repeat the entire lesson. So, what I would prefer is to have an English lesson based on CD players and they listen and repeat because it's all about listening and reading. In these 40 minutes where they just listen to the passage from the teacher once or twice, they will not be able to remember and recall how to read and pronounce all these words as second language learners.

I think it's all related to listening comprehension. The system should provide sessions mostly devoted to listening comprehension.

T 13: We have difficulties with the teaching facilities such as labs. We don't have labs and ways to encourage learners to read as groups, especially in the reading, listening and speaking classes.

Sub-theme two: Translating words to assist comprehension (TWAC)

Five seventh grade teachers declared that they encouraged their learners to translate words into Arabic to assist their comprehension and save time. These participants encouraged learners to use this technique as a way to facilitate comprehension. Below are some extracts regarding the use and importance of TWAC.

T 1: It is sometimes helpful.

T 2: It's very important. It affects their reading comprehension, it assists them in their understanding of words such as "father, grandmother, uncle".

T10: It has an impact on the learning process and how they pronounce the words and it facilitates their comprehension. This is quite useful.

T 12: [I use this technique] so that they understand.

T 13: My way of teaching is based on this method: somebody asks, somebody reads and somebody translates and this is the way I teach in all my classes.

Sub-theme three: Monitor comprehension (MC)

Six teachers claimed that they encouraged their learners to monitor their comprehension. They mentioned that it was important and had an impact on the reading process. They encouraged their learners to guess the meaning while reading and to make sense of it. It seems that teachers of this grade focused on longer texts and therefore did not encourage their learners to use the MC reading strategy frequently. The interviewees explained the use and role of this technique in these terms:

T 1: It shows me that my learners are following the events in a passage.

T 12: It is important. For example, when I read the words “this is a bed and this is a ruler”. So, here I encourage learners to monitor their comprehension.

T 7: Yes, it is important

T 8: It affects the reading comprehension process.

T 9: Yes, it shows me if my learners understand or not.

T 16: This is very important because there are some learners who need to know when they understand and when they don't.

Sub-theme four: Reading alphabet letters (RAL)

The analysis reveals that three participants encouraged their learners to read and learn the alphabet form involving the use of letter correspondences to recognise words. One teacher explained that she used this strategy “to check that [the learners] know [how] to decode” the words.

Sub-theme five: Answering and asking questions (AQ)

Five seventh grade teachers mentioned that they encouraged their learners to use the strategy of asking and answering questions. This strategy involves reading a text and checking with the teacher. The teachers explained their use of this strategy and its importance in the following terms:

T 1: It's all about confidence when they understand the words they can read.

T 3: They have to ask me. Who else will they ask? It will help them to understand the meaning.

T 8: They should always be encouraged to ask and answer questions. After all, the reading or the learning process is based on co-operative teamwork between the teacher and the learner.

T 9: If I ever encourage them to read and answer the questions in the passage, it's easier than having them answer the question from the passage.

T 11: Yes, I encourage them to learn and understand.

Sub-theme six: Background knowledge (BK)

In this reading strategy teachers encourage learners to use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in a given text. Also, learners are guided to make use of their prior knowledge to link between the events in the reading passage and their own experience (NRP, 2000; McKeown et al., 2009). The analysis revealed that three participants encouraged their learners to use the strategy of associating background knowledge with remembering and understanding a word in a given sentence, as illustrated below.

T 3: This reading strategy is very important as it helps the learners to comprehend the meaning of the words and I did that by asking them, for instance, "what does your uncle do? What does your brother do? What does your father do?"

T 10: I actually encouraged them to use their background knowledge more than once such as for “fireman, father, brother, sister”.

T 11: It helps them to understand the words more easily and to develop a background knowledge of the word. It is as if it is a kind of introduction to the family topic.

This finding is problematic because these learners are preparatory grade learners and are expected to be using such metacognitive reading strategies. It may be the case that the learners are too young to be using such strategies in a Libyan EFL context.

Sub-theme seven: Predict in the reading passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text (PRP)

The analysis reveals that three teachers declared that they sometimes encouraged their learners to predict the meaning of a word in a given text. T1 did that to “facilitate their comprehension” and T 11 thought that this strategy had an “effect on their understanding of the meaning”.

T 15: Yes, it is important.

Sub-theme eight: Break down complex words to construct meaning (BDM)

Four teachers declared that this strategy was useful, as illustrated below.

T 3: I use this reading strategy. It is important and they can do it easily, especially at this stage.

T 9: Although it's not recommended in the curriculum to explain the comparative form, I thought it was good to explain adjectives to them. And it is good to focus on morphological awareness instruction which is another teaching reading technique.

T 10: [This strategy] is useful for the learners and they might benefit from it for future studies.

T 13: Yes, it is useful.

Sub-theme nine: Recognise story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters and themes) to assist their understanding of the text's structure (RS)

The teachers believed that this strategy enhanced the learners' reading skills and helped them to gain a better understanding of the text they were reading. According to one teacher, "this reading strategy develops [the learners'] reading skill and knowledge. It's very important and they will love it".

Sub-theme ten: Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts (MSC)

The combination of reading strategies was viewed positively by the participants. Two teachers explained the importance of this strategy in the following terms:

T 8: Yes, I prefer teaching in this way although it takes a lot of time and it's quite time consuming and sometimes I cover topics which are not in the curriculum. But it's worth it.

T 9: I think it's really important and that's what all learners use this reading strategy for. I find it quite useful. But it takes a lot of time and we might have a delay in completing the curriculum, but the learner benefits from this approach.

6.4 Summary

This chapter presented the quantitative data obtained from the systematic observations checklists and provided the qualitative thematic analysis based on the data. The descriptive analysis indicated that most participants were females and had between 1-5 years of experience. These teachers varied in terms of their qualifications.

Furthermore, the data gathered from the classroom observations suggested that the teachers were spending about less than half (33.11% for fifth grade and 42.71 % for seventh grade) of their English language class on reading lessons. A chi-square was carried out to compare the relationship between the grades and the frequently combined decoding skills and comprehension skills. Interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between the two grades. Findings from the observed lessons and stimulated recall interviews suggested that teachers were likely to focus on the same reading strategies in both grades such as sounding out letter names and words reading strategy, read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy and translate words to assist comprehension. Moreover, the findings revealed that both grade groups displayed fairly similar characteristics in terms of the techniques they used for teaching reading in their class, e.g., picture cues techniques, letter knowledge identification, vocabulary instruction, explicit translation instruction, promoting learners' fluency and systematic instruction in morphological awareness. Our current research results indicated that very limited time was spent on reading phonics instruction and there was a tendency to use letter names rather than phonic sounds during reading instruction.

Interestingly, the time spent on reading instruction was less than 50% in both grades in spite of the difference in the number of teachers in each grade (18 for fifth grade and 16 for seventh grade). However, teachers of both grades were spending more time on non-reading lessons in the EFL Libyan primary and preparatory schools. It is noteworthy that there was a lack of systematic instruction in phonics in both grades. The lack of use of several reading strategies instruction could be attributed to the teachers' limited pedagogical knowledge. It could also be possible that some teachers did not feel confident to use specific teaching reading techniques.

The data from stimulated recall interviews also suggest teachers in this study did not all have the same pedagogical knowledge and awareness of classroom practices.

Chapter Seven

Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. Section 7.2 briefly reiterates the aims of the study and the research questions. Section 7.3 examines the questionnaire response rate. Section 7.4 discusses the demographic characteristics of the questionnaire respondents and Section 7.5 highlights briefly fifth and seventh grade teachers' responses in each of the three questionnaire sections. Section 7.6 focuses on the factor analysis performed to reduce the variables of the teachers' attitudes to a smaller number of factors and examine which variables can be grouped as clusters. Sections 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9 provide a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire responses according to the research questions. A t-test was carried out to determine if there were any significant statistical differences between the grades (Section 7.10). This chapter concludes with a summary.

7.2 Research Questions Addressed in this Chapter

The aim of the questionnaire study was to examine teachers' reading attitudes and practices in the teaching of reading in English within the specific Libyan context. The research questions focusing on the questionnaire section were as follows:

(3) What are the English teachers' general attitudes towards teaching reading in English in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting?

(4) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of English word reading and comprehension?

(5) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension?

(6) Is there a statistically significant difference in the Libyan English teachers' attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques across grade groups?

The sections below address the above questions in light of the questionnaire responses.

7.3 Response Rate

A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed to both fifth and seventh grade teachers from different schools in Libya, of which 308 were completed and returned, achieving a response rate of 81%. However, 16 out of the 308 returned questionnaires had not been adequately filled in by the teachers and had to be excluded from this research. Consequently, 292 questionnaires were used for the data analysis, as shown in Table 7.1. The final response rate was of 77%, which is regarded as very good by any standards. Bryman (2015) states that the response rate is “the percentage of a sample that does, in fact, agree to participate” (p.98), and he makes the point that this concept is a common one in social research. It indicates in a way, the extent to which the respondents perceive the research to be worthwhile since they give of their time to participate. Babbie (2015) claims that a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Therefore, the claim that the response rate of 77% in this study was very good is justified, and this demonstrates that the respondents felt the issues on which they were commenting were interesting. The timing of the survey could further explain the willingness of teachers to take part

in the research: the survey was conducted at a time in the academic year when schools had reopened after the Libyan uprising and teachers were motivated to participate and express their views.

7.4 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

According to Marshall and Jonker (2010), “descriptive statistics can be used to illustrate the characteristics of a group of observations i.e. the raw data” (p.6). This section presents the results from the descriptive data analysis which reveals the distribution of the 136 fifth grade and 156 seventh grade respondents based on their gender, age, years of experience teaching reading, and teaching training.

7.4.1 Gender

As shown in Table 7.1, the majority of the participants in both grades were females (87% and 84.6%). Such findings might be surprising given the stereotypical view that Arab women have a limited role outside their home. However, research has revealed that the vast majority of teachers in basic education (85%) are women (Al-Hadad, 2015). Moreover, Shihba (2011) observed that many schools in Libya exclude male staff. In her own study, 91% of the sample were female teachers. Table 7.1 shows the proportion of males and females in the sample.

Table 7.1

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to gender

Grade	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Fifth	Male	17	12.5
	Female	119	87.5
Total		136	100
Seventh	Male	24	15.4
	Female	132	84.6
Total		156	100

7.4.2 Age

Teachers were asked to indicate their age range from six categories, each representing a five-year range. Table 7.2 shows the age ranges of the 292 teachers as frequencies and percentages.

The data confirmed the researcher's initial assumption that most fifth and seventh grade teachers would fall in the 31-35 years age brackets: older teachers are less likely to teach young children, i.e., those in basic education, in Libya. The respondents were from different age groups, as shown in table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to age

Age	Fifth Grade		Seventh Grade	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	percent
Less than 25	20	14.7	23	18.6
25-30	28	20.6	36	23.1
31-35	53	39.0	61	35.1
36-40	26	19.1	33	21.2
41-45	5	3.7	1	.6
46-50	4	2.9	2	1.3
Total	136	100	156	100

7.4.3 Years of Experience

Table 7.3 shows the responses to the question regarding the number of years spent teaching English. Results reveal that the majority of teachers in both grades had less than 11 years of experience: 33.1% of fifth grade teachers and 38.5% of seventh grade teachers had 1-5 years of experience and 36.8% of fifth grade teachers and 31.4% of seventh grade teachers had 6-10 years of experience. Such results were supported by the data in Table 7.2: many of the teachers were too young to have had more than 11 years of experience. Similar observations regarding years of experience were made in research investigating Libyan teachers' implementation of an English language curriculum innovation programme (Shihba, 2011). A smaller proportion (19.9 % and 17.3%, respectively) had between 11 or more years of experience, while the smallest group

(10.3%/12.8% respectively) had less than a year experience. Accordingly, these teachers had gained their experience in teaching in a small period of time, therefore their teaching reading practices and teaching attitude may not be fully developed.

Table 7.3

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to years of experience in teaching English reading

Years of Experience	Fifth Grade Frequency	Percentage	Seventh Grade Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	14	10.3	15	12.8
1-5 years	45	33.1	53	38.5
6-10 years	50	36.8	60	31.4
11 years or over	27	19.9	28	17.3
Total	136	100	156	100

7.4.4 Training

Table 7.4 shows that 92.6% and 87.8% of the fifth and seventh grade teachers respectively were untrained. This is not a surprising result because previous studies such as Orafi & Borg (2009) and Saleh (2015) have pointed that there was a lack of English language training courses in Libya and highlighted the crucial need for teachers to develop their qualifications. Saleh (2015) also mentioned that there used to be different in-service training programmes before the 2011 Libyan uprising. These programmes included improvement courses for teachers whose level of proficiency was weak, and also cultural and vocational knowledge and methodology courses. However, the fact that these courses took place during the summer holidays made them unpopular among teachers who were not motivated to attend. Additionally, Saleh (2015)

emphasised that the focus of these courses was on the theory and methodology of English language teaching rather than actual practice.

Table 7.4

Percentage of fifth and seventh grade teachers according to their training

Grade	Training	Frequency	Percentage
Fifth	Trained	10	7.4
	Untrained	126	92.6
Total		136	100
Seventh	Trained	19	12.2
	Untrained	137	87.8.
Total		156	100

7.5 Descriptive Analysis of Teachers' Responses in Percentage Scores for the Two Grades

Most of the questions in the questionnaire used in this study specifically targeted teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching reading. These questions were presented as statements with which the respondent could agree or disagree. Table 7.5 (see appendix 5) provides a general description of the statements including responses in terms of agree/strongly agree and disagree/strongly disagree.

7.6 Factor Analysis

An important goal of factor analysis is to reduce the data to a smaller number of variables (Rogerson, 2014). For instance, factor analysis is useful in psychological surveys which measure different psychological constructs and assess how each item in one construct relates to another. Factor analysis, according to Kline (1994), “is a statistical technique widely used in psychology and the social sciences. Indeed, in some branches of psychology, especially those in which tests or questionnaires have been administered, it is a necessity” (p.1). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is widely used in quantitative research social sciences. Its aim is to examine the relationship between factors and assess which ones are exactly rotating. In the modern social sciences, it is perhaps most frequently used to explore the psychometric properties of an instrument or scale. Osborne (2015) states that “exploratory factor analysis examines all the pairwise relationships between individual variables (e.g., items on a scale) and seeks to extract latent factors from the measured variables” (p.1). EFA was therefore deemed appropriate for this study.

The teacher reading attitude questionnaire analysis was conducted using SPSS version 21. This software was applied to three sections of the original questionnaire: part B consisting of 11 items measuring teachers’ attitude to the teaching of reading, part C consisting of 17 items designed to measure their thoughts towards the reading strategies they encourage their learners to use, and part D consisting of 11 items designed to measure their thoughts towards the techniques for teaching reading they use in the classroom.

7.6.1 Teachers' Reading Attitude Factors

This research uses Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation done on the scale. PCA was utilised to investigate the number of teachers' reading attitude factors to be extracted. Table 7.6 summarises the results for the extraction of component factors and the percentage of variance explained by each of these factors. For two factors, the total value exceeded 1.0. The percentage of variance ranged from 12.11%, for factor 2 to 56.77 % for factor 1. The extraction of these two factors together accounts for 68.88 % of the variance. The KMO was .896.

Table 7.6

Attitude factor total variance explained

Factors	Initial	Eigen	Values	Extraction	Sums of	Loadings	Rotation	Sums of	Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.24	56.77	56.77	6.24	56.77	56.77	3.86	35.11	35.11
2	1.33	12.11	68.88	1.33	12.11	68.88	3.71	33.77	68.88
3	.85	7.75	76.62						
4	.64	5.82	82.45						
5	.48	4.42	86.87						
6	.37	3.39	90.26						
7	.26	2.36	92.62						
8	.24	2.19	94.81						
9	.21	1.92	96.73						
10	.20	1.77	98.50						
11	.17	1.50	10.00						

Varimax rotation of teaching reading attitude factors

To proceed with the analysis, the two factors had to be rotated, using varimax with KNR to identify the highest loading for each variable. The results are listed in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7

Results of PCA with varimax rotation for Attitude

Rotated Component Matrix		
Statements	Component/Factor Loadings	
	1	2
2. I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English.	.884	
3. I would like to take a teaching reading training course in English.	.834	
4. I feel confident with my level of reading comprehension in English.	.782	.448
6. It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English.	.767	.448
1. I enjoy teaching reading in English.	.692	
9. I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English.		.883
7. As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English.		.845
10. I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.	.381	.716
5. I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English.	.437	.700
11. I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English.	.408	.648
8. I feel I have the ability to recognise the specific reading needs of my learners.	.408	.527

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

In order to figure out which item has the highest loading for each variable, the analysis starts with the first item on the first factor, moving from left to right and selecting the highest loading for that item on any factor. If it is significantly high, it loads onto this factor (Everitt & Hothorn, 2011). Table 7.7 indicates that six of the items had a loading greater than 0.3 on more than one factor (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q5, Q11, and Q8). Moreover, Q2, 3Q, Q4, Q6, Q10, Q5, and Q11 had a loading greater than 0.6 on one factor and item Q8 had a loading greater than 0.5. Burgees et al. (2006) considers factor loadings as high when they are greater than 0.3 or quite high when they are above 0.6, thus establishing that factor as being very good. Any factor that loads below 0.3 may be excluded. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) state that “a criterion for meaningful correlation is usually 0.3 or larger” (p.625). The final procedure was to label each of the two teaching reading attitude factors. The labels and the loading of variables in descending order using varimax with KNR on each factor are presented in Table 7.8 which shows that factor 1 consisted of six items, whose loading ranged between .884 for item 2 and .408 for item 8. According to Yong and Pearce (2013), all components in a factor are required to be arranged in a descending order based on the most explained variance. Four of these items seem to be about teachers’ confidence and attitudes towards teaching reading (confidence, responsibility and enjoyment of teaching the reading skill). Item 3 is about the teachers’ attitude towards attending a training course in teaching reading in English. Accordingly, this factor was named ‘confidence and training attitude’. Moreover, factor 2, as shown in Table 7.8, consisted of five items whose loading ranged between .883 (item 9) and .448 (item 6). Since the component item entitled ‘motivation’ had the highest loading followed by other motivation variables, this factor was described as ‘motivations and feelings’ towards teaching reading.

