Suggesting English Pre-reading Activities for Improving Second language learners' Reading Skill

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Abstract: *Teaching reading comprehension is very essential to develop learners' English language. This paper was concerned with investigating pre-reading activities to improve Reading Comprehension in EFL Classes. It aims at showing the needs of pre-reading activities in teaching reading in EFL classes. It aims also at increasing EFL students' motivation by using these activities in reading comprehension. The study adopted the experimental analytical method. The data gathering tools is reading comprehension test (pre- and post-test) consist of (10) items (4 options for each item) which were distributed (50 copies) to students. The SPSS program is used to analyze the data, by using T-test. As the result of the analysis, it was found that the pre-reading and post-reading activities in EFL classes shouldn't be limited to the development of vocabulary building, but should lead to the internal improvement of reading ability. Understanding the student's needs and coaching the student to become a real learner are the typical gifts that many have developed in earlier pedagogical practice. So, teachers should dive in different activities of pre -reading and then encourage students to these activities as well. In the tight of these findings the study recommends Teachers should encourage students to infer the meaning of word rather than looking them up in a dictionary, and EFL learners should be motivated through using different reading activities.*

إقتراح انشطة ماقبل القراءة لتحسين مهارة القراءة لدارسي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية

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ملخص الدراسة

يعتبر لتدريس مهارة القراءة دور مهم وذلك لتطوير اللغة الانجليزية للدارسين. اهتمت هذه الورقة بالتحقيق في استخدام أنشطة ما قبل القراءة لتحسين مهارة القراءة لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أجريت دراسة هذه الورقه على المستوى الجامعي. وتهدف إلى إظهار أهمية أنشطة ما قبل القراءة في تدريس مهارة القراءة في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وتهدف هذه الورقة أيضًا إلى زيادة تحفيزدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية من خلال استخدام هذه الأنشطة في فهم محتوى القراءة. استخدم الباحث في هذه الورقة المنهج التحليلي التجريبي. تم جمع بيانات هذه الدراسة عن طريق الاختبار (اختبار قبلي واختبار بعد)،اشتمل علي عدد (10) اسئلة (4 خيارات لكل سؤال) و تم توزيعها على(50)طالب. تم تحليل البيانات بواسطة برنامج SPSS باستخدام اختبار (T) وتوصلت الدراسة الي نتائج اهمها. أن أنشطة ما قبل القراءة في دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، يجب ألا تقتصر على تطوير بناء المفردات ، بل يجب أن تؤدي إلى التطور الداخلي لقدرات إستيعاب القراءة. كما توصلت ايضا الى إن فهم احتياجات الطالب وتدريبه على استخدام هذه الانشطة و أن يصبح متعلمًا حقيقيًا هو الهدف الذي يسعي اليه الكثيرون في الممارسة التربوية السابقة. لذا ، ينبغي على المعلمين الغوص في أنشطة ما قبل القراءة ، ثم تشجيع الطلاب على هذه الأنشطة أيضًا. وعلى ضوء هذه النتائج ، توصي الدراسة بأن يشجع المدرسون الطلاب على استنتاج معنى الكلمة بدلاً من النظر إليها في القاموس ، ويجب ان يشجع ويحفز الطلاب على إستخدام أنشطة القراءة المختلفة.

Introduction:

Nowadays English learning is essential because English is the international communication medium. The language is necessary for different activities, including education, politics, and socio-economics. Its importance stated in the Basic Education Core Curriculum. The stated the need for curriculum and teaching process revision to prepare student for real life application in the information age. The teaching should accommodate the learners' development of the four language skills. Reading skill, in particular, is the most important skill in second or foreign language learning.

Statement of the Problem:

The paper concerned with investigating the reading skills at Second year students at English language and linguistics Dept. at University of Sennar .

Reading comprehension problems lies primarily in identifying the conception about reading may also interfere with interactive processing. Some students simply do not know have an ability to use information not stated in the passage to interpret or explain it. It also studies the authentic materials and the nature of authentic answers in addition to the notion that language is inferred from and understood in context. The absence of relevant knowledge structure to make use of top-down processing without technical knowledge. Therefore, the researcher's concern is to pay extra attention to these types of problems committed by students or learners at Faculty of Education.

The Objectives:

1-This study is going to examine E F L students' ability in reading skill among the students of Faculty of Education who are learning English as second language.

2- to compare the learners' comprehension ability before and after the implementation of two types of pre-reading activities, guessing reading content from text and asking pre-reading questions,

3- to show the learners attitudes towards the implementation of the two pre-reading activities

4-Provide suggestion for improving classroom performance in reading skill in an environment where the lack of reference Books for teacher of English is a problem.

5- Highlight the importance of pre-reading in improving classroom performance in reading skill.