Table 7.8

Loading of variables on factors 1 and 2 using varimax with KNR

Factor 1 Confidence and training attitude	Loading	Factor 2 Motivation and feelings	Loading
2. I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English.	.884	9. I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English.	.883
3. I would like to take a teaching reading training course in English.	.834	7. As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English.	.845
4. I feel confident with my level of reading comprehension in English.	.782	10. I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.	.716
1. I enjoy teaching reading in English.	.692	11. I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English	.648
5. I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English.	.437	6. It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English.	.448
8. I feel I have the ability to recognise the specific reading needs of my learners.	.408		

7.6.2 Reading Strategies Factors

PCA was found to be a useful method to investigate the number of factors to be extracted from the 14 questionnaire items relating to reading strategies. Table 7.9 summarises the results for the extraction of component factors and the percentage of variance explained by each of them. Four factors can be observed to have total values over 1.0, their extraction accounting for 7.67% (factor 4) to 25.91% (factor 1) of variance, a total of 57.92%. The KMO was .814.

Table 7.9
Strategies factor total variance explained

Factors	Initial	Eigen	Values	Extraction	Sums of	Loadings	Rotation	Sums of	Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.63	25.91	25.91	3.628	25.91	25.91	3.12	22.30	22.30
2	2.22	15.89	41.80	2.224	15.89	41.80	2.25	16.05	38.35
3	1.18	8.45	50.25	1.183	8.45	50.25	1.41	10.05	48.41
4	1.07	7.67	57.92	1.074	7.67	57.92	1.33	9.51	57.92
5	.87	6.21	64.13						
6	.84	6.00	70.12						
7	.71	5.09	75.22						
8	.65	4.65	79.86						
9	.61	4.38	84.24						
10	.58	4.15	88.40						
11	.49	3.55	91.94						
12	.42	2.98	94.93						
13	.39	2.77	97.69						
14	.32	2.31	100.00						

Varimax rotation of reading strategies factors

In order to interpret the four factors, the next step was to rotate them, using varimax with KNR to identify the highest loading for each variable. The results are listed in the Table 7.10.

Table 7.10

Results of PCA with varimax rotation for strategy

Statements	Component/Factor Loadings			
	1	2	3	4
22. Recognise story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes): to assist their reading.	.796			
26. Break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning.	.793			
23. Summarise in order to unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole.	.712			
19. Predict in the passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text.	.669			
27. Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts.	.555			
17. Monitor comprehension in which they learn how to be aware of their understanding during reading.	.539			
14. Segment phonemes.		.772		
12. Isolate phonemes.	.362	.746		
13. Blend phonemes.		.744		
15. Follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units.		.679		
21. Use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in reading.			.808	
20. Ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text.			.710	
24. Use word maps to develop complete understandings of words.				.823
25. Use external aids and writing to organise their ideas about what they are reading.				.710
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				

Additionally, in order to recognise the highest loading for each variable, the first item on the first factor was interpreted by also moving from left to right and by choosing the highest loading for that item on any factor. Table 7.10 reveals that items Q22, Q26, Q23, Q19, Q14, Q13, Q15, Q21, Q20, Q24 and Q25 had a loading greater than 0.6. The table shows that Q27 and Q17 had a loading greater than 0.5. Moreover, Q12 loaded on factor 2 (.746) and factor 1 (.363). The final procedure involved the labeling of each of the four reading strategies factors. The resulting labels and the loading of the variables on each factor were obtained in descending order using varimax with KNR, as presented in Table 7.11 which shows that factor 1 consisted of six items, whose loading ranged between .796 for item 22 and .539 for item 17. The majority of these items can be associated with metacognitive reading strategies which assist in the comprehension of a text (recognise story structure, summarise in order to unite the other ideas or meanings in a text, predict in the passage they read, use more than one strategy, monitor comprehension). Consequently, this factor was named 'metacognitive reading strategies'.

Furthermore, Table 7.11 shows that factor 2 consisted of four items, whose loading ranged between .772 for item 14 and .679 for item 15. All of these items are relevant to decoding reading strategies that are used by learners to assist their decoding skills (segment, isolate, blend phonemes and follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units). Therefore, this factor was labeled as 'decoding phonics'. Table 7.11 also reveals that factor 3 consisted of two items, whose loading ranged between .808 for item 21 and .710 for item 20. Such items can be considered as learners' external knowledge reading strategies to assist their comprehension skills (using background knowledge and ask and answer questions). Hence, this factor was labeled as 'use external knowledge'. Also, the table indicates that factor 4 consisted of two items, whose loading ranged between .823 for item 24 and .710 for item 25. These items can be viewed as the learners'

supportive tools reading strategies to assist their comprehension skills (use word maps and external aids and writing). Accordingly, this factor was labeled as ‘use tools to support reading’.

Table 7.11

Loading of variables on factors 1,2,3 and 4 using varimax with KNR

Factor N/ Variable items	Loading	Factor name
Factor 1/ Variable items		
22. Recognize story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes): to assist their reading	.796	Metacognitive reading strategies
26. Break down morphologically complex words.	.793	
23. Summarize in order to unite the other.	.712	
19. Predict in the passage they read.	.669	
27. Use more than one strategy.	.555	
17. Monitor their comprehension in which they learn how.	.539	
Factor 2/ Variable items		
14. Segment phonemes.	.772	Decoding phonics reading Strategies
12. Isolate phonemes.	.746	
13. Blend phonemes.	.744	
15. Follow a developmental pattern.	.679	
Factor 3/ Variable items		
21. Use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in reading.	.808	Use external knowledge strategies
20. Ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text.	.710	
Factor 4/ Variable items		
24. Use word maps to develop complete understanding of words.	.823	Use tools to support reading strategies
25. Use external aids and writing to organize their ideas about what they are reading.	.710	

7.6.3 Techniques for Teaching Reading

PCA was used to identify the number of teaching reading techniques factors to be extracted. Table 7.12 highlights the findings for the extraction of component factors and the percentage of variance obtained by all these factors. For three factors, the total value exceeded 1.0. The percentage of variance ranged from 14.17 % for factor 3 to 21.88% for factor 1. The extraction of these three factors together accounts for 55.86% of the variance. The KMO was .608.

Table 7.12

Techniques factor total variance explained

Factors	Initial	Eigen	Values	Extraction	Sums of Squared	Loadings	Rotation	Sums of Squared	Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.70	21.88	21.88	1.70	21.88	21.88	1.67	20.91	20.911
2	1.55	19.82	41.69	1.55	19.82	41.69	1.58	19.72	40.634
3	1.13	14.17	55.86	1.14	14.18	55.86	1.22	15.2	55.863
4	.89	11.15	67.01						
5	.76	9.44	76.45						
6	.66	8.24	84.69						
7	.64	7.94	92.63						
8	.59	7.37	100.00						

In order to interpret the three factors, the next step was to rotate them using varimax with KNR to identify the highest loading for each variable. The results are listed in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13

Results of PCA with varimax rotation for teaching technique

Statements	Component/Factor Loadings		
	1	2	3
32. Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading.	.763		
34. Systematic instruction in vocabulary, for example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.	.715		
33. Techniques which promote learners' fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.	.657		
30. Systematic instruction in phonics, for example, to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.		.778	
29. Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, for example, teaching the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondences.		.770	
39. Techniques of identifying letter knowledge, for example explaining and naming upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet.		.592	
31. Both real words and nonsense words (pseudo-words) to enhance readers decoding skill.			.737
36. Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.			.696
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			

In order to identify the highest loading for each variable, the interpretation also begins with the first item on the first factor, moving from left to right and selecting the highest loading for that item on any factor. If it is significantly high, it loads onto this factor (Everitt & Hothorn, 2011). Table 7.13 indicates that items Q32, Q34, Q33, Q30, Q29, Q31, and Q36 had a loading greater than 0.6. Moreover, Q39 loaded on factor 2 (.592).

The last step in factor analysis was to label each of the three teaching reading technique factors. The resulting labels and the loading of the variables on each factor in descending order using varimax with KNR are presented in Table 7.14. Factor 1, as shown in Table 7.14, consisted of three items with loadings from .763 (item 32) to .657 (item 33). Variables 32 and 34 involve the teaching of vocabulary words while item 33 focuses on the promotion of fluency. This factor was therefore labelled ‘vocabulary instruction and fluency’. Factor 2, as revealed in Table 7.14, consisted of three items with loadings from .778 (item 30) to .592 (item 39). Variables 30 and 29 involve the teaching of decoding skills through phonics while item 39 focuses on the teaching of alphabet letter knowledge. This factor was labeled ‘phonics instruction and alphabet knowledge’. Also factor 3, as shown in Table 7.14, consisted of two items with loadings from .737 (item 31) to .696 (item 36). These variables relate to the teaching of decoding skills through nonsense words and word shapes. Consequently, this factor was labeled ‘nonsense words and word shapes reading techniques’.

Table 7.14

Loading of variables on factors 1,2 and 3 using varimax with KNR

Factor 1	Loading	Factor 2	Loading	Factor 3	Loading
Vocabulary instruction and fluency		Phonics instruction and alphabet knowledge		Nonsense words and word shapes techniques	
32. Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading.	.763	30. Systematic instruction in phonics, for example, to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.	.778	31. Both real words and nonsense words (pseudo- words) to enhance readers' decoding skill.	.737
34. Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.	.715	29. Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, for example, teaching the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondences.	.770	36. Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.	.696
33. Techniques which promote learners' fluency.	.657	39. Techniques of identifying letter knowledge, for example, explaining and naming.	.592		

7.7 Teachers' Reading Attitudes Factors

To gain insight into some of the Libyan teachers' attitudes towards their instruction in both fifth and seventh grades, respondents were specifically asked about their attitudes to teaching reading. Their responses which are discussed below shed light on one of the main research questions, "What are the English teachers' general attitudes towards teaching reading in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting?".

The current study used a 4-point Likert-type scale, which is considered an ordinal scale, as explained in Section 5.8. To establish the reading teachers' attitudes, SPSS was used to interpret the data, frequencies, percentages and mean values of individual response scores. For interpretation of the means, the equivalent mean value for each of the likert scale values was calculated. The results showed that the first possible score on the four-point scale was 1 and the highest was 4, the total range was $4-1=3$. The length of each of the four categories was thus calculated as $3/4=0.75$, giving equivalent mean values for the first category $1.00 - (1+0.75) 1.75$, second category $1.76 - (1.75+0.75) 2.50$, third category $2.51 - (2.50+0.75) 3.25$ and fourth category $3.26 - (3.25+0.75) 4.00$. This therefore gives each of the items on all the rating scales an equal weight. Kyriacou et al.'s (2013) and Al Tayyar's (2014) rating mean score criteria were considered. The equivalent mean value for each category, as well as its interpretation is illustrated below:

Mean values based on response scores

The equivalent mean for the first category: $1 - 1.75 =$ Strongly Disagree

The equivalent mean for the second category: $1.76 - 2.50 =$ Disagree

The equivalent mean for the third category: $2.51 - 3.25 =$ Agree

The equivalent mean for the fourth category: $3.26 - 4.00 =$ Strongly agree

Table 7.15 illustrates the mean scores for each item included in the nine factors and their overall scores. Results suggest that the participants displayed a positive attitude to the first two factors with mean scores of (3.22 and 3.18 and standard deviation .625 and .677 respectively). These will be further discussed in detail in the following sections.

Table 7.15
The overall mean score of all nine factors of the attitude questionnaire

Factor 1 Confidence and training		Factor 2 Motivation and feelings		Factor 3 Metacognitive reading strategies		Factor 4 Decoding phonics Strategies		Factor 5 Use external knowledge		Factor 6 Use tools to support reading		Factor 7 Vocabulary instruction and fluency		Factor 8 Phonics instruction and alphabet knowledge		Factor 9 Nonsense words and word shapes reading	
Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean
1	3.27	9	3.28	17	3.10	12	2.24	21	3.31	24	2.10	32	3.36	39	3.04	31	1.88
8	3.24	7	3.17	27	2.78	15	2.13	20	3.29	25	1.95	34	3.33	30	2.29	36	1.87
2	3.22	6	3.17	19	2.72	14	2.07					33	3.30	29	2.27		
4	3.22	11	3.16	22	2.71	13	2.02										
5	3.21	10	3.12	26	2.65												
3	3.17			23	2.58												
Overall	3.22		3.18		2.76		2.12		3.30		2.03		3.33		2.53		1.87

As mentioned in Chapter Five, teachers were given the questionnaire and were required to choose their attitude response on the basis of a four-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Table 7.16 shows the teachers' general attitude responses. In general, results revealed that the participants displayed a positive attitude, with a mean score of 3.22 and standard deviation .625. Table 7.16 shows teachers' responses to items grouped under the 'confidence and training' factor, listed in order of mean score, with the item eliciting the most positive responses (item 1) at the top of the table. For item 1, 56.8% agreed and 37% strongly agreed with this attitude, with a mean score of 3.27 and standard deviation. .679.

Fifty percent agreed and 39.4 strongly agreed with item 8, with a mean score of 3.24 and standard deviation of .775. Moreover, items 2 and 4 received responses of 48.6%, 49.7% respectively for agreement, and 41.1% and 38.7%, respectively for strong agreement; the mean score for both items was 3.22 and standard deviations were .842 and .782 respectively.

Almost half (46.2%) of the teachers agreed with the statement for item 5 and 39.7% strongly agreed with it, giving a mean score of 3.21 and standard deviation .800. Item 3 received responses of 51% for agreement and 38.4% for strong agreement, the mean score was 3.17 and standard deviation was .878. As a result, the overall mean of 3.22 suggests that teachers had generally positive attitudes towards teaching the reading skill.

Table 7.16

Responses to items in factor 1 (Confidence and training attitude)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	I enjoy teaching reading in English	10	3.4	8	2.7	166	56.8	108	37	3.27	.679
8	I feel I have the ability to recognise the specific reading needs of my learners.	15	5.1	16	5.5	146	50.0	115	39.4	3.24	.775
2	I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English	24	8.2	6	2.1	142	48.6	120	41.1	3.22	.842
4	I feel confident with my level of reading comprehension English	15	5.1	19	6.5	145	49.7	113	38.7	3.22	.782
5	I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English.	14	4.8	27	9.2	135	46.2	116	39.7	3.21	.800
3	I would like to take teaching reading training course in English	30	10.3	1	3.	149	51	112	38.4	3.17	.878
Overall			6.9		3.6		50.6		38.8	3.22	.625

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage; and Std Dev= standard deviation

Table 7.17 lists teachers' responses to items under the 'motivations and feelings' factor in descending order of mean scores. Most teachers (91%) displayed a positive attitude with regards to motivating their learners to learn to read in English (item 9); fewer than 9% disagreed with the statement, thus giving a mean score of 3.28 and standard deviation .746. The scores for agreement with item 7 (As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor

my learners in reading in English), item 6 (It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English), item 11 (I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English) and item 10 (I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.), were similar. In addition, the overall mean score of 3.18 and standard deviation .677 for this motivations \and feelings' factor indicates that teachers had generally positive attitudes towards teaching the reading skill.

Table 7.17

Responses to items in factor 2 (motivations and feelings)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
9	I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English.	14	4.8	10	3.4	148	50.7	120	41	3.28	.746
7	As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English.	22	7.5	16	5.5	143	49	111	38	3.17	.842
6	It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English	22	7.5	19	6.5	137	46.9	114	39	3.17	.854
11	I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English	21	7.2	21	7.2	141	48.3	109	37.3	3.16	.843
10	I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.	26	8.9	20	6.8	138	47.3	108	37	3.12	.884
	Overall		6.4		6.3		48.6		38.7	3.18	.677

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.8 Teachers' Thoughts Towards Reading Strategies

This section provides a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire responses that pertain to the fourth research question, namely “What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of word reading and comprehension?”.

7.8.1 Metacognitive Reading Strategies Factor

Table 7.18 shows teachers' responses to items grouped under the 'metacognitive strategies' factor, listed in order of mean scores, with the item eliciting the most positive responses (item 17) at the top of the table. Attitudes to the items in Table 7.18 were mixed. 44.8 % and 35% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that it was important to encourage learners to 'monitor comprehension in which they learn how to be aware of their understanding during reading'. About a fifth of the teachers disagreed with the use of this strategy (19.9 %). More than half of the participants (60.3%) thought that it was useful to adopt more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts. The remaining participants did not think that this strategy was useful and disagreed with its use. Over half of the teachers (58.2%) had a positive attitude towards using the 'predict in the passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text' strategy. Attitudes towards item 22 ('recognise story structure to assist their reading') were divided, with 53.8% agreeing and strongly agreeing and 46.7% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing on its importance and use. In response to item 26, 55.1% of the teachers agreed that it was important to encourage their learners to 'break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning'. 44.8% of the teachers expressed a negative attitude towards the use of this reading strategy. 52% of participants agreed on the importance of summarising 'in order to unite the other ideas or

meanings of the text into a coherent whole' (item 23). Almost half of the participants (48%) did not believe that this strategy was useful or important. Finally, the overall mean score of 2.76 and standard deviation .641 suggests that although attitudes towards this factor generally varied, participants tended to agree rather than disagree to the items connected with this factor.

Table 7.18

Responses to items in factor 1 (Metacognitive Reading Strategies)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
17	Monitor comprehension in which they learn how to be aware of their understanding during reading	14	4.8	44	15.1	131	44.8	103	35.2	3.10	.827
27	Use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts	20	6.8	96	32.9	104	35.6	72	24.7	2.78	.897
19	Predict in the passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text	41	14	81	27.7	88	30.1	82	28.1	2.72	1.023
22	Recognise story structure (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes): to assist their reading	16	5.5	119	40.8	91	31.2	66	22.6	2.71	.878
26	Break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning	29	9.9	102	34.9	104	35.6	57	19.5	2.65	.906
23	Summarise in order to unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole	43	14.7	97	33.2	92	31.5	60	20.5	2.58	.976
	Overall		9.3		30.8		34.8		25.1	2.76	.641

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.8.2 Decoding Phonics Reading Strategies Factor

Table 7.19 lists teachers' responses to items in the 'decoding phonics strategies' factor. There was a high level of disagreement with regards to the use and importance of the reading strategy 'isolate phonemes': 37% and 22.9% of teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The overall mean score of 2.12 and standard deviation .645 for this factor indicates that teachers generally disagreed with the importance of the reading strategy. It is interesting to note that similar trends were found in the observation and stimulated recall interviews sections. The second highest mean (2.13) and standard deviation (.886) was in response to item 15, i.e., to encourage learners 'to follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units'. Also, many teachers did not think that it was useful for learners to know how to 'segment phonemes': 46.2% and 27.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the use of this reading strategy. The 'blending phoneme' strategy (item 13) was also not viewed positively by the participants: the overall mean score of 2.12 indicates that teachers generally disagreed on the need to encourage their learners to use these reading strategies.

Table 7.19

Responses to items in factor 2 (Decoding phonics strategies)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
12	Isolate phonemes.	67	22.9	108	37	96	32.8	21	7.2	2.24	.888
15	Follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units.	72	24.7	137	46.9	57	19.5	26	8.9	2.13	.886
14	Segment phonemes.	81	27.7	135	46.2	48	16.4	27	9.2	2.07	.900
13	Blend phonemes.	74	25.3	153	52.4	50	17.1	111	5.1	2.02	.796
Overall		25.2		45.6		21.5		7.6		2.12	.645

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.8.3 Use External Knowledge Reading Strategies Factor

Table 7.20 shows teachers' responses to items under the 'use external knowledge' factor. Participants agreed (50%) and strongly agreed (41.4%) with the importance of using background knowledge to find out the meaning of words. Only 6.5% of participants disagreed with the use of this item. 45.5% strongly agreed that it was important to encourage their learners to ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text. The overall mean score for this factor was 3.30 and standard deviation .601, representing a strong agreement.

Table 7.20

Responses to items in factor 3 (Use external knowledge)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
21	Use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in reading.	6	2.1	19	6.5	146	50	121	41.4	3.31	.684
20	Ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text.	13	4.5	23	7.9	123	42.1	133	45.5	3.29	.795
	Overall		3.3		7.2		46.1		43.4	3.30	.601

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.8.4 Use Tools to Support Reading Strategies Factor

Table 7.21 shows teachers' responses to the 'use tools to support reading' factor. Most participants disagreed (53%) or strongly disagreed (23%) with the use of word maps 'to develop complete understandings of word reading'. Most teachers (83.9%) also displayed a negative attitude to item 25, i.e., 'the use of external aids and writing to organise their ideas about what they are reading'. The overall mean score for the factor was 2.03 and standard deviation .617, the lowest of all the factors. Thus showing that this factor received the most negative responses.

Table 7.21

Responses to items in factor 4 (Use tools to support reading)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
24	Use word maps to develop complete understandings of word.	65	22.3	155	53	53	18.2	19	6.5	2.10	.812
25	Use external aids and writing to organise their ideas about what they are reading.	73	25	172	58,9	35	12	12	4.1	1.95	.731
	Overall.		23.7		55.9		15.1		5.3	2.03	.617

SD=strongly disagree;D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.9 Teachers' Thoughts Towards their Techniques for Teaching Reading

This section provides a quantitative analysis of questionnaire responses that pertain to the fifth research question, namely “What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension?”.

7.9.1 Vocabulary Instruction and Fluency Techniques Factor

Table 7.22 lists responses relating to the ‘Vocabulary instruction and fluency techniques’ factor. The teachers strongly agreed with teaching techniques 32, 33 and 34. The overwhelming majority of participants (92.8%) supported the use of picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words. These positive attitudes are clearly reflected in the mean score for this teaching technique. Similar observations apply to the ‘systematic instruction in vocabulary technique’ and ‘techniques which promote learners’ fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading

confidently by sight’: over 90% of participants displayed positive attitudes towards the use and importance of these teaching techniques. Finally, the overall mean of 3.33 and standard deviation .449 indicates that teachers displayed a strongly preferable attitude to this factor.

Table 7.22
Responses to items in factor 1 (Vocabulary instruction and fluency)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
32	Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading.	1	.3	18	6.2	148	50.7	125	42.8	3.36	.613
34	Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions	3	1	14	4.8	160	54.8	115	39.4	3.33	.615
33	Techniques which promote learners’ fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.	2	.7	21	7.2	159	54.5	110	37.7	3.30	.627
	Overall		.4		6.1		53.4		40	3.33	.449

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.9.2 Phonics Instruction and Alphabet Letter Knowledge Reading Techniques Factor

Attitudes to the items in Table 7.23 were divided. 78.8% of respondents agreed that the ‘identifying letter knowledge’ techniques were useful. This is in sharp contrast to the attitudes displayed to the ‘systematic instruction in phonics’ technique: 67.5 % of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to the use and importance of this teaching technique. Such a negative attitude is reflected in the low mean (2.29) and standard deviation (.913) scores for this item. A similar observation can be made for the ‘systematic instruction in phonemic

awareness' technique, with 65.3% of respondents either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with its use and importance. Finally, the overall mean for the factor was 2.53 and standard deviation .621, indicating a lower limit of agreement attitude towards these teaching reading techniques.

Table 7.23

Responses to items in factor 2 (Phonics instruction and alphabet knowledge)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
39	Techniques of identifying letter knowledge. For example, explaining and naming upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.	6	2.1	56	19.2	150	51.4	80	27.4	3.04	.740
30	Systematic instruction in phonics. For example, to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.	50	17.1	147	50.4	54	18.5	41	14	2.29	.913
29	Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness. For example, teaching the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondences	55	18.8	136	46.5	68	23.3	33	11.3	2.27	.896
	Overall		12.7		38.7		31.1		17.5	2.53	.621

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev=standard deviation

7.9.3 Nonsense Words and Word Shapes Reading Techniques Factor

Table 7.24 shows the responses of teachers concerning the 'Nonsense words and word shapes' factor. About 90% of the teachers displayed negative attitudes towards the use of both real words and nonsense words (pseudo-words) to enhance readers' decoding skill.

Similar observations apply to item 36, i.e., the use of word shapes as a reading technique to aid word recognition. Around a tenth of the teachers agreed to use these two teaching techniques in their classroom instruction. The overall mean for this factor was 1.87 and standard deviation .467, thus showing that teachers were not favourable to the use of these two teaching reading techniques in class. In fact, this factor yielded the lowest mean score. To conclude, results suggest that this factor obtained the lowest scores in terms of agreement compared to the other factors.

Table 7.24

Responses to items in factor 3 (Nonsense words and word shapes reading)

N	Items	SD		D		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
31	Both real words and nonsense words (pseudo-words) to enhance readers decoding skill.	69	23.6	192	65.8	27	9.2	4	1.4	1.88	.609
36	Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.	72	24.7	192	65.8	21	7.2	7	2.4	1.87	.632
	Overall		24.1		65.8		8.2		1.9	1.87	.467

SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; A=agree; SA=strongly agree; F=frequency; %=percentage and Std Dev= standard deviation

7.10 Comparing grade groups: Factor Analysis Among Teachers

This final section provides a quantitative analysis of questionnaire responses that pertain to the sixth research question, namely “Is there a statistically significant difference in the Libyan English teachers’ attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques across grade groups?”.

A t-test was carried out on the mean scores for each factor to determine whether there were significant grade differences. The independent samples t-test compares one measured characteristic between two groups of observations or measurements. It tells us whether the difference we see between the two independent samples is a true difference or whether it is just a random effect caused by skewed sampling (Norušis, 2006).

As the table below illustrates, the t-test did not reveal any significant statistical differences between the two grades for the 'confidence and training' and 'motivation and feelings' factors in Section B. The results of the independent samples t-test indicated that the mean scores of the two groups were significantly different for the reading strategies factors in Section C, specifically metacognitive reading comprehension strategies, decoding phonics reading strategies, and use of external knowledge reading strategies. The mean score of the attitude difference for the metacognitive reading strategies was 2.24 for fifth grade teachers with a standard deviation of .40, and 3.21 for seventh grade teachers with a standard deviation of .45 and $p < 000$. This indicates that seventh grade teachers agreed to use more metacognitive reading strategies, such as monitoring comprehension, in their English lessons, through which students learn to be aware of their understanding during reading and use more than one strategy to comprehend texts while reading. On the other hand, fifth grade teachers failed to encourage the use of such reading strategies. A statistically significant difference was found between fifth and seventh grade teachers in use of the decoding phonics reading strategy factor, with a $M= 2.38, SD=.46$; $M=1.89, SD .70$ and $p < .000$, respectively. The items included in this factor are isolate phonemes, follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units, segment phonemes, and blend phonemes reading. Such results indicate that teachers of both grades viewed this factor negatively, with the seventh grade teachers displaying more negative attitudes towards the decoding phonics reading strategies.

As for the third factor in this cluster, the table shows the differences between fifth and seventh grades were respectively $M = 3.15$, $SD = .58$; $M = 3.43$, $SD = .59$ and $p < .000$. Such results indicate that seventh grade teachers strongly agreed with persuading their learners to use these specific reading strategies. For the use of tools to support the reading comprehension strategies factor, the test did not reveal any statistical difference between the grades. Furthermore, the tests indicated that the means of the attitude difference for the two factors in Section D was for phonics instruction and teaching alphabet letter knowledge, the differences between fifth and seventh grade teachers were, respectively, $M = 2.95$, $SD = .56$; $M = 2.18$, $SD = .41$ and $p < .000$. Findings shown in this table suggests that fifth grade teachers were more positive than their seventh grade counterparts towards using such teaching techniques. Moreover, the t-test results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the factor that included both real and nonsense words, as well as word shapes configuration, known as the teaching nonsense words and word shapes reading technique. The differences between fifth and seventh grade teachers were $M = 1.79$, $SD = .46$; $M = 1.96$, $SD = .46$ and $p < .002$, respectively. Such results indicate that teachers of both grades viewed this teaching reading technique factor negatively, with the fifth grade teachers displaying more negative attitudes towards nonsense techniques for teaching reading. There were no statistically significant differences between the two grades for teaching vocabulary words instruction or the fluency techniques factors. Table 7.25 lists the means, standard deviations and t-tests for the factors for teachers from both grades.

Table 7.25

Results of the t-test, mean score and standard deviation of the fifth and seventh grade teachers' responses

Factor	Fifth		Seventh		T	Sig.(2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD		
Confidence and training	3.18	.66	3.26	.59	-1.173-	.242
Motivations and feeling	3.13	.59	3.22	.75	-1.143-	.254
Metacognitive reading strategies	2.24	.40	3.21	.45	-19.252-	.000
Decoding phonics	2.38	.46	1.89	.70	7.002	.000
Use external knowledge	3.15	.58	3.43	.59	-4.083-	.000
Use tools to support reading	1.97	.55	2.07	.67	-1.392-	.165
Vocabulary instruction and fluency	3.28	.45	3.36	.45	-1.460-	.145
Phonics instruction and alphabet letters	2.95	.56	2.18	.41	13.546	.000
Nonsense words and shape words	1.79	.46	1.96	.46	-3.191-	.002

7.11 Summary

This chapter has provided an analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire responses. The descriptive analysis revealed that most of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years (78.2%) and had between 2-10 years of experience. Most of the teachers were females. Only 7.4% of the fifth grade teachers and 12.2% of the seventh grade ones had attended training programmes for the teaching of reading. The questionnaire results reveal that Libyan teachers of both fifth and seventh grades displayed similar attitudes towards teaching reading in a Libyan setting, with overall mean scores of 3.22 and 3.18 respectively. Factor analysis was used to reduce the large number of variables to two teaching reading attitude factors, four reading strategies factors and three teaching reading techniques factors. Interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between the fifth and seventh grade respondents for the ‘confidence and training’ factor and ‘motivation and feelings’ factor. There were statistically significant differences among the reading strategies factors (‘metacognitive reading strategies’ factor, ‘decoding phonics’ factor and ‘use external knowledge’ factor). However, there were no statistically significant differences between grades for the ‘use tools to support reading’ factor. A statistically significant difference between the two grades was found for two of the teaching techniques factors: ‘phonics instruction and alphabet knowledge reading techniques’ factor and ‘nonsense words and word shapes’ factor.

These findings provide an insight into the way in which Libyan teachers of English as a foreign language think about the teaching techniques they use in the classroom and also the reading strategies they encourage their learners to use in classrooms. The following chapter discusses the study data in light of the questionnaire, systematic observations, stimulated recall interviews, relevant literature and evidence-based practices. As will be shown, teaching

reading is a complex process that needs to be examined taking into account the context and the attitudes of teachers.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

8.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss and explain the quantitative and qualitative data considering the research questions and the literature review. The chapter focuses on the findings of the systematic observation, stimulated recall interviews and the questionnaire responses of fifth and seventh grade teachers. The data is discussed with reference to previous studies on EFL teachers' reading practices and their attitudes towards teaching reading in primary schools. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study will be the first to investigate fifth and seventh grade Libyan teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading EFL in Libya. The discussion addresses each research question listed in Section 1.5. The chapter starts with an exploration of the quantitative findings. The most important qualitative findings are then discussed in light of the quantitative result discussion and the most pertinent points raised in the literature review. This chapter concludes with a summary.

In this chapter, the discussion will be based around the six research questions:

- (1) How much approximate total instruction time do fifth and seventh grade English teachers typically spend teaching reading and encouraging learners to use reading strategies and in teaching English language lessons?
- (2) What reading strategies do teachers encourage students to use in fifth and seventh grade English language classrooms and what teaching techniques do they use to teach reading and are there any grade differences?
- (3) What are the English teachers' general attitudes towards teaching reading of English in fifth and seventh grades in a Libyan setting?

- (4) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the different reading strategies that could be taught to support the development of English word reading and comprehension?
- (5) What do fifth and seventh grade English teachers think about the teaching reading techniques they could use to support the development of word reading and comprehension?
- (6) Is there a statistically significant difference in the Libyan English teachers' attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques across grade groups?

8.1 Total Instruction Time Spent by Fifth and Seventh Grade English Libyan Teachers Teaching Reading in English Lessons (Research Question 1)

As noted in Section 6.2.2, the amount of school time that the teachers spend teaching the reading skill can be calculated in two different ways: (1) as the percentage of reading time that teachers devote to the reading lessons, or (2) as the number of total minutes that teachers spend on reading instruction. This section discusses the percentage of school time spent on teaching reading. The data for minutes per lesson spent on teaching reading is found in tables 6.3 and 6.4 The discussion below is based on the researcher's observations only.

The data gathered from the classroom observations in this research suggested that the fifth and seventh teachers were spending 33.10% and 42.7 % respectively of their English language lessons on reading. This is in contrast with previous research in L1 by Durkin (1978) who found that a mere 1% of reading instructional time was devoted to reading comprehension instruction. Also, Ness (2011) found that reading comprehension instruction occupied 25% of reading instructional time. Although it is impressive to find that the Libyan teachers are spending about 30%-40% of the time during observed English classes on teaching reading, it is worth mentioning that this research is not directly comparable to the

earlier research in the FL context. Our study was carried out only based on observations of lessons focusing on decoding and comprehension reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading. One may assume that the proportion of time focusing on reading will decrease if lessons that have been planned to focus on aspects other than reading such as writing, grammar, speaking and listening are included in the observations.

Given the above observations, how do we compare this research to the results from other studies? It is worth mentioning that to the researcher's knowledge few EFL reading studies have investigated the approximate time devoted to teach reading in primary and preparatory grades (fifth and seventh grades). Therefore, the researcher also referred to relevant L1 studies. First of all, in terms of comprehension instruction, Ness (2011) gathered 3,000 minutes of observation data in 20 first- through fifth-grade classrooms and reported that 25% of the observed instruction was reading comprehension. The mean amount of time teachers allocated to comprehension instruction during their 3-hour reading block rose gradually by grade level as follows: 21 minutes in kindergarten, 34 minutes in first grade, 50 minutes in second grade, and 58 minutes in third grade. However, findings in her study indicated that 287 minutes of the time allocated were spent in fourth grade, and 122 minutes in 5th-grade. Previous studies found that fewer minutes were devoted to comprehension instruction. For instance, the findings are different from Durkin's (1978) seminal study in which she reported that middle grade teachers devoted less than 1% of their reading instructional time to comprehension instruction. According to Allington (2006), studies show that primary L1 children devote as little as ten minutes a day in real reading comprehension experiences also. However, the results from the Reading First Impact Study carried out by Gamse et al. (2008) revealed that the length of the reading comprehension block was approximately 106 minutes; and the mean number of minutes of reading instruction observed was 59 minutes of the total

90% instruction. The findings in their research also showed that, on average, across 3 years of data coded from 325 three-hour classroom observations, kindergarten through fifth and seventh-grade, teachers in private schools in one western state spent approximately 41 minutes, or 23% on comprehension in their reading instruction.