The Study Questions:

The research is expected to answer the questions bellow:

1. To what extent guessing reading content from text, and pre-reading questioning activities help learners improve reading ability?

2. Which among the three pre-reading activities (guessing reading content from texts, learning vocabulary before reading and pre-reading questioning activities) can best improve the learners' reading comprehension ability?

3. Are and to what extent learners satisfied with 2 pre-reading activities (guessing reading content from texts, and pre-reading questioning activities)?

4- To what Extent University students find it difficult to read properly?

5- What is the role of the teacher in a reading comprehension class?

The Study Hypotheses:

1. The usage of guessing reading content from reading text, and pre-reading questioning activities help learner to improve reading ability.

2. The use of the three pre-reading activities (guessing reading content from texts, learning vocabulary before reading and pre-reading questioning activities) can best improve the learners' reading comprehension ability.

3. Learners satisfied with the two pre-reading activities (guessing reading content from texts, and pre-reading questioning activities.

4. Most English teachers face difficulties on the usage of pre-reading activities that can make the situation comprehensive and understandable for students.

5. Some second language students, who learn English language, face difficulties in understanding reading texts.

The Significance:

The study dealt with the concept of reading comprehension instruction procedure consisting of pre-reading activities. The pre-reading activities used in this paper consisted of guessing reading content from texts, and pre-reading questioning activities. Both pre-reading activities were used to stimulate the learners' schema in order, the learners could make the connection between their background knowledge and the new coming information in the reading task which could lead them to better reception of the information and achieve the goal of reading comprehension. This study also examines the most problematic area in reading and the features that influence English language learning process. In addition, it may help designing remedial materials.

The Methodology:

The researcher adopts the experimental method to conduct the data, by using pre-test and post-test. The present study will conduct to compare the learners' reading comprehension ability. It was also aimed to determine the learners' reading comprehension ability improved from experiencing teaching with guessing reading content from texts compared with that gained from learning with pre-reading questioning activities. The learners' attitude and satisfaction towards the two pre-reading activities were also determined. The Samples will be fifty students at university level; will recruit to participate in the present study. The students assigned into 2 groups of 25 students for reading comprehension test administered prior to the experiment. The population of the research will be at university level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction:

Studies of pre-reading activities for native speakers have demonstrated the facilitative effects of activating reader's prior knowledge relevant to understanding of the new text. Not only do pre-reading activities prepare native speakers for the concepts that follow, but making the reading task easier and connecting the new concept more meaningfully to prior knowledge, pre-reading activities make reading a more enjoyable task. Pre-reading activities are thus intended to activate appropriate knowledge structures or provide knowledge that the reader lacks. The present study intends to investigate the effects of pre-reading and post-reading activities on comprehension of second language learners.

Sookchotirat (2005) suggested that reading skill is the most important skill as it is the basis of all the success in one's life. Good readers can gain more knowledge of any kind from reading. Reading makes the reader more knowledgeable, have wider perspectives and vision. Reading helps the reader get new ideas leading to cognitive development. When the readers transfer what they read to apply with their own idea a new perspective or idea is created. However, there have been problems in English teaching in all educational levels in Thailand, including elementary, secondary and university level. Graduates of each educational level do not have reading ability they should have. Generally, it can be claimed that the problem was caused by the inadequacy of teaching and learning time. Teaching reading is a continuing process; it should be given continuously from the first to the highest educational level. Teaching reading to learners at very young age is, therefore, the basis for the higher level.

Reading Comprehension:

The reader does this by comparing information in the paragraph to his or her schemata and prior experience. Comprehension is what Researchers in text comprehension have applied an information-processing analogy to understanding how people think, learn, and remember what they read. When a person reads, two aspects of this "human information processing system" continuously interact.

Teaching Reading as process:

Watts and Graves(1994)state Teacher should have suitable steps of teaching reading. There should be a pre-reading step to prepare the reader before they read the whole material. The instructor should provide them with the pre-reading the learners did not have any background knowledge it would be the teachers' responsibility to provide the background knowledge to the learners in order that they could achieve the most comprehension from the reading. The teachers should provide the learners with various pre-reading activities that help them have certain amount of background knowledge about the reading text because the schema would help the reader get better comprehension .

General Views on Pre-reading Activities:

The goals of Pre-reading stage are to activate the student's knowledge of the subject, to provide any language preparation that might be needed for coping with the passage and, finally to motivate the learners to want to read the text.

He say that pre-reading activities elicit prior knowledge, and focus attention. Various techniques have been suggested by some authors to mobilize existing knowledge including the use of pictures, movies and even role – plays. So teachers are free to experiment according to the nature of reading material and inclinations of their classes. In an academic setting, however, more formal techniques might be appropriate, of course different scholars listed different types of pre-reading activities, (Celce-Murcia, 1991) suggests, Word Association, Discussion and Text Surveys.