One of the few studies in EFL was Janzen's (2007) research studying the instructional practices of L2 middle grade teachers in the areas of decoding skills and comprehension. In her study, she reported that middle grade teachers spent an average of 14–50% of their class time on reading comprehension instruction such as discussing passages. The time spent was divided between class discussion, supporting learners, local comprehension of the text being read, recognising individual words and summarising information which was mentioned in their course book. Importantly, the absence of time spent on strategy instruction was also observed in both Libyan classrooms in the current study since none of the teachers were encouraging their learners to use more than one reading strategy, for instance, by assisting their learners to use a number of reading strategies to comprehend the text. Such findings concur with Janzen (2007) who also reported that there was a lack of time focusing on scaffolding in the EFL classrooms observed. However, she pointed out that only one observed teacher encouraged her learners to use more than one reading strategy in class, for example, contextual guessing, ignoring unknown words, and scanning, without further explaining their use. In the current study, the findings relating to the interviewed teachers' decoding comprehension practices are similar to those observed in class. This is in line with previous research in EFL (Janzen, 2007). The initial assumption that reading strategies encouragement would be scarce in these primary and middle EFL classrooms was confirmed by the findings of this study. This implies that fifth grade learners were encouraged to use bottom up rather than top down reading strategies in their learning. In other words, fifth grade

teachers instruct their learners in the reading process of recognising words in print and building up the meaning from the smallest units (words and letters) (Rivers, 1964; Yorio, 1971). Therefore, the learners possibly play a passive role, since they rely heavily on their linguistic knowledge.

Our current research results indicate that there was a lack of time spent on reading phonics instruction and the only time spent on decoding reading strategies and teaching techniques was based on alphabet letter knowledge and sounding out letter names. For example, in the reading lessons observed in this study, it was found that fifth and seventh grade teachers encouraged their learners to use the following decoding strategies: sound out letter names and words, during 10% and 6.25% respectively of the instructional time and read in alphabet letter forms, during 1.25% and 1.15% respectively of the instructional time. The qualitative results of the stimulated recall interviews support these points. In terms of these decoding skills, Taylor et al. (2003) reported in their study that phonics instruction was coded for 22% of the reading segments in grade 1 but coded much less often in grades 2 to 5. Phonics instruction was seldom coded beyond grade 1. These findings are not consistent with the NRP (2000) which highly recommends the use of phonics instruction which "taught at very early grades was proved to be more effective than phonics instruction introduced after first grade" (p.2-85). Also, Janzen (2007) mentioned that only one of the six teachers in her study spent most of her time in each class on learners' decoding of graphemes, words, and sentences, and believed that developing this skill had a positive impact on the learners' decoding skill. Most of the other teachers spent less time on fewer decoding phonics skills, choosing, for example, to discuss topics centered around encouraging their learners to use comprehension strategies based on discussing main points in a text in addition to explicit

morphological awareness instruction based on word root knowledge, vocabulary, picture cues, translation and fluency techniques.

It is clear that reading strategy instruction has a positive impact on reading improvement (NRP, 2000; Macaro & Erler 2008; McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009). However, there were two main concerns in this study: (1) EFL Libyan teachers failed to instruct their learners to use more than one strategy to develop their cognitive process, such as recognise story structure, use external aids, use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts; and (2) the absence of time spent on phonics instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms. The education picture of EFL Libyan reading instruction indicated the high reliance on some specific techniques for teaching reading instruction such as systematic vocabulary instruction, explicit translation instruction, picture cues, and systematic instruction in morphological awareness. In this study, most of the teachers usually begin their reading lessons by introducing the passage briefly and relying on picture cues before proceeding to read and translate the passage. The most common type of instruction related to reading comprehension which teachers seemed to be involved in was vocabulary instruction. In both fifth and seventh grades, systematic vocabulary instructions were observed during 4.17 % and 5.47% respectively of the instructional time.

The teachers also encouraged learners to translate words to assist comprehension. In this context, the specific EFL Libyan primary and middle teachers were not engaged in actual strategy instruction, as specific features, which typify strategy instruction like direct explanation of the strategy use, scaffolding (Duke et al., 2012), were not observed in these primary and middle classrooms. Two conclusions might be drawn. First, the systematic observation checklist showed that in English classes, teachers spent less time teaching reading and encouraging the use of reading strategies than they did teaching things other than

reading. Second, teachers of both grades generally spent a greater percentage of their English lesson on reading than most of the teachers in previous studies mentioned above. In other words, the mean number of minutes of reading instruction provided was also greater for the teachers in this study. To the researcher's knowledge, no study has recommended either how much instructional time or the percentage of instructional time that teachers at the primary and middle grade levels in EFL should devote to reading instruction. Consequently, it is quite challenging to assess if the time allocated to teach reading in this research was adequate. Furthermore, the limited amount of time devoted in reading instruction may be due to several reasons. First, the Libyan EFL teachers may lack the appropriate training. Indeed, the demographic data in this study show that a large number of Libyan teachers who teach both grades are untrained and therefore are less likely to be aware of current research and recommendations for the urgent need to use specific techniques for teaching reading and assisting learners with the appropriate reading strategies. The observations and interviews support this point. Another factor which may influence the result is related to the learners' literacy knowledge. Many of the teachers claimed that most of the fifth-grade learners lacked the basics of alphabet knowledge, implying that they cannot read, comprehend, write and even speak fluently in English. To address this issue, the teachers had to teach these children alphabet knowledge and not phonics. Given these learners' poor command of the English language, they were not ready to use reading strategies.

8.2 The Reading Strategies Learners are Encouraged to use in Fifth and Seventh Grade English Language Classrooms, the Teaching Techniques Teachers Use to Teach Reading and the Differences Between the Two Grades (Research Question 2)

The discussion in this section includes the researcher's observations of the reading strategies and teaching techniques used for teaching reading by fifth and seventh grade Libyan teachers. These observations are backed up by the teachers' stimulated recall interviews. That is, the researcher studied the data from both systematic observations and stimulated recall interviews to identify teachers' instructional moves and triangulated the data with the findings. This triangulation is done to support the results in the stimulated recall interviews and also to track any differences between the researcher's observations and the results of the stimulated recall interviews. The findings are discussed in relation to the most and least used reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading. Then, the differences of teachers' reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading are investigated. The key argument is that middle school teachers and primary teachers may differ in the use of different techniques for teaching reading and reading strategies.

Similar to L1 reading, L2 reading proficiency involves a number of elements. First, adequate reading strategies are considered vital in developing the reading process (Hellekjær, 2007; Šamo, 2009). Second, there is a variety of techniques available for teaching reading-related skills, decoding and comprehension skills. These together contribute to the learners' development of self-monitoring skills and reading strategies (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). According to the limited foreign language reading research, learners should be encouraged to use sufficient reading strategies, when they are willing to comprehend a text and to facilitate reading comprehension (Erle, 2008). Therefore, reading strategies should be explicitly taught to assist the learners' comprehension.

Findings from the systematic observations revealed that teachers of both grades greatly encouraged their learners to sound out letter names and words rather than sounds during their observed lessons. In fact, the findings from the observation suggested that the most frequently observed reading strategy was the naming letter names and sounding words strategy. For example, naming the letter, 'b', learners practice saying 'bee'. These teachers encouraged their learners to use letter names rather than phonic sounds during their practice, implying a disagreement about how to teach phonological knowledge and this seems that they struggle with instructing larger phonological awareness beyond phoneme-grapheme addressed by phonics instruction highlighted by Ziegler and Goswami, (2005). Another similar reading strategy encouraged by the teachers and associated to decoding skills was the read in alphabet letter forms only and not words strategy. According to Bradley and Stahl (2001), alphabet recognition or alphabet knowledge requires the capability to differentiate among letter shapes, names, and sounds in addition to quickly recalling and naming each letter. The authors believed that language instruction would be more efficient if learners first learned to name letters. Moreover, Torgesen (1998) argued that learners should not be encouraged to use the phonics reading strategy. He believed that it is the basis for learning to read at lower standards/age groups as it supports the reading skill in the curriculum. These findings were similar with the interview results from this study. Only one of the 34 interviewed teachers highlighted the importance of the segmenting phonemes reading strategy and few reading strategies, for example segmenting phonemes reading strategy (0.28 %), were observed during the systematic observation sessions. Libyan teachers' pay very limited attention to phonics instruction strategy in both grades. Their practices are unlike findings of reviewed research studies in L1 (e.g., NRP, 2000; Rose Report, 2005). These studies reported that the systematic phonics instruction is an effective way of developing the

learners' early reading skills. Mokotedi's (2012) findings are consistent with those of the current study. He reported that many EFL teachers did not encourage their learners to use phonics-related reading strategies. In his research, the teachers mentioned that they were not trained in and were unfamiliar with phonics instruction. The few teachers who did encourage their learners to use phonics while reading did not do so sufficiently.

In terms of comprehension reading strategies, the two reading strategies that were more frequently encouraged by teachers in both grades were translating words to assist comprehension during reading and monitoring learners' comprehension reading strategies (Table 6.3). First, teachers from both grades persuaded their learners to translate words to assist comprehension strategies. This finding is consistent with Manoli and Papadopoulou's (2012) study who reported that most of the EFL teachers participating in their study usually began their reading lessons by introducing the passage and then encouraged their learners to read and translate the passage in English as a foreign language vocabulary instruction. This implies that they encourage their learners to use their L1 reading ability, which is an important component in Bernhardt's (2005) compensatory reading model. The findings in this thesis indicate that reading comprehension was facilitated when students translated the familiar words and sentences in a text, and that their language ability had an impact on their comprehension. However, Aivazoglou and Griva (2014) argued that the translation reading strategy was likely to be used by only struggling foreign language readers. They explained that in L1, the corresponding most frequently used 'support' strategy by students was "restating ideas of the text in their own words to better understand what they read" (p.240). Additionally, results in this research indicated that the strategy of monitoring learners' comprehension was also observed during the Libyan reading lessons. In contrast, Gilje (2014) found that the primary school Norwegian EFL teachers in their study did not take into

consideration monitoring skills or reading strategies. In fact, one of the teachers mentioned that she did not have enough time to encourage such reading strategies in her EFL reading lessons. The qualitative results in this research on teachers' assistance of these reading strategies were consistent with the quantitative observation results (see also sections 6.3.2, 6.3.3). A small number of fifth grade teachers claimed that they encouraged their learners to monitor their comprehension and understand the meaning of words while reading. It is obvious from the results that most of the fifth and seventh grade teachers lack the experience of encouraging their learners to use comprehension strategies that could help them comprehend English texts. Moreover, according to the systematic observations and the audio stimulated recall interviews, most of the learners were not encouraged to recognise story structure, use external aids, and use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts.

In order to further investigate the results, the researcher studied the most frequent techniques used by both grades in the systematic classroom observations. The findings revealed that both grade groups displayed similar characteristics in terms of the techniques they used for teaching reading in their class, e.g., picture cues techniques, identifying letter knowledge, vocabulary instruction, explicit translation instruction, promoting learners' fluency and systematic instruction in morphological awareness. The picture cues techniques for teaching reading was one of the most frequently used techniques in both grades. According to scholars such as Verhallen and Bus (2011), picture cues enhance the process of storing information in the reader's mind. Elliott and Dupuis (2002) favoured their use in classrooms since they help comprehend the meaning of the text in addition to adding to the learner's vocabulary knowledge in the lesson. Nodelman (1996) pointed out,

When we look at the pictures in picture books, we are meant not just to do that but also to think about how they relate to the accompanying words and also to the pictures

preceding and following them. In other words, we must consider not only their beauty but also how they contribute to unfolding knowledge of the story (p.219).

Teachers of both grades were using picture cues actively and frequently in the English language classes to facilitate comprehension. This finding was observed in the systematic classroom observations, the teachers' audio stimulated recall interviews', and translated transcripts. Specifically, fifth grade teachers spent most of their reading comprehension instruction using pictures from books. It was believed that picture cues had a rich and valuable pedagogical place in language learning classrooms and were considered helpful to introduce the meaning of words and develop the imaginative capacity in reading comprehension. Wyatt (2012) conducted a study focusing on the development over time of English as a foreign language among young learners in Oman. Results suggested that teachers relied on the picture cues teaching technique in the classroom as it assisted learners' comprehension. Furthermore, in another study concerning the use of flash cards, Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2010) examined the impact of using picture cues and word lists on EFL learners' learning of foreign language vocabulary. Their study suggested that there was no significant difference in the use of flash cards in comparison to other reading techniques. It is worth mentioning that there is a gap in the literature focusing on the techniques for teaching reading using picture cues in L2 instruction. In fact, the question of whether the use of picture cues facilitates teaching and vocabulary instruction needs to be researched. Nation (2013) recommends the use of this technique for teaching vocabulary in a foreign language. He explains that this technique is used when a teacher writes the word on one side of a small flash card and its translation in the first language on the other side. The teacher relies on a set of flash cards and encourages the learner to figure out the meaning.

Although this technique is useful, the time factor impedes teachers from using it for teaching reading because it is generally time-consuming (Alkhaldeh, 2010).

The classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews suggested that teachers also frequently used vocabulary instruction and techniques which promoted learners' fluency by moving from decoding words to reading confidently by sight in both grades. The latter is also another basic technique that has been shown to be important for teaching reading development (e.g., Kim, Wagner & Foster, 2011). These findings are consistent with those of Pathan and Marayi (2016) who found from their study that both primary and preparatory Libyan school teachers focused more on vocabulary, specifically on words. However, in practice most of the Libyan teachers focused more on the decoding of words techniques than on those related to word attack and comprehension strategies. Another important finding that needs discussion in relation to systematic vocabulary instruction is that most of the techniques used by the Libyan teachers in both grades were adopted at word level rather than sentence level. This finding differs from Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) who argue that reading involves the reader, text, and an interaction between the reader and text. In other words, the reading process is an active construction of meaning. Such a process, according to them, cannot be portrayed simply as a set of individual decoding skills but should be conceptualised as involving both a combination of lower-level identification skills and higher-level comprehension or interpretation skills.

Furthermore, the results from the systematic observations revealed that the translation technique for teaching reading was frequently used. In addition, during the stimulated recall interviews some of the teachers agreed that translating to Arabic was an appropriate way to facilitate learners' comprehension. This is in line with Schroeder (2005) who emphasises the importance of using the first language in understanding a reading text. Pathan and Marayi

(2016) found comparable results in their study. They reported that the teachers frequently used their first language Arabic in their EFL teaching. There was also a substantial amount of translation into Arabic as they believed that this helped their learners to improve their vocabulary significantly. As a result, they also encouraged their students to translate the lessons from English into Arabic most of the time. Such findings indicate that these learners were encouraged to use their L1 knowledge to compensate for or to overcome any reading difficulties in a given text. Moreover, the current findings revealed that most of the early grades were specifically interested in teaching words without paying attention to the longer passages. In fact, scholars are divided on the importance of teaching alphabet names, shapes and sounds to very young children before the formal onset of reading instruction. In the systematic observations, many fifth-grade teachers preferred using the alphabet name teaching technique to phonics. This was backed up by the findings from the stimulated recall interviews. Nine fifth grade teachers said that they used this technique which was deemed important. These teachers taught their learners how to differentiate between the upper- and lower-case letters. Moreover, teachers emphasised that the learners needed to know the alphabet letter system in addition to the basic sound system of letters which can be difficult to learn. Therefore, some teachers preferred to spread the teaching of the letter forms over several reading lessons to facilitate the learning process. Other teachers used this technique as a revision. Share (2004) also emphasises that being familiar with the names of letters can assist the young learners' comprehension of written spoken language. Share's (2004) research investigated four and five-year-old children who learnt the names of most alphabet letters and used orthography to better learn and remember vocabulary. In the current study, results indicated that the most commonly evidence of teachers using bottom-up decoding items were

the ones that mostly focused on letter knowledge, whereas the least used ones were those where there was little phonics instruction.

8.3 English Teachers' General Attitudes towards Teaching Reading in Fifth and Seventh Grades in a Libyan Setting (Research Question 3)

The quantitative results set out in Chapter 7 (Table 7.16 and Table 7.17) show that the overall scores for the general attitude towards the two factors 'confidence and training' and 'motivations and feelings' were 3.22 and 3.18 out of 4, respectively. In general, results revealed that the participants displayed a positive attitude towards both factors. The first factor included items such as 'I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English', 'I would like to take teaching reading training course in English', 'I enjoy teaching reading in English' and 'I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English'. 85.9% of grade teachers generally agreed with the item 'I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English'. These positive attitudes were also demonstrated in the mean score and standard deviation for this attitude item (Table 7.16) and the overall mean and standard deviation scores were 3.21 and .800, respectively. According to Elabbar (2016) and Najeeb (2013), Libyan teachers do not receive training or professional support and rely only on their university qualification which they think is sufficient for teaching all subjects. In fact, they lack the pedagogical background to teach EFL in Libyan schools. However, in the current study teachers in both grades agreed on the importance of training and professional support in enhancing their teaching practice. These findings are in line with those of previous studies of teachers in Arab countries. For example, Gardiner-Hyland (2012) observed that reading teachers in the UAE were trained with the right teacher training programmes which included developing a knowledge base and theoretical and practical perspectives on teaching reading. Such programmes which took into

account the teachers' training needs boosted their confidence level in teaching reading skills and changing the reading pedagogy instruction in primary schools. Moreover, Hammad (2014) found that Palestinian EFL teachers of middle grades had positive attitudes towards the reading English curricula. Similar observations were put forward by Fattash (2010) who mentioned in his study that EFL teachers enjoyed teaching the reading lessons and topics in the English course books. Comparable observations were made by Pathan and Marayi (2016) in their research on the issues and challenges faced by Libyan schools. The authors asked their study participants who were primary EFL teachers about their feelings on the course they taught, e.g., whether the course was easy to teach, whether the pupils learnt fast and if they found the materials convenient for their learners. Only 9% of the teachers responded positively and thought that the course was very easy because it centred on simple vocabularies, limited grammar, writing, reading, speaking and listening skills. However, the majority of the participants (91%) displayed negative attitudes. Their reasons focused on the syllabus and teaching materials, e.g., "The syllabus is not suitable as time is not enough to complete the tasks and activities in the lessons which forces teachers to ignore listening, speaking and writing activities and the focus is only on reading and grammar", "the texts are long and the topics are boring for most of the students" (p. 26).

The second factor, 'motivations and feelings', consisted of five components, namely 'I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English', 'I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English', 'I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English', 'I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English', and 'It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English'. Teachers were found to be positive towards this factor (Table 7.17), with an overall mean score of 3.18 and standard deviation .677. Most teachers (91%) displayed a positive attitude

with regards to motivating their learners to learn to read in English (item 9); fewer than 9% disagreed with the statement, thus giving a mean score of 3.28 and standard deviation .746. The present findings contradict those of Ibrahim (2015). According to Ibrahim's recent study (2015), preparatory Libyan teachers did not feel that they were able to motivate their learners as required. They also struggled to use an adequate method to teach their preparatory learners the necessary reading skills and to get them to participate in their class. Similar results were reported by Pathan and Marayi (2016) who explained that EFL Libyan teachers found it difficult to challenge and encourage their pupils to acquire the necessary reading skills and read in English. Moreover, the participants explained that most of the learners were not motivated to learn to read in English. Some of the reasons put forward were: "English is a new language for them", "the texts are boring for their learners" and "learners do not have strong aims for learning English" (p.29). Unlike the participants in Ibrahim (2015) and Pathan and Marayi's (2016) studies, the teachers in the current study displayed positive attitudes towards motivating their learners. It is possible that the uprising in Libya has changed teachers and learners' attitudes towards reading in English: teachers feel that they have a responsibility to encourage their learners and make them succeed after the social upheaval. In fact, Aloreibi and Carey (2017) claim that Libya has made significant progress in improving its literacy rate by providing an important budget for education. Additionally, schools are open and free for all Libyans and there are plans to develop further education programmes. Furthermore, the literacy rate has risen from 40% in 1970 to 89% in 2011: this is a substantial increase in comparison to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, where the average literacy rate is around 77% (World Bank, 2013).

8.4 Fifth and Seventh Grade English Teachers' Thoughts about the Reading Strategies they Encourage their Learners to Use to Support the Development of Word Reading and Comprehension (Research Question 4)

8.4.1 Metacognitive Reading Strategies Factor

Research has shown that the use of metacognitive reading strategies enhances the acquisition of reading skills (Karbalaee & Rajyashree, 2010). Indeed, metacognitive reading strategies are vital in L1 as in EFL for facilitating reading comprehension and developing learners' reading strategies. It is the teachers' responsibility to assist their learners with the reading strategies. Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) explain that when learners do not know sufficient reading strategies, teachers need to be able to assist them with the metacognitive strategies effectively in order to develop their comprehension skills instead of focusing only on word recognition. In Griva and Chostelidou's recent study (2017), primary EFL teachers agreed on the idea of encouraging learners to use metacognitive reading strategies in order to comprehend words when they struggled to understand the words or texts. Such an observation was also made in the current study where most teachers agreed on the importance of the metacognitive reading strategies factor in learning to read (overall mean score of 2.76 in Table 7.18). Furthermore, studies conducted in other education systems have found that the repertoire of reading comprehension strategies taught by teachers tends to be narrow (e.g., Ness, 2011; Anmarkrud, Bråten & Strømsø, 2014). Also, the limited teaching of metacognitive strategies is an obstacle to children's proper and full acquisition of comprehension strategies in order to become competent readers. Duke et al. (2011) have pointed out that competent readers have an advantage over poor readers because they master more skills and strategies which can be used in processing passages, in addition to a more thorough knowledge of the language, text structures and the world; all of which assist in the

comprehension of reading passages. Furthermore, monitoring strategies, such as summarising main ideas in a passage strategy, seem to be the main types of metacognitive reading strategies used by good readers when reading instead of memorisation (Person & Duke, 2002). Moreover, learners are required to use a variety of reading strategies, such as monitoring comprehension, summarising and reflecting on the text, when reading for comprehension (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2008). These strategies which require practice help learners to comprehend the passage better and are important in making them independent readers (Pressley et al., 1992). Therefore, EFL teachers are encouraged to take these strategies into consideration when scaffolding comprehension strategies, highlight their importance and frequently and regularly plan their usage in class (Grabe, 2009). There are limited empirical studies investigating teachers' attitudes towards encouraging learners' use of reading strategies (Ellis, Denton & Bond, 2014). By investigating teachers' attitudes towards encouraging learners to use reading strategies in a Libyan context, my study seeks to add to the limited body of research in this area.

8.4.2 Decoding Phonics Reading Strategies Factor

The decoding phonics factor, whose four components were 'isolate phonemes', 'follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units', 'segment phonemes' and 'blend phonemes', was found to be perceived slightly less than the metacognitive reading strategies factor (Table 7.19) where the overall mean score was 2.12. and overall standard deviation .645. All the components in this factor were perceived negatively. Most seventh-grade teachers (see Table 7.5) expressed a negative attitude towards these decoding strategies, indicating that teachers of this grade generally disagreed on the need to encourage their learners to use any phonics reading strategy. A possible reason for the more negative attitude

toward in-word recognition strategies may be the English curriculum in Libya; specifically that for fifth grade where the focus is mostly on alphabet knowledge reading strategies, at the expense of phonics. The seventh-grade curriculum focuses more on syntactic knowledge and vocabulary. Another possible reason for the teachers' negative attitudes towards decoding phonics reading strategies in classrooms may be the level of learners they teach. These are middle grade students where teachers are likely to encourage them to focus on more top-down reading comprehension strategies. In seventh grade, learners' reading should be of a generally fluent level and they should be ready to build on these early reading skills and use them to decode and comprehend texts. This will be especially pertinent at middle grade levels where the learners would have developed their phonics decoding skills and word recognition knowledge further. Similar results were reported by Chiou (2004) who studied Taiwanese middle level EFL teachers' beliefs about reading and language teaching. Chiou (2004) found that a large number of teachers preferred strategies that enhance vocabulary learning and highlight vocabulary building. A very low number of teachers preferred phonics strategy instruction. Similarly, Sarairah (2003) explored Jordanian elementary EFL teachers' beliefs about two major theoretical orientations to reading instruction: vocabulary, grammar skills and phonics strategies. Sarairah's findings (2003) also showed that 31% of teachers supported the phonics strategy model. These teachers believed in the importance of phonic sound emphasis in decoding. Porters' study (2014) suggested that the development of L2 sound/spelling links (through systematic phonics strategy instruction) was slow in French primary classrooms. The studies quoted above together with the current one support the argument for an early start to EFL reading.

8.4.3 Use External Knowledge Reading Strategies Factor

Teachers strongly agreed to the reading strategies ‘encourage their learners to ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text’ and ‘using background knowledge to find out the meaning of words’, thus showing that they were positive towards the ‘use external knowledge’ factor (Table 7.20). The overall mean score was 3.30. Results in the current study are similar to those of Griva and Chostelidou’s (2017) study. The authors suggested that the ‘activating background knowledge’ reading strategy was considered by the majority of the teachers (77.3%) as a “very important” strategy. In addition, 18.7% of the teachers studied believed that students should draw on prior knowledge and previous experience to facilitate their acquisition of new knowledge. Half of the teachers (50%) showed a negative attitude towards ‘asking and answering questions’ strategy while performing a task. There were significant differences between the primary school teachers and other grade teachers who recommended using it in the text. Bamanger and Gashan (2014) conducted a study of Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching reading strategies. Their study revealed that there was a positive correlation between what Saudi EFL teachers thought about guiding reading strategies and their actual classroom practices. One of the most frequently employed reading strategies in a 5-likert questionnaire was ‘ask questions to check the comprehension of the text’ (Mean = 4.55), while the ‘using and activating background knowledge’ strategy was less frequent (Mean= 3.70). The responses were explained in terms of the teachers’ own beliefs about these reading strategies: they thought that asking questions to check comprehension was one of the most significant strategies in teaching reading skills.

8.4.4 Use Tools to Support Reading Factor

Table 7.22 shows teachers' responses to the 'use tools to support reading' factor. Teachers were found to moderately disagree that learners should be encouraged to use this factor (Table 7.21): more teachers disagreed than agreed with the use of the strategies making up the factor. The overall mean score was 2.03, indicating that this factor received the most negative responses to the component variables. In fact, more than half of the teachers expressed disagreement with the use of word maps to develop complete understandings of word reading and the use of external aids and writing to organise ideas. In brief, teachers' views on, and use of, the reading strategies varied. The teachers rated the strategies according to their perceived importance.

8.5 Fifth and Seventh Grade English Teachers' Thoughts about the Techniques for Teaching Reading they Use to Support the Development of Word Reading and Comprehension (Research Question 5)

Before describing in detail the results of the current study related to the teachers' attitude towards techniques for teaching reading, it is essential to explain again briefly the meaning of techniques for teaching reading. Many elements have an effect on the process of successfully teaching reading to EFL learners. One of them is the teaching technique. The technique for teaching reading is a way for teachers to transfer the required knowledge to the learners and also motivate them to learn. Teachers should be creative and be able to select the appropriate techniques for teaching reading. They can use a reading approach as the way they teach (Hager, 2001).

8.5.1 Vocabulary Instruction and Fluency Techniques Factor

Teachers were found to positively favor this factor, whose components were ‘picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words’, ‘systematic instruction in vocabulary technique’ and ‘techniques which promote learners’ fluency by moving from decoding words through their sound knowledge to reading confidently by sight. Interestingly, there was a variety in terms of techniques used for teaching reading in the Libyan EFL fifth and seventh grade classrooms. The overwhelming majority of participants (93.5 %) supported the use of picture cues to assist learners in identifying words. These positive attitudes were clearly reflected in the mean score for this teaching technique (Table 7.22) where the overall mean score was 3.33 and standard deviation .449, revealing that teachers of these grades generally agreed on using these teaching techniques in their reading lesson. All the components in this factor were perceived positively. The widespread use and importance of picture cues were supported by findings from other scholars who emphasised their value to the teaching of reading. According to Elliott and Dupuis (2002) and Verhallen and Bus (2011), this technique could help the learner to comprehend the meaning of the reading text, although they might not be familiar with the word for the picture. Moreover, Hsiu-Chih (2008) studied EFL teachers’ perceptions of using children’s picture cues in the Taiwanese EFL classroom. Results indicated that the illustrations in the children’s picture books have linguistic benefits that help readers to progress in their vocabulary learning, reading, and critical thinking. Additionally, these illustrations in picture books can motivate the young readers to learn the language (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Taboada & Buehl, 2012). More importantly, similar observations were made by Al Khaiyali (2013) who conducted a study measuring Arab EFL primary fourth and fifth grade teachers’ perceptions towards using picture cues in their EFL class in a Libyan school in the USA. He reported that

the teachers favoured using this technique as they relied on picture books in their reading lessons. Results in his study revealed that the use of picture cues was vital because the participating teachers thought that illustrations could assist their learners in overcoming any deficiency in vocabulary knowledge and may also facilitate the use of reading strategies.

In our current research, the questionnaire results revealed that similar observations apply to the 'systematic instruction in vocabulary technique'. The overall mean of 3.33 indicates that teachers displayed a strongly favourable attitude to this component. This teaching technique largely included discussions of the meaning and translation of words. The participants felt that any reading lesson should be tackled using systematic vocabulary instruction. Moreover, the vocabulary knowledge helped the learners to clarify and express their ideas in the lesson. Hu (2009) conducted a study in EFL reading instruction in China. He reported that the eleven teachers he surveyed all agreed that vocabulary and comprehension were important aspects of instruction at middle school level as well. He also found that teachers applied a variety of methods such as direct translation, explicit teaching of strategies, and used a variety of resources and activities to teach vocabulary and reading comprehension. Also, Griva, and Chostelidou (2017) reported in their study that 90.7% of primary and elementary teachers favoured using systematic vocabulary instruction and believed that their learners needed to develop the sub-skill of vocabulary instruction when learning a literacy skill.

One of the issues raised by EFL learners is that vocabulary instruction is not interesting. In many EFL classes, this teaching reading technique is based on the wrong approach of mechanical repetition and drills which were popular long ago (A'lipour & Ketabi, 2010). Therefore, it is very important for all EFL teachers to use the appropriate teaching techniques relying on tools such as visuals and flash cards when explaining new words in a reading text

in order to interest their learners. The learners also could be provided with sufficient time to read for themselves and to figure out the appropriate reading strategies to comprehend the appropriate texts.

When discussing teachers' attitude towards this teaching technique, it is important to also take into consideration word recognition in reading instruction. In fact, Carver (2003) found a correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading words. Teachers may help their learners develop word recognition skills that include the ability to comprehend letter-sound correspondences and identify words more rapidly (Grabe, 2009). Early readers develop sight words gradually which represent core vocabulary elements, then they become automatically aware of them (Grabe, 2009). Such sight words, after a lot of practice and training, are read automatically and fluently, thus developing the learners' reading fluency skills. Sight words are important and need to be emphasised by the teachers. Therefore, teachers could evaluate their learners' level of vocabulary and monitor if they struggle in reading any words by adopting the correct teaching techniques. One diagnostic technique is to ask learners to read a specific word list accurately without interruption (Grabe, 2009). If any learners fail this activity, they should be given extra training, especially on fluent pronunciation and connecting the letter with its sound. Such a teaching technique is vital as it assists learners with their learning process. This important technique sheds light on the last component in this factor, fluency.

Fluency is the ability to read texts quickly, accurately, and with proper expression (Kuhn et al., 2006). Over 90% of participants displayed positive attitudes towards the use and importance of this teaching technique for teaching reading in this current research (table 7.22). These results are consistent with Hu (2009) who reported that elementary Chinese EFL teachers believed that it was crucial for Chinese learners to develop their reading fluency and

indicated that reading fluency was a requirement for learners to speak fluently. Such results are in contrast with Althewni (2016) who suggested that Saudi EFL teachers did not agree on the use of the fluency teaching technique's positive impact on EFL Arab learners. They were not convinced about the use of reading fluency instruction.

8.5.2 Phonics Instruction and Alphabet Knowledge Factor

Attitudes to the items were divided as shown in Table 7.23, where 78.8% of respondents agreed that the 'identifying letter knowledge' techniques were useful. These findings are consistent with the results reported by El-Okda (2005). His research investigated Omani EFL training teachers' beliefs about a set of decisions made by themselves and involving teaching early grade literacy. Results suggested that the majority of the participants thought that young children need to be taught the alphabet from the very beginning. Additionally, those teachers believed that delaying the use of this teaching technique may impede the entire EFL learning process. However, the attitudes displayed to the 'systematic instruction in phonics' technique tended to be negative: 67.5 % of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to the use and importance of this teaching technique. A similar observation can be made for the 'systematic instruction in phonemic awareness' technique, with 65.3% of respondents either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with its use and importance. These results were also backed up by the systematic observations and qualitative results which revealed an overall lack of both phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction. According to Markus (2008), teachers should focus on phonetic accuracy in EFL teaching. Moreover, the teachers' negative attitudes in our current study are in contrast with Griva, Chostelidou & Tsakiridou's study (2011). These authors reported that EFL Greek teachers showed significant interest in teaching phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction. In both grades, Libyan

learners need to acquire the ability to decode the letters of the alphabet and learn how to sound them out. Research suggests that acquiring the alphabetic principle is best supported by systematic phonics. Libyan teachers need support in recognizing the importance of this technique.

8.5.3 Nonsense Words and Word Shapes Techniques Factor

Many children struggle with reading in primary grades until they move to middle and secondary levels where they begin to use comprehension reading strategies. As they move to upper grades, more advanced recognition skills are needed. Multi-syllabic words need decoding into many small ‘word parts’ and putting them together. Such word parts are like nonsense words (mul-ti-pli-ca-tion). A study carried out by Diliberto, Beattie, Flowers and Algozzine (2008) found that learners who were instructed by their teachers to practice syllabication skills, for example reading and spelling pseudo-words, progressed in their decoding skills and reading faster than the other learners who were not instructed using nonsense words. In the current study, teachers of both grades viewed the instruction of ‘nonsense words and word shapes reading techniques’ negatively, with the fifth grade teachers displaying more negative attitudes towards these two decoding techniques for teaching reading. Such an attitude can be an obstacle to the successful teaching of reading skills (Al-Beckay et al., 2015). In the current study, it was found that teachers negatively perceived this reading attitude factor (Table 7.24): more teachers disagreed than agreed, and the overall mean score was 1.87. As to the component variables, almost ninth of the teachers expressed disagreement with the use of both real words and nonsense words (pseudo-words) to enhance readers’ decoding and the use of word shapes to aid word recognition. A possible reason for the more negative attitude toward this teaching technique is that these teachers

might find it difficult to instruct their learners to practice syllabication skills through spelling pseudo-words. This is because they teach learners who are themselves learning to read English as a second language for the first time and they may, in particular, struggle to decode these specific nonsense words that heavily rely on consonants meaning they may overlook vowels, transfer Arabic patterns into English passages or mistake words. This is due to the fact that the Arabic decoding process cannot occur by direct translation of spelling to pronunciation. All of these difficulties may pose a problem and affect their attitude towards using such teaching techniques.

It is worth mentioning that the area of research focusing on EFL Libyan teachers' attitude toward these techniques for teaching reading is scarce. Research done by Althewini (2016) in Saudi Arabia found that teachers agreed to use tools such as graphic organisers to illustrate how text structures worked and created activities to instruct their learners on text structure, illustrating and practicing different types of structures and recognising how some words signal text organisation.