Word association: tasks generally involve eliciting from the students as many ideas as they can offer regarding the announced subject of the text. Normally their suggestions are written on the board and sometimes arranged into semantic map or "graphic organizer" which indicates how concepts are related to each other.

Discussions: have also been found to activate what students know and through the exchange of information, to enhance their knowledge of the subject. Discussions can be initiated by simply posing questions about the content of the text or by using "anticipation guide" which is a series of statements often provocative in nature, which are intended to challenge student's knowledge and beliefs about the content of the passage.

Nuttal (1982: 57) claims that

" discussion promotes the active struggle with the text and students learn the processes of critical thinking that good readers use. Group work is ideal, because in small groups, even the weaker students should be active and learning. The procedure works in almost every level, and discussion can be in L1, if students cannot manage it in the FL."

Text Survey: is often, but not exclusively, used with longer stretches of discourse, such as chapter from a textbook, the purpose of this activity is to quickly determine the structure of the piece and to identify the key ideas .

Vocabulary Pre-teaching

Authorities in the field of teaching English have rejected the idea of learning vocabulary out of context.

Richards (1985) stated that words are organized into an intricate, interlocking system; therefore, they cannot be learned in isolation without considering their related context.

Now this question arises: What kind of context is appropriate for vocabulary pre-teaching?

Carter and McCarthy (1988) stated that one cannot pin-point a certain treatment or approach to be the best for all situations and for every level of language knowledge. The student's proficiency level and the nature of the course inevitably demand a certain way of treating this component of language.

Explicit vocabulary development and pre-reading activities are very useful when the text or content can be specified. However, what is also required is for teachers to ensure that students use appropriate strategies to increase their recognition vocabulary when confronted with unfamiliar texts.

Pre-reading activities

Pre-reading tasks have tended to focus exclusively on preparing the reader for likely linguistic difficulties in a text; more recently attention has shifted to cultural or conceptual difficulties. However, pre-reading, activities may not just offer compensation for second language reader's supposed linguistic or socio-cultural inadequacies; they may also remind readers of what they do, in fact, already know and think, that is to activate existing schematic knowledge.

Au (1979) state: "The experience-text-relationship (ETR) method of consists of students expressing their own experience of knowledge about the topic prior to reading.   After the students have adequately shared their knowledge, the text becomes the focus of the class."

During this segment of the lesson, the teacher asks the students to read short sections of the text and then questions about the content. The teacher must be sensitive to those text areas that could elicit misunderstandings and work through any difficulties that the students may have. In the final stage, the teacher aids the students to draw relationships between personal experiences and the material discussed in the text stage. This provide an opportunity for each student to make comparisons and contrasts with what they already know and to accommodate the new information into their preexisting schemata. Through this process, student's schemata become redefined and extended. The teacher has the responsibility of leading the students to the appropriate answers without giving them too much information, so the task becomes one of self-discovery and integration.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction:

The present study was conducted to compare the learners' reading comprehension before and after the treatment, i.e. learning reading comprehension through pre-reading activities. It was also aimed to determine the learners' reading comprehension ability improved from experiencing teaching with guessing reading content from storytelling compared with that gained from learning with pre-reading questioning activities. The learners' attitude and satisfaction towards the tow pre-reading activities were also determined. The following research elements procedure was included in carrying out to obtain the research objectives.

The Population:

The population of this study include students at second level were chosen from Sinnar University, faculty of education department of English language.

The Sample:

This includes the samples who responded to the tests. The samples of fifty students at second level were randomly chosen from Sinnar University, faculty of education department of English language. The researcher teach them course (reading-1) through ten lectures he taught them 8 reading comprehension passages with paying extra attention to pre and post-reading activities, then the researcher choose one passages from those he teaches for the Test of the study. Then the researcher gives them the test. The test prepared to measure the subject's reading ability twice, before and after the treatment, i.e., once as pre-test and the other as post-test, respectively They were assigned into two groups of 25 based on the scores sought from the test of reading comprehension administered prior to the experiment, their age ranges between 23and25 years.

Tools of Data Gathering:
The tool was used for collecting data, is a test.
The Test:
The test constructed specifically for the present study consisted of 10 multiple choice test items. Four choices were given for each test item. The test items were written based on 5 reading comprehension stories. The test was administered to measure the subject's reading comprehension ability twice, before and after the treatment, i.e., once as pre-test and the other as post-test, respectively. The subjects will finish the test within 40 minutes. The researcher used simple and clear language to help the students to express themselves and provide the data required.

Validity of the Test:

The test was checked by a group of expert lecturers at Sinnar University in departments of English Language- Faculty of Arts Sinnar and faculty of education Singaa. The face validity was checked. All the teachers agree the test is valid.