To conclude, results show that this factor obtained the least score for disagreement among all previous factors (Table 7.24). These findings could be explained in terms of the teachers' heavy encouragement on vocabulary instruction and picture cues teaching techniques at the expense of the wide range of reading techniques.

8.6 Differences in attitudes, reading strategies, and teaching techniques between Fifth and Seventh Grade Teachers in a Libyan Context (Research Question 6)

As the results of the two independent samples t-tests reveal, there was no significant difference between the two groups of teachers in terms of self-reported attitudes towards reading. Both groups of teachers displayed positive attitudes towards the factors ‘confidence and training’ and ‘motivation and feelings’. This is in line with a recent study carried out by McIlwraith and Fortune (2016). The authors collected data on the attitudes of teachers working with different age groups. They reported that all teachers from grades 1-12 felt confident about being a teacher and believed that they worked hard and were good at their jobs. Most of the teachers in McIlwraith and Fortune’s study (2016) felt confident in their knowledge of their subject, their interest and rapport with their learners, and in assisting their EFL learners to comprehend the language. They were also familiar with their learners’ needs and tried to motivate and interest their learners.

As noted in the previous chapter, the fifth and seventh grade figures varied on the basis of the reading strategies and techniques for the teaching reading factors. With regards to the reading strategies, Rupley and Logan (1985) reported that the beliefs of primary and middle grade teachers on the use of specific decoding phonics strategies (e.g., recognition of sounds) differed significantly with respect to grade groups. Middle grade teachers who believed in the importance of comprehension reading were less likely to value reading strategies that focus on decoding. Interestingly, in the current study the results of the independent samples t-tests indicated that the mean scores of the two groups were significantly different for the reading strategies factors in Section C: metacognitive reading strategies, decoding phonics and use of external knowledge reading strategies. Bamanger and Gashan (2014) found that EFL school

teachers believed that metacognitive strategies were the most important strategies in reading comprehension while the linguistic category was the least important in reading comprehension. These observations differ from Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005) who found that primary teachers in their study displayed a highly positive attitude towards both decoding and meaning-based reading instruction. However, the teachers' metacognitive knowledge was not strong overall. Thus, although teachers appeared to acknowledge the importance of metacognitive reading strategies in the process of learning to read, they did not necessarily have the requisite knowledge to use them or promote their use. Results in our current study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two grades for the 'vocabulary words instruction and fluency' techniques factor. As for the 'phonics instruction and identifying letter knowledge' techniques for teaching reading factors, a statistically significant difference between the two grades was found. Findings from this thesis suggested that fifth grade teachers were more positive than their seventh-grade counterparts in using such teaching techniques. Griva, Chostelidou and Tsakiridou (2011) who studied L2 reading beliefs among Greek teachers found that the majority of primary teachers showed significant interest in teaching phonemic awareness instruction such as the 'detection of the same phonemes in different words', 'rhyme awareness' and 'change/add a sound in a word' and believed that they were the basic components in language learning. Some studies have explored the role of phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction in teaching EFL students to read English (Chien & Chen, 2002; Liaw, 2003; Leou & Huang, 2006). In the current study, teachers of both grades viewed the 'teaching nonsense words and word shapes reading techniques' negatively, with the fifth grade teachers displaying more negative attitudes towards non sense techniques for teaching reading. Such an attitude can be an obstacle to the successful teaching of reading skills. Indeed, according

to Al-Beckay et al. (2014), “[n]onsense words are more useful since teachers feel free to create as many words as they can to show the difference. When teaching the difference between [f] and [v], teachers can use nonsense pairs such as fat/vat, far/var, sefen/seven, etc. However, it is much more effective when these problematic sounds are taught in context” (p.6).

In sum, the major factors which reveal a difference between fifth and seventh grade teachers could be attributed primarily to the learner’s levels, but also the teachers’ training experiences and the teachers’ existing knowledge and awareness of decoding strategies, metacognitive strategies and use of external knowledge reading strategies. Fifth grade learners, who are around ten years old, are regarded as word level readers, typically being exposed to individual words only. However, these learners are expected to be encouraged to use some reading comprehension strategies beyond the word level to get to the big picture. Some of the reading strategies that could demonstrate ways learners can comprehend words in sentences are predicting the meaning of words, using background knowledge, interpreting pictures and making connections. Moreover, they could be taught vocabulary and inference making (higher-level) strategies for understanding the meaning of words, such as making deductions from the word-form, linking to cognates, translating words to their first language, and organising words in the mind. Instructing these learners to learn new words does not just mean decoding them in print, it includes acquiring new meaning and an in-depth knowledge of the word (Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002).

On the basis of the t-test findings, it can be claimed that fifth grade teachers are less likely to favour teaching metacognitive strategies awareness and encourage external knowledge reading strategies than their seventh-grade counterparts. However, they are more

likely to be positive towards the use of decoding phonics reading strategies. This is confirmed in this study where fifth and seventh grade teachers differed in their attitudes towards the reading strategies they encouraged their learners to use and the techniques for teaching they used in class. However, participants in both grades displayed the same general positive attitudes towards teaching the reading skills.

8.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the quantitative and qualitative results presented in chapters Six and Seven in the light of relevant literature and evidence-based practices. It systematically aimed in addressing the research questions. The observation study revealed that the development of foreign language through systematic phonics instruction was almost absent and that the teachers preferred to teach reading through alphabetic knowledge decoding skills. Such an issue is regarded as a concern because in spite of the learner's ability to decode the words during reading, they are not guided also to use the appropriate reading strategies to develop both skills in reading comprehension. It appears that the teachers lack experience and are unable to match up with the demand they find themselves facing in the teaching of reading.

Interestingly, the chi-square findings from the researcher's observations showed that there was no statistically significant difference across grades. Moreover, the questionnaire study revealed that Libyan teachers of both fifth and seventh grades displayed positive attitudes towards teaching reading in a Libyan setting. Such findings provide an insight into the way in which Libyan teachers of English as a foreign language think about the teaching techniques they use in the classroom and also the reading strategies they encourage their learners to use

in classrooms. This insight is valuable in informing the practices of teachers in Libya and developing our understanding of EFL teaching in Arab countries, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and Recommendations

9.0 Introduction

The current study has examined the attitudes displayed and practices adopted in the teaching of reading in the entire English curriculum in fifth and seventh grades in Libya. Research on the teaching of English reading in Libya is limited. This study therefore fills a gap in the literature and enhances our understanding of the role of teachers' attitudes in promoting reading in English. The aims were: (1) to investigate the time allocated to teach reading in an English lesson, (2) to find out whether teachers differed in their reading practices according to their grade groups, (3) to explore teachers' attitudes towards their teaching of reading in English, (4) to explore teachers attitudes towards different reading strategies, (5) to explore teachers attitudes towards the use of different teaching reading techniques, (6) to find out if teachers differed in their attitudes, reading strategies and techniques for the teaching of reading according to grade. This final chapter provides a summary of the main findings discussed in chapters six and seven, draws general conclusions, examines the contribution of this research to knowledge, provides some recommendations for EFL teachers and policy makers to enhance EFL fifth and seventh grade teachers' practices and attitudes in Libya, discusses the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for future research.

9.1 Summary of Findings

The findings summarised here are based on the quantitative systematic observation data and the stimulated recall qualitative data gathered during the first and second phases of the

study. Thirty-four teachers in 6 private and 3 public schools in Benghazi were observed, and subsequently took part in stimulated recall interviews. Both these instruments were piloted and tested to ensure their validity and reliability. These teachers also participated in the attitude questionnaire.

The main quantitative and qualitative findings on teaching reading indicated that the most frequent techniques used by teachers of both grades were: using systematic instruction in vocabulary technique, picture cues to assist learners in identifying words, techniques which promote learners' fluency, and explicit translation instruction techniques, respectively. Also, the most frequently encouraged reading strategy by teachers of both grades was the sounding out letter names and words reading strategy. During the observation sessions, the teachers encouraged their learners to translate words to assist comprehension and to use the read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy. The stimulated recall interviews also supported these findings.

The third quantitative phase consisted of the teachers' attitude questionnaire. The response rate for the survey, after the elimination of 16 incomplete questionnaires, was very good at 77%. The questionnaire results revealed that Libyan teachers of both fifth and seventh grades displayed similar positive attitudes towards teaching reading, with overall mean and standard deviation scores of 3.22, .625 and 3.18, .677, respectively. Factor analysis was used to reduce the large number of variables represented by the 33 questionnaire items to two teacher reading attitude factors ('confidence and training' factor and 'motivation and feelings' factor), four reading strategies factors ('metacognitive strategies' factor, 'decoding phonics' factor, 'use tools to support reading' factor, and 'use external knowledge' factor) and three teaching reading techniques factors ('vocabulary instruction and fluency' factor, 'phonics

instruction' and 'alphabet letter knowledge' factor, 'nonsense words' and 'word shapes techniques' factor).

9.1.1 Time Spent Teaching Reading Compared to other Skills in an English language Curriculum

The data gathered from the classroom observations in this research suggested that the teachers were spending about less than half (33.10%, 42.7 % respectively) of their English language class periods on lessons teaching EFL reading. In the reading lessons observed in this study, it was found that fifth and seventh grade teachers encouraged their learners to use the following strategies:

1. sound out letter names and words, during 10% and 6.25% respectively of the instructional time.
2. read in alphabet letter forms, during 1.25% and 1.15% respectively of the instructional time.
3. translate words to assist comprehension, during 1.62% and 4.64% respectively of the instructional time.
4. monitor their comprehension, during 0.42% and 4.17% respectively of the instructional time.
5. asking and answering questions (0.37% and 1.51% respectively).
6. background knowledge (0.37% and 0.36% respectively).
7. break down words to assist meaning and construct meaning to comprehend the text, during 0.37% and 1.04% respectively of the instructional time.

In the English language lessons observed in this study, it was found that fifth and seventh grade teachers used these techniques for teaching reading:

1. picture cues, during 5.65% and 3.49% respectively of the instructional time.
2. systematic vocabulary instructions, during 4.17% and 5.47% respectively of the instructional time.
3. letter knowledge identification, during 4.21% and 1.09% respectively of the instructional time.
4. explicit translation instruction teaching reading technique to assist learners' comprehension technique, during 1.90% and 3.65% respectively of the instructional time.
5. promoting learners' fluency teaching reading technique to help learners decode words until they become confident readers, during 1.34% and 2.81% respectively of the instructional time.

It is important to note that there was a lack of time spent on 'systematic instruction in phonics'. This teaching reading technique was adopted only during 0.14% (for fifth grade) and 0.31% (for seventh grade) of the instructional time, showing that the use of this technique in both grades was negligible. The 'systematic instruction in phonemic awareness' teaching reading technique was also hardly used: 0.9% for fifth grade and 0.31% for seventh grade of the instructional time.

Our current research results indicate that very limited time was devoted to reading phonics instruction. The focus was on decoding reading strategies and teaching techniques based on alphabet letter knowledge and sounding out letter names. Interestingly, the time spent on these reading strategies was similar in both grades in spite of the difference in the number of teachers in each grade (18 for fifth grade and 16 for seventh grade). However, teachers of both grades were spending more time on non-reading lessons in the EFL Libyan primary and preparatory schools.

9.1.2 The Reading Strategies and Techniques for Teaching Reading both Fifth and Seventh Grade Teachers Focus on in their English Classrooms and Grade Differences

The observed lessons and stimulated recall interviews of both grades indicated that teachers used a variety of techniques for teaching reading and specific reading strategies. In fact, these teachers tended to focus on certain reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading while avoiding other strategies and techniques. Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicated that fifth grade teachers' most frequently used reading strategies were the sounding out letter names and words reading strategies, read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy and translate words to assist comprehension; these strategies were based more on decoding skills (see Section 6.2.3). However, these teachers also encouraged their learners to use comprehension strategies such as get learners to ask and answer questions to assist their comprehension (see Section 6.2.3). This emphasis on decoding skills may be explained in terms of the curriculum, which places a heavy focus on alphabet knowledge and level of learners who began to study English language at a late stage (i.e. grade five). Similarly, the most frequently observed reading strategies in the seventh grades were the sounding out letter names and words strategy and the read in alphabet letter forms reading strategy. Moreover, the learners were persuaded to use the translating words to assist comprehension strategies, monitor their comprehension, and ask and answer questions to assist their comprehension. Observation results revealed that the following reading strategies were not used by fifth grade learners: isolate phonemes/individual sounds in words, blend phonemes and follow a developmental pattern. The following comprehension reading strategies were not used by the younger learners: recognise story structure, use external aids, use more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts. Seventh grade learners were also not encouraged to adopt these

strategies. The teachers' assistance with the adoption of some strategies such as blend phonemes, follow a developmental pattern, recognise story structure, was minimal.

The findings revealed that both grade groups displayed similar characteristics in terms of the techniques they used for teaching reading in their class, e.g., picture cues techniques, letter knowledge identification, vocabulary instruction, explicit translation instruction, promoting learners' fluency and systematic instruction in morphological awareness.

Interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between the two grades. After combining these reading strategies and techniques for teaching reading into decoding and comprehension categories (see Section 6.2.3.1), a chi-square was conducted to compare the relationship between the grades and combined decoding skills and comprehension skills. Results from Table 6.7 revealed differences between grades in the combined decoding skills: reading strategies ($\chi^2= 18.279$, $df= 20$, and $p = .569$), and combined decoding skills: teaching reading techniques, ($\chi^2= 11.991$, $df=15$, and $p = .680$). Moreover, no significant differences were found for the combined comprehension skills: strategies ($\chi^2= 26.97$, $df=18$, and $p = .079$) and combined decoding skills: teaching reading techniques ($\chi^2= 22.627$, $df=23$, and $p= .483$) variables.

9.1.3 Teaching Reading Factors Eliciting Positive Attitudes

According to the questionnaire responses, teachers displayed the strongest positive attitudes to teaching reading factor 1, i.e., vocabulary and fluency techniques. There was a strong agreement on the importance of this factor, reflecting teachers' use of the teaching vocabulary words and fluency techniques. The preference for this factor is not surprising since the Libyan curriculum places significant emphasis on learning how to decode key

words fluently in a reading passage. After the teaching vocabulary and fluency techniques factor, the 'use external knowledge' factor was found to have a high level of agreement.

Participants firmly believed in encouraging their learners to use such reading strategies, and they thought that some strategies included in this factor such as using background knowledge would assist them in learning new words. A key impact of this strategy is that it shows to the learners that they can engage with the teachers when they ask and answer questions. Of course, such a strategy also shows that the learners understand the words they read. Both grade teachers positively perceived the third and fourth factors 'confidence and training' and 'motivations and feelings'. In general, results revealed that the participants displayed a positive attitude for both of these factors, with overall mean scores of 3.22 and 3.18 respectively. Participants strongly agreed with the items 'I enjoy teaching reading in English' and 'I enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English', but agreed less with items related to feelings, such as being comfortable in challenging learners to read in English. The factors that received the least positive responses were those related to the metacognitive reading strategies and phonics instruction, and teaching alphabet letter knowledge (see Table 7.15).

9.1.4 Teaching Reading Factors Eliciting Negative Attitudes

The three factors that were found to be perceived negatively by Libyan EFL teachers in this factor were nonsense words and word shapes, use of tools to support reading and decoding phonics reading strategies. Teachers from both grades disagreed with the importance of pseudo-words in enhancing readers' decoding skill and also the use of word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition. The use of tools to support reading factor was also perceived negatively by teachers in this attitude

reading strategy factor. The negative attitudes to these strategies could be due to the lack of training programmes for these teachers who were not aware of their importance and application. Both grade teachers disagreed with the use and importance of the following phonics reading strategies: isolate phonemes, follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units, segment phonemes and blending phonemes.

9.2 General Conclusions

This study has investigated Libyan EFL teachers' reading practices and attitudes towards teaching reading in a primary and preparatory school, specifically in fifth and seventh grades in Libya. As discussed in Chapter Two, not all researchers agree on one definition of the complex concepts of teaching the reading process. Teaching reading includes many components and many variables that can have a positive or negative impact on the process. In fact, many scholars have concluded that teaching reading is not a simple one-dimensional process but comprises a number of elements which can be seen as a dynamic paradigm affected by a number of factors, including the high and low processes such as the reading strategies teachers encourage their learners to use, techniques for teaching reading, teachers' cognitions such as attitudes which are based on this reading function itself.

The nuances in findings on teachers' use of techniques for teaching reading, reading strategies and teachers' reading cognitions highlighted in the literature could be explained in terms of the conceptual complexity of the relevant studies in this area and to some extent in terms of the differences in definitions, themes, and measurements, the range of quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods, and variations in sample sizes. All these theoretical and methodological aspects, and other external aspects such as the social context (e.g., Libyan schools and training development programmes for teachers) could also have an

impact on teachers' practices and cognitions more specifically on teachers' attitudes (Isoré, 2009; Althewni, 2016). For instance, Isoré (2009) in the OCED report mentioned that professional development might be one way to improve teachers' promotion of learners' strategies and facilitate their instruction. Most EFL teachers in Libya are not trained for teaching in primary and preparatory grades. According to Najeeb (2013), Libyan teachers do not receive training or professional support and rely only on their university qualification which they believe is sufficient for teaching all subjects. This observation came through in the current study where the participants seemed to lack the pedagogical knowledge to teach phonics instruction. Such a situation may have an important influence on teachers' overall attitude. In other words, the academic background and training experience of the teachers may influence the attitudes towards the use of strategies and techniques for teaching reading in Libyan classes: this was indeed reflected in both the observed lessons and the stimulated recall interviews. Another related finding was that these Libyan teachers use a limited amount of comprehension strategies. Auerbach and Paxton (1997) explained that reading may have a stronger effect when preparation strategies such as 'metacognitive strategies' are adequately used. This was not the case in the current study.

The study results also indicated that the frequency of using specific instructions during reading instruction is linked to the level of the learners, who began to study English language at a late stage (i.e. grade five) and to the curriculum which places a heavy focus on alphabet knowledge. However, the impact of EFL Libyan teachers' attitudes on their actual classroom practice may not be explicit as we cannot match the extent that incorporating these practices within classrooms will be influenced by teachers' attitudes toward specific instructional reading practices. Although, these teachers have participated in the questionnaire, they were treated anonymously. Therefore, it is difficult to match what teachers say with what they do.

These factors may also become clearer if teachers are surveyed and interviewed at various points through the academic year on their reading instructional practice.

The incorporation of Libyan EFL practices in the teaching of reading is vital due to the limited time spent on these reading techniques and strategies in an English lesson. Libyan teachers may need to familiarise themselves with a variety of effective teaching techniques and strategies before they decide to instruct them in the classroom. Therefore, they can cooperate and manage different levels in proficiency of the learners to obtain better results. However, in Libyan classrooms as elsewhere, reading instruction is a complex process associated with many factors and potentially hampered by many obstacles.

9.3 Pedagogical Implications

This study has practical implications as it will benefit the key stakeholders of the educational system including teachers, learners, policy makers and parents. It sheds light on the limited reading strategies that Libyan primary and preparatory grade teachers encourage their learners to use and techniques for teaching reading they use in their own classroom. Moreover, it focuses on the teachers' attitudes toward their own teaching practices. The findings of this research can be used to make significant and vital changes to the current instruction of reading lessons in fifth and seventh grades in Libya. Recommendations have been made based on the findings of this study (see section 9.7). These recommendations will benefit the process of teaching and learning of reading in Libyan primary and preparatory schools.

The education system in Libya requires substantial support and innovation. There seems to be a lack of teacher development programmes since the teachers in this study appeared to be untrained and unsupported. Therefore, the entire educational system requires a shake-up.

Although teachers have positive attitudes towards teaching reading and are keen and motivated, they need to be appropriately trained, bring in innovative practices in their classrooms and use a variety of tried-and-tested techniques for teaching reading and also a number of reading strategies for learners. The results will benefit teachers of reading and EFL teachers' book designers, specifically in their development of suitable learning reading strategies and teaching techniques for reading. Policy makers are responsible for improving the framework of the Libyan education programme for schools to maintain a productive and conducive environment to learn reading.

Finally, this thesis took the limited number of studies on EFL Libyan fifth and seventh grade teachers' attitudes about reading instruction into account and adopted a mixed method approach in identifying teachers' attitude and reading practices. The current findings contribute to the EFL Arab teacher education field and to the Libyan context more specifically by investigating and highlighting EFL teachers' attitudes about reading instruction while associating them to recent research on foreign language reading instruction. Relevant training programmes and professional development workshops can be organised based on the teachers' attitudes and practices observed in this study and in previous ones.

9.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The current study makes a significant contribution to knowledge of EFL reading attitudes and practices among teachers, not only in the context of Libya but also the Arab region. It builds on previous studies into teachers' reading practices and attitudes to enhance our understanding of these practices and attitudes in an Arabic-speaking context. It is different from earlier studies in that it focuses on factors related to teachers' techniques for teaching reading and the reading strategies these teachers encourage their learners to use. The findings

are of direct relevance to the Libyan setting and Arab countries and also the wider EFL context. Most published studies of teachers' reading practices (NRP, 2000; Mckeown et al., 2009) have been developed based on reading instruction in L1 for example, in the U.K (e.g. Rose, 2005). Studies on teachers' beliefs on reading have been conducted mostly in Western countries, such as the USA (e.g., Durkin, 1978; Vaugahn, 1979; Deford, 1985; Ness, 2009, 2011). There have been some studies on EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching reading in non-Western countries (e.g.; Chiou, 2004; Janzen, 2007; Hernandez-Laboy, 2009; Kuzborska, 2011; Porter, 2014; Griva & Chostelidous, 2017). However, no studies have investigated both primary and preparatory EFL teachers' attitudes on teaching reading in Libya. Thus, by providing evidence based on Libyan teachers' attitudes and practices in both fifth and seventh grades, the present study makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge at the EFL level, as well as bridging a gap in the literature on studies in non-Western contexts. At the level of developing countries and the Arab world, few studies (e.g., Sarairah, 2003; Khonamri and Salimi, 2010; Alsamadani, 2012; Hammad, 2014) have examined the subject of teachers' teaching reading and their attitudes in EFL classrooms. The studies that have looked at teachers' reading practice and their beliefs in Libya have focused mostly on preparatory schools. Some studies have investigated either teaching reading in primary or preparatory schools or EFL Libyan teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading, but not both together (e.g., Al Khaiyali, 2013; Soliman, 2013; AlBeckay & Reddy, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015) or investigated teachers' reading practice in universities (Abosnan, 2016; Mohamed, 2016). Consequently, this research contributes to knowledge, being the first study of reading EFL teachers' practices and attitudes among both primary fifth grade and preparatory seventh grade teachers in Libyan schools.

An analysis of the previous literature has shown that empirical studies of EFL teachers' practices and attitudes have mostly either applied quantitative research methods (Hernandez-Laboy, 2009) or qualitative methods (Wyatt, 2015), with few employing both. Thus, this study makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge by using mixed methods, being the first study of both fifth and seventh grade school teachers in Libya to do so. It is worth mentioning here that the questionnaire sample size (292) was large enough to represent teachers from different primary and preparatory school teachers in the City of Benghazi and three other cities. Additionally, this research did not depend on standardised questionnaires developed and used by earlier researchers. Nor did it replicate a developed systematic code observation checklist. The research instrumentation was developed on the basis of the research questions, previous literature in this field and its relevance to the Libyan context.

Although the thesis did not set out to address the issue of teachers' training needs, demographic information of the stimulated recall interviews, systematic observations and questionnaires revealed that it was an important factor in influencing teachers' practices and attitude. This issue needs further investigation.

9.5 General Limitations

The study needs to consider some limitations to lead to a more refined and rigorous future research. Firstly, it is essential to restate that the observation study was a small study, which was conducted with a small group of teachers from 6 private and 3 public schools in Benghazi. The observation sample sizes were small: 16 and 18 teachers from each grade in Benghazi. Therefore, this work may not be generalised.

With regards to the stimulated recall method, it is probably not possible to differentiate between the information captured during the recall, prompted by the recall questions, and the

teachers' thoughts while working on the task as mentioned in Chapter Five. Also, during the stimulated recall interviews, it is possible that teachers would want to clarify their decision-making in defence of their reading instruction, and to justify the prompt questions in a manner that the researcher interviewing them is thought to prefer (Lyle, 2003). This can affect the quality of the data gathered. Moreover, when writing this research and specifically the literature review section, it was challenging to find relevant studies which discuss EFL Libyan fifth and seventh grade teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading. Most of the literature available focused on Libyan learners' attitude towards EFL in secondary schools, the evaluation of EFL students' reading comprehension skills with reference to Libyan universities, or the development of English reading skills among the young Arab (Libyan) learners. As a result, the studies included in this thesis may not provide a wealth of information, thus not giving a complete picture of the EFL teachers' instruction and their pedagogical cognitions in the Libyan context. Moreover, the current research did not investigate how these reading practices have a significant impact on EFL primary and preparatory Libyan learners' reading. In addition, it was observed that most of the participants were females in this research, which reveals that most teachers in Libyan primary and preparatory education in Libya are females. Therefore, one can infer that male teachers in the field of teaching are required. As noted from the 34 observed and interview responses, only four teachers were males. Therefore, results cannot be generalised to both genders.

Furthermore, the social unrest was a major concern in conducting this study. In fact, the researcher had to wait for one academic year to conduct her field work until the schools reopened. The selection of private and public schools was convenient for purposeful sampling and the time chosen to carry out the study put a further limit on the size and representativeness of the data. The timing chosen for carrying out the observation and

stimulated recall interviews studies was an issue because this study was conducted at the beginning of the school year and teachers were still just adjusting to their classes.

9.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Other studies investigating teachers' attitudes in EFL reading instruction pedagogy and EFL reading teachers' cognitions will ideally incorporate a triangulation of different data collection methods in order to present a more realistic and complete picture of teachers' reading practices and attitudes than any conclusions drawn from a non-experimental study alone. An experimental intervention study, for instance, can best be used in order to enhance reading instruction and test the effectiveness of teaching reading techniques and strategies in the context of language classes in Libya. The current study explores the reading strategies encouraged by teachers and the teachers' techniques for teaching reading for fifth and seventh grades in foreign language classrooms without studying any learner characteristics and preferences of these reading strategies. Perhaps this research could be replicated with a sample drawn from teachers at higher educational stages, and/or more advanced schools, which would develop our understanding of EFL reading teachers' attitudes and their reading practices and enable us to investigate whether these grades are affected by similar factors. Further research can be carried out in the Arab region or international contexts about reading pedagogy in L2 and reading teachers' attitudes towards teaching the skill. Moreover, data collection can be conducted with a larger number of participants in each grade. The participation of more teachers will result in a better understanding of teachers' pedagogical practices and teaching reading attitudes.

9.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research study and the researcher's own observations, the following recommendations are made in order to improve the quality of pedagogical practices of reading in primary and preparatory schools in Libya. This research recommends that teachers may use techniques for teaching reading to develop their learners' decoding skills. These techniques include isolating phonemes/individual sounds in words, blending phonemes and following a developmental pattern. Teachers may also encourage their middle grade learners to use reading comprehension strategies such as recognising story structure, using external aids, and using more than one strategy in order to comprehend texts. Teachers are recommended to adopt systematic instruction in phonics and in phonemic awareness knowledge teaching techniques.

More studies are required on EFL Arab primary and preparatory teachers' reading instructions in schools. Such studies would be of direct relevance to education innovators and policy makers. Research specifically assessing staff training and development needs is required. Such research would enable the development of relevant training programmes. Moreover, EFL research focusing on Libyan primary and preparatory schools would help in identifying the reading techniques and strategies appropriate for use by teachers in this specific context. The techniques for teaching reading and learners' strategies are based on English as a first language literature. Further research may provide insights into the use of more techniques and strategies and their association with teachers' reading attitudes in a foreign context.

Finally, this study has been a learning process for the researcher, both as a teacher and as an educator. The learning has gone beyond the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Several transferable skills have been acquired. For instance, the researcher has learned how to

conduct observations and stimulated audio recall interviews in her field of study. In addition, she gained knowledge in the areas of statistics SPSS and NVIVO analysis. Furthermore, the researcher learnt how to write a thesis, present results orally and visually, through forms such as posters, workshops, conferences and the viva. The research journey helped her overcome problems, develop confidence and have patience. At the end of the study, the researcher has gained knowledge about teachers' practices and attitudes in L2.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Teacher 1 (fifth grades)

R: Researcher

T: Teacher

R: Why did you start your class with the systematic vocabulary instruction teaching reading technique?

T: It is a good way for them to practice their vocabulary skills. I taught them the days of the week, basic colours and numbers.

R: Why did you use this teaching technique systematic instruction in morphology?

T: In my classes I like to teach them or I think it's important to focus on grammar with the reading because if they do not know the basic grammar they will not be able to read and write.

R: You relied on picture cues to assist their comprehension in the lesson "My house", for words such as "sofa, chair, table". Why did you use this technique of teaching reading: picture cues?

T: To assist their comprehension: when they see the picture, they will not need any translation into Arabic.

R: I noticed that you used explicit translation instruction. Why was that?

T: To make the reading process easier.

R: What do you think is the importance of the asking and answering questions reading strategy?

T: To make them confident about reading

R: How do you encourage your learners to overcome any reading problem, i.e., what reading strategies do you encourage them to use?

T: I ask them to circle the words they do not know. As a matter of fact, I keep on encouraging them to repeat and repeat until they know the word. I found that they made a lot of progress when they were encouraged to sound out letter names and words since they had not learnt English before.

R: Which reading strategy or reading technique did you find difficult to teach or face any obstacles in teaching them?

T: No, nothing. I thought that the learners were doing a good job and they were responding to me.

المقابلة الأولى:

ب: ليش بديتي الحصة باستخدام تكنيك المفردات اللغوية للقراءة؟

م: هذى طريقة كويسة مش يطوروا من المفردات بتاعهم. أنا درستهم أيام الأسبوع, الألوان و الأرقام.

ب: ليش استخدمتى تكنيك الصرف النحوى لتعليمالقراءة؟

م: فى حصص أنا نحب ندرسهم علم التصريف لأنه مهم فى القراءة لإنهم لو ما عندهم القواعد الصح مش حيقدروا يقرأوا أو يكتبوا.

ب: اعتمدتى على استخدام الصور لدعم عملية الفهم فى درس my house كلمات كنبه, كرسى و طاولة . ليش استخدمتى تكنيك تعليم القراءة الخاص بالصور؟

م: لدعم عملية الفهم. الطالب لما يشوف الصورة ما يحتجش أى ترجمة عربية.

ب: لاحظت إنك استخدمتى تكنيك الترجمة لتعليم القراءة. ليش؟

م: بش نسهل عملية القراءة.

ب: كيف تشجعى الطلبة عنهم يتغلبوا على أى مشكلة فى القراءة بمعنى شنو الاستراتيجيات ال تشجعيهم يستخدموها؟

م: نطلب من الطلبة يديروا دائرة على الكلمات ال ميعرفوهاش. فى الواقع مش بس هكى نشجعيهم يكرروا و يكرروا لعند ما يتعلموا الكلمة كيف يقرأوها. لقيتهم تحسنوا واجد لما شجعتهم إنهم يتهجوا الحروف و الكلمات الإنجليزية ال ميعرفوهاش من قبل.

ب: أى استراتيجية أو تكنيك فى القراءة لقتى صعب أو واجهتك عوائق فى تدريسه؟

م: لا مفي شى. أنا فى اعتفادى الطلبة قاعدين يديروا فى شغل كويس و يستجيبوا لطريقة تدريسي.

Appendix 2

Teacher 2 (fifth grades)

R: Why did you start with the systematic vocabulary instruction teaching reading technique?

T: I think it is important to start teaching them the key words and then some examples to clarify the meaning. After that, we move to the reading passage.

R: Why did you use the identifying letter knowledge teaching reading technique?

T: Yes, because the learners do not know when to use capital and small letter forms. For instance, I teach learners to start their names with the capital forms. The majority of learners still do not know how to read the alphabet forms.

R: As we noticed in the recording that you encouraged your learners to read the alphabet letters rather than their sound forms. Why did you encourage learners to use this reading strategy?

T: Yes, they are both important. Sometimes my learners ask me: when do we read “s” sound as /c/ or /s/? The reading process progresses and develops when they are given phonological awareness instruction.

R: Why do you use explicit translation instruction?

T: Yes, I like to translate the words by letters.

R: As we noticed in the recording and through my observations, you encouraged your learners to sound out letter names and words and to understand how to decode the words. Why did you encourage your learners to use these reading strategies?

T: It helps them to learn how to read a word.

R: OK. What do you encourage your learners to do when they do not know how to read specific words?

T: I keep on repeating or sounding out the letter names during the lesson until they manage to read the words.

R: Did you face any obstacles when encouraging them to use these reading strategies or teaching techniques?

T: Yes, for instance, I taught them the geography of the country today, the directions “south, north, east”, then I merged them together. Yes, I found the terms quite complex. Maybe because it focused on geography. I also find it quite difficult when they deal with new words. They sometimes struggle with reading complex words. I encourage them to sound out letters and words during the class so that they master these words.

المقابلة الثانية

ب: ليش بديتى بتكنيك المفردات اللغوية لتعليم القراءة؟

م: اعتقد إنه مهم إن نبدوا الحصة بتدريس الكلمات و بعض الأمثلة لتوضيح المعنى بعد هكى نخشوا على القطعة.

ب: ليش بديتى بتكنيك التعرف على الحروف الأبجدية؟

م: صح لإن الطلبة ميعرفوش الفرق بين حروف capital و small مثلاً نورى طلابى كيف يكتبوا بحروف capital الأغلبية من الطلبة ميعرفوش كيف يقرأوا الحروف الأبجدية.

ب: لاحظنا من خلال التسجيلات إنك شجعتى الطلبة إنهم يقرأوا الحروف الأبجدية عن صيغة الأصوات. ليش شجعتهم إنهم يستخدموا استراتيجية القراءة هذى؟

م: نعم هما الاثنين مهمات أحياناً طلابى يسألونى امتى ينطقوا حرف (s) ك (c) و لا ك (s) ؟ عملية القراءة بتطور فى اعتقادى لما يكونوا الطلبة عندهم وعى بعلم الفونولوجى.

ب: ليش استخدمتى تكنيك الترجمة؟

م: أنا نفضل نترجم الكلمات بالحروف.

ب: لاحظنا فى التسجيلات و من ملاحظاتى ال سجلتها إنك شجعتى الطلبة إنهم يتهجوا الكلمات و يفهموا كيف يلاحظوهم ليش شجعتى الطلبة إنهم يستخدموا استراتيجية القراءة هذى؟

م: تساعدهم إنهم يتعلموا كيف يقرأوا الكلمات.

ب: باهى ليش شجعتى الطلبة إنهم يستخدموا الاستراتيجية هذى لما كانوا ميعرفوش يقرأوا كلمات معينة؟

م: أنا قعدت نعاود و نتهدا فى الحروف و الكلمات خلال الدرس لعند ما قدروا يقرأوا الكلمات.

ب: هل وجدتى أى صعوبة فى تشجيع الطلبة على استخدام استراتيجيات معينة لتعليم القراءة أو تكتيكات معينة لتعليم القراءة؟

م: نعم مثلاً لماعلمتهم الجغرافيا بتاع لبلاد اليوم, الاتجاهات "الجنوب, الشمال, و الشرق" و بعدها مزجتهم مع بعض لقيت المفردات معقدة شوية ممكن لإن درس اليوم يركز على الجغرافيا أيضاً لقيت صعوبة فى تدريس الكلمات الجديدة أحياناً الطلبة يلقوا صعوبة فى قراءة الكلمات الصعبة. أنا نشجع فيهم إنهم يتهجوا الحروف و الكلمات خلال الحصة لعند ما يتقنوها.

Appendix 3

Teacher 1 (seventh grades)

R: Why did you start with the systematic vocabulary instruction teaching reading technique? For example, you read for them the family members “grandfather, grandmother, daughter, son, sister brother”.

T: Yes, it was like a revision for the preview class.

R: You also used the fluency teaching reading technique. You encouraged your learners to decode words in print until they could read them automatically by sight with good pronunciation. What is the importance of this teaching reading technique?

T: It's very important to teach the learners to pronounce correctly. For instance, I told my learners to read wh-questions with a falling intonation.

R: You also encouraged your learners to sound letter names when they did not know how to read them. Why did you encourage learners to use such a reading strategy?

T: As a repetition.

R: Why did you encourage your learners to monitor their comprehension while reading text? For instance, you encouraged them to check by themselves they fully understand a text about family members.

T: Yes, it shows me that my learners are following the events in a passage.

R: Why did you encourage your learners to use more than one reading strategy to comprehend the text? For instance, you encouraged them to ask and answer questions when they did not know the meaning of words and to use their background knowledge from time to time. So, what do you think is the importance of these reading strategies?

T: Yes, I prefer teaching in this way although it takes a lot of time and its quite time consuming and sometimes I cover topics which are not in the curriculum. But it's worth it.

R: Also, as we noticed from the recordings that you used the explicit translation instruction teaching technique. Can hear from the recording the word “uncle”? You translated into *عمو* and “grandfather” into *جدى*. So you translated all the words. Do you think it's important to use this teaching technique in order to assist the learners' comprehension?

T: Of course. It is important because it assists the comprehension and affects the meaning when I translate the words. I also encourage the learners to translate the words. It allows them to know the meaning and affects their comprehension.

R: Why do you encourage your learners to recognise story structure?

T: Yes, this reading strategy develops [the learners'] reading skill and knowledge. It's very important and they all love it.

R: You encouraged your learners to ask and answer questions about the text they were reading. Why was that?

T: It's all about confidence when they understand the words they can read.

R: Why do you encourage your learners to translate words?

T: Yes, it is sometimes helpful.

المقابلة الثالثة:

ب: ليش بديت باستخدام المفردات اللغوية كنوع من التكنيك لتعليم القراءة مثلا قرئت كلمات أعضاء الأسرة الجد الجدة الابنة الابن الأخت الأخ؟

م: نعم كنوع من المراجعة للحصة الفاتت.

ب: أيضاً استخدمت تكنيك الطلاقة لتعليم القراءة و شجعت الطلبة انهم يتعرفوا على الكلمات المطبوعة الى ان يوصلوا لمرحلة انهم يقرؤهم بشكل اوتوماتيكي و بنطق جيد. ما أهمية تكنيك القراءة هذا؟

م: مهم جداً إنك تعلم الطلبة كيف يتهجوا بشكل صحيح مثلاً قلت للطلبة إنهم يقرأوا WHQ مع falling intonation.

ب: ليش شجعت الطلبة إنهم يتهجوا الكلمات الصعبة بالنسبة لهم . ما أهمية استراتيجية القراءة هذي؟

م: كنوع من التكرار.

ب: ليش شجعت الطلبة إنهم يتابعوا أو يلاحظوا فهمهم خلال القراءة. مثلاً شجعت الطلبة إنهم يديروا تشيك بارواهم إنهم فهموا بشكل كامل النص الخاص بأعضاء الأسرة؟

ب: نعم إن طلابي متبعين الأحداث في النص.

ب: ليش شجعت الطلبة إنهم يستخدموا أكثر من استراتيجية قراءة لفهم النص. مثلاً شجعت الطلبة إنهم يسألوا و يجابوا لما مكنش عندهم دراية بمعاني الكلمات و شجعتهم إنهم يستخدموا خلفيتهم الثقافية مرة مرة فليش أهمية الاستراتيجيات؟

م: ايوه نفضل ندرس بالشكل هذا بالرغم من إنه ياخذ من وقتي واجد و أحياناً يطلعني من موضوع الدرس و لكنه مهم.

ب: أيضاً لاحظت من خلال التسجيلات إنك استخدمت تكنيك الترجمة الحرفية لتعليم القراءة نقدر نسمع كلمة أنكل كيف ترجمتها لكلمة عمو كذلك جراند فاذر لجد. هل تعتقد إن تكنيك القراءة هذا مهم لتعليم القراءة و يدعم عملية الفهم؟

م: طبعاً مهم لأنه يدعم عملية الفهم و ياتر على فهم معاني الكلمات. أيضاً نشجع الطلبة بروحهم يترجموا الكلمات لأنها تدعم عملية الفهم.

ب: ليش شجعت الطلبة إنهم يلاحظوا تركيبية القصة؟

م: نعم استراتيجية القراءة هذي تدعم مهارة القراءة و ثقافة القراءة عند الطالب إنها مهمة جداً للطلبة يحيوها.

لاحظت إنك تشجع الطلبة إنهم يسألوا و يجابوا على النص أو القطعة ال يقرأوا فيها ليش؟

م: العملية كلها معتمدة على ثقة الطالب لما يفهموا الكلمات يقدروا يقرأوها.

ب: ليش تشجع طلابك إنهم يترجموا الكلمات؟

م: نعم أحياناً مفيدة.

Appendix 4

Teacher 2 (seventh grades)

R: Why did you rely on pictures in today's reading lesson? Do you think this teaching reading technique is important?

T: I agree they are very important and help the reader to be interested.

R: The first thing we noticed from the audio recordings is that you started with the systematic vocabulary instruction teaching reading technique. Why did you start with this teaching reading technique? For example, when you explained to them the meaning of family members, "grandfather, mother, uncle, sister".

T: So that they can identify the family members and understand the meaning of those words and then start to read them. They still need to know words such as "father, mother". It is very important to repeat them and they need to understand and translate them. They are all important for the reading process.

R: Why did you use explicit vocabulary instruction?

T: To make sure my learners understand.

R: Also, you used some morphological awareness instructions, for instance, you explained to them the root forms of "I've had" as "have" and some contractions – such as "I've is equal to I have". So why is this teaching reading technique important?

T: It is very important to familiarise the students with the grammar while reading because this affects the reading. When you tell them that all these grammatical rules such as "I've = I have; she's = she is", it makes them happier and more confident in the knowledge that they understand these rules while reading. In fact, till now unfortunately there are learners in secondary school who do not know these basic grammatical rules.

R: Why did you encourage learners to sound out letter names when they struggled in decoding them?

T: It's really important to encourage learners to sound out the letter names because this is what makes them very good readers.

R: Why did you encourage your learners to translate the words into Arabic?

T: Yes, it's very important. It affects their reading comprehension, it assists them in their understanding of words such as “father, grandmother, uncle”.

R: Why did you encourage learners to guess what is coming in the text?

T: To facilitate their comprehension.

R: Did you find any obstacles with those teaching reading techniques and reading strategies

T: No, we are the best school.

المقابلة الرابعة:

ب: عيش اعتمدى على استخدام صور فى درس اليوم للقراءة هل تعتقدين إن تكنيك القراءة هذا مهم؟

م: أنا نوافق إنه مهم جداً و يساعد على اهتمام الطالب بالدرس.

ب: أول حاجة لاحظناها من خلال التسجيلات إنه بديتى باستخدام تكنيك المفردات اللغوية لتعليم القراءة ليش بديتى باستخدام تكنيك القراءة هذا مثلاً لما شرحتى معنى أعضاء الأسرة الجد الأم العم الأخت؟

م: بش يفهموا و يتعرفوا على أعضاء الأسرة يفهموا معانى الكلمات و بيدوا يقرأهم هما مازالوا يحتاجوا إنهم يتعلموا كلمات الأب الأم وإنه مهم جداً بانهم يكرروا الكلمات و يحتاجوا يفهموهم و يترجموهم كلهم لعملية القراءة.

ب: أيضاً قمتى بتدريس الوعى الصرفى أو النحوى مثلاً شرحتى لهم أن أصل كلمة I've had هو كلمة

I have had ببعض الاختصارات فإذا ليش تكنيك القراءة هذا مهم؟

م: مهم جداً إن تهىئ الطلبة على قواعد اللغة خلال القراءة لأنه يآثر على قرايتهم لما تعرفيهم على قواعد الصرف. مثلاً I've equal I have و she's equal she is تخليهم أسعد و أكثر ثقة خلال عملية القراءة. الحق لعن توى للأسف فى طلبة فى الثانوى معندهم أساسيات الصرف.

ب: أيضاً شجعتى طلابك على تهجى الكلمات الى كان عندهم صعوبة شنوا أهمية استراتيجية القراءة هذى؟

م: نعم إن مهم جداً تشجع الطلبة إنهم يتهجوا الكلمات لإنما تخليهم قراء كويسين بكل.

ب: ليش شجعتى طلابك يترجموا الكلمات للغة العربية؟م:

لإنها مهمة جداً تأثر على القراءة بتاعهم و فهمهم للكلمات الأب الجد العم.

ب: ليش شجعتى الطلبة إنهم يحاولوا يفكروا شنوا ال جاى فى النص؟

م: هذا يدعم عملية الفهم.

ب: هل واجهاتك أى نوع من المشاكل فى استخدام أى تكنيكات و استراتيجيات هذى؟

م: لا نحن أحسن مدرسة.

Appendix 5

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A Questionnaire of the Attitudes of Fifth & Seventh Grade Teachers' towards teaching reading in English in a Libyan Primary & Preparatory Setting. This questionnaire comprises **Four** parts. In Part A, you are asked to provide basic demographic data which will help in the interpretation of the findings of this study. In **Part B**, you are asked to describe your general attitude with respect to the teaching of reading, in **Part C** you are asked to describe your attitude with respect to the reading strategies you encourage your learners to use, and finally in **part D** you are asked to describe your attitude with respect to the techniques of teaching reading you use in your class, participation is entirely voluntary. Remember that all responses will be treated confidentially. **Section A: Demographic Data** The following questions will help us to analyse and interpret the findings of the study. **Please tick the appropriate box.**

Question	Answer
1.What is your age?	Less than 25 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50
2.What is your gender?	Male / Female
3.How many years have you been teaching English?	Less than 1 year 1-5 6-10 11 or over
4.Did you attend a teaching training program before you started to teach English?	Yes / No
5.How many years have you been a trained teacher?	Less than 1 year 1-5 6-10 11 or over

Section B: General attitude of reading teachers' towards teaching reading in English.
Using the scale:4- Strongly Agree; 3-Agree; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree, please tick
in the appropriate box to indicate your view on the corresponding items below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.I enjoy teaching reading in English.				
2.I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English.				
3. I would like to take a teaching reading training course in English.				
4. I feel confident with my level of reading comprehension in English.				
5. I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English.				
6.It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English.				
7. As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English.				
8. I feel I have the ability to recognize the specific reading needs of my learners.				
9. I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English.				
10. I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.				
11. I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English.				

18. translate words into Arabic language to assist their comprehension.								
19. predict in the passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text.								
20. ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text.								
21. use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in reading.								
22. recognize story structure: (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes) to assist their reading.								
23 summarize in order to unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole.								
24. use word maps to develop complete understandings of words.								
25. use external aids and writing to organize their ideas about what they are reading.								
26. break down morphologically complex words into parts to construct meaning. In this strategy, learners use their knowledge of high frequency root words to comprehend low-frequency words. For example, a popular root word can be used to understand a more difficult derivative word.								
27. use more than one strategy in to comprehend texts.								

36. word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.							
37. systematic instruction in morphological awareness. For example, focusing on base word and show learners how the meaning changes depending on who is doing the action.							
38. explicit description of the learner's strategy and when and how it should be used.							
39. techniques of identifying letter knowledge. For example, explaining and naming upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.							

Appendix 6

Table 7.5

Agreement and disagreement percentage scores for the two grades

Statement/ Section B	Agreement 5+7	Disagreement 5+7	Agreement 5	Disagreement 5	Agreement 7	Disagreement 7
1. I enjoy teaching reading in English.	93.80	6.20	92.60	7.40	94.90	5.10
2. I am confident that I know how to teach reading in English.	89.70	10.30	91.20	8.80	88.50	11.50
3. I would like to take a teaching reading training course in English.	89.40	10.60	89.70	10.30	89.10	10.90
4. I feel confident with my level of reading comprehension in English.	88.40	11.60	86.00	14.00	90.40	9.60
5. I feel qualified to teach a reading course in English.	86.00	14.00	84.60	15.40	87.20	12.80
6. It is my responsibility to teach learners how to read in English.	86.00	14.00	89.00	11.00	83.30	16.70
7. As a teacher, I would take time after school to tutor my learners in reading in English.	87.00	13.00	85.30	14.70	88.50	11.50
8. I feel I have the ability to recognize the specific reading needs of my learners.	89.40	10.60	87.50	12.50	91.0	9.00
9. I would enjoy the opportunity to motivate my learners to learn to read in English.	91.80	8.20	91.20	8.80	92.30	7.70
10. I would feel comfortable challenging my learners to read in English.	84.20	15.80	83.10	16.90	85.30	14.70
11. I like the activity of classroom teaching reading in English.	85.60	14.40	81.60	18.40	89.10	10.90

Statement/ Section C	Agreement 5+7	Disagreement 5+7	Agreement 5	Disagreement 5	Agreement 7	Disagreement 7
12. Isolate phonemes (recognize the individual sounds in words, for example, the first sound in paste /p/).	40.10	59.90	69.10	30.90	14.70	85.30
13. Blend phonemes (listen to a sequence of separately spoken sounds and combine them to form a recognizable word. For example, the word /s/ /k/ /u/ /l/ (school)).	22.90	77.10	33.10	66.90	12.80	87.20
14. Segment phonemes (break a word into its sounds. For example, the number of phonemes in ship is three (/ʃ/ /l/ /p/)).	25.70	74.30	35.30	64.70	17.30	82.70
15. Follow a developmental pattern in dealing with phonological units i.e. work with syllables then onsets and rimes, then phonemes, and blending before segmenting.	28.40	71.60	27.90	72.10	28.80	71.20
16. Sound out letter names and word parts when they do not know the letter or word.	97.90	2.10	98.50	1.50	97.40	2.60
17. Monitor comprehension in which they learn how to be aware of their understanding during reading.	80.10	19.90	65.40	34.60	92.90	7.10
18. Translate words into the Arabic language to assist their comprehension.	57.20	42.80	64.70	35.30	50.60	49.40
19. Predict in the passage they read by using their own knowledge in the text.	58.20	41.80	25.70	74.30	86.50	13.50

20. Ask and answer questions to comprehend a word in the text.	87.70	12.30	81.60	18.40	92.90	7.10
21. Use their background knowledge to help them find out the meaning of words in reading.	91.40	8.60	89.00	11.00	93.60	6.40
22. Recognize story structure: (i.e., setting, plot, characters, and themes) to assist their reading.	53.80	46.20	10.30	89.70	91.70	8.30
23. Summarize in order to unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole.	52.10	47.90	13.20	86.80	85.90	14.10
24. Use word maps to develop complete understandings of words.	24.70	75.30	19.90	80.10	28.80	71.20
25. Use external aids and writing to organize their ideas about what they are reading.	16.10	83.90	14.00	86.00	17.90	82.10
26. Breakdown morphological complex words into parts to construct meaning.	55.10	44.90	20.60	79.40	85.30	14.70
27. Use more than one strategy to comprehend texts	60.30	39.70	44.10	55.90	74.40	25.60
28. read alphabets.	64.00	36.00	87.50	12.50	43.60	56.40

Statement/ Section D	Agreement 5+7	Disagreement 5+7	Agreement 5	Disagreement 5	Agreement 7	Disagreement 7
29. Systematic instruction in phonemic awareness. For example, teaching the knowledge of blending sounds and their correspondences.	34.60	65.40	59.60	40.40	12.80	87.20
30. Systematic instruction in phonics. For example, converting letters into sounds or phonemes and then blending the sounds to form recognizable words.	32.50	67.50	54.40	45.60	13.50	86.50
31. Both real words and nonsense words (pseudo words) to enhance readers decoding skill.	10.60	89.40	7.40	92.60	13.50	86.50
32. Picture cues (information from pictures) to assist learners in identifying words in reading	93.50	6.50	91.20	8.80	95.50	4.50
33. Techniques which promote learner's fluency by moving from decoding words through their phonics knowledge to reading confidently by sight.	92.10	7.90	91.90	8.10	92.30	7.70
34. Systematic instruction in vocabulary. For example, briefly explaining terms, phrases and definitions.	94.20	5.80	92.60	7.40	95.50	4.50
35. Explicit translation instruction. For example, focusing on translating the vocabulary words from Arabic into English.	55.50	44.50	66.90	33.10	45.50	54.50

36. Word shapes (word configuration) as a reading technique to aid in word recognition.	9.60	90.40	11.80	88.20	7.70	92.30
37. Systematic instruction in morphological awareness. For example, focusing on base word and showing learners how the meaning changes depending on who is doing the action.	50.00	50.00	7.40	92.60	87.20	12.80
38. Explicit description of the learner's strategy and when and how it should be used.	47.90	52.10	25.00	75.00	67.90	32.10
39. Techniques of identifying letter knowledge. For example, explaining and naming upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet.	78.80	21.20	91.90	8.10	67.30	32.70