Reliability:
A split half method was used to measure the reliability of the test, in which the items of the test are divided into two halves for scoring purposes. For this purpose, the even numbered items and the odd numbered ones are scored separately to obtain corresponding scores.
Techniques of Analysis:
The research was an experimental research. The following research activities were performed in the data collection procedure.
Selecting research subjects and giving the selected subjects an orientation, including the explanation of the research objectives.
Administering the pre-test to the 50 students who were assigned into two similar groups of 25 students. The pre-test was aimed at measuring the subjects' reading comprehension ability before receiving the designated treatment.
Giving treatment (teaching reading comprehension) to the 50 subjects selected. They were all receiving the same lessons, comprising 10 lesson plans. They were divided into two groups to receive a specific pre-reading activity. Then, the researcher had the first group learning reading comprehension with a pre-reading activity (implementing the guessing reading content from storytelling activity). They were requested to guess the story contents from the pictures given and tell the story. The implementing the pre-reading questioning activity, which was given to the second group, on the other hand, the researcher gave a 1-2 sentence brief summary of the story. The subjects were requested to ask questions from the researcher's summary. After the pre-reading activities, both groups were doing the same while-reading activities, and took the same post-reading test.
Giving a reading comprehension test after the treatment, the post-test.
The data obtained from the subject by means of the test was organized and tabulated to be processed manually and by computer. The program, which was used by the researcher, was (SPSS) which refers to Statistical Packages for social Sciences. The researcher adopted an analytical experimental method to conduct the study. Percentages used to convey the statistical information because it is simple for the readers to grasp besides its accuracy and effectiveness

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Introduction
The preceding chapter provided a detailed explanation of how the data were gathered and the instruments used for gathering the data. This chapter covers the analysis and discussion of the data obtained from the results of the test.
Test Discussion

Table (1) Pre-test Result

Result/Students	Students	%
Pass	13	26%
Fail	37	74%
Total	50	100%

This Tables (1) and (2) below shows students' scores the researcher notices the pretest rates very week for example, (37) are fail and (13) are pass.

Table (2) Students Pretest Scores

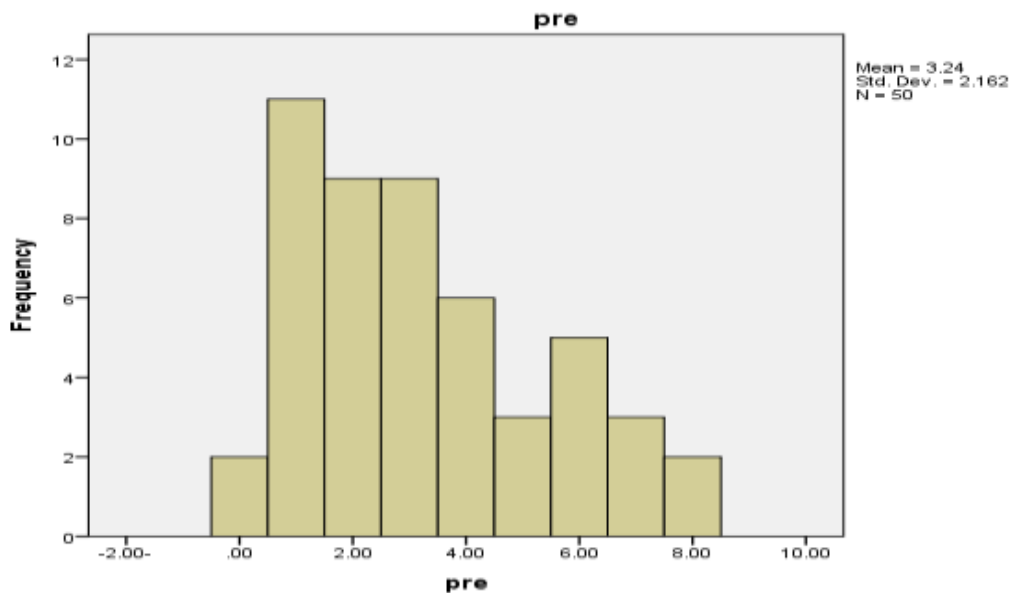| Grades	0.4	5.6	7.8	9.10	Total
Number of student	37	8	5	0	50
100%	74%	16%	10%	0%	100%

Figure (1)

Table and Figure reveal that no Students get scores between (9.10), and there are (37) students fail their scores between (0.4) degree. Also the table show that (8) students get between (5.6) scores and (5) get between (7.8).

Table (3) Post-test Result

Result/Students	Students	%
Pass	48	96%
Fail	2	4%
Total	50	100%

(Table 4) Students Post test scores

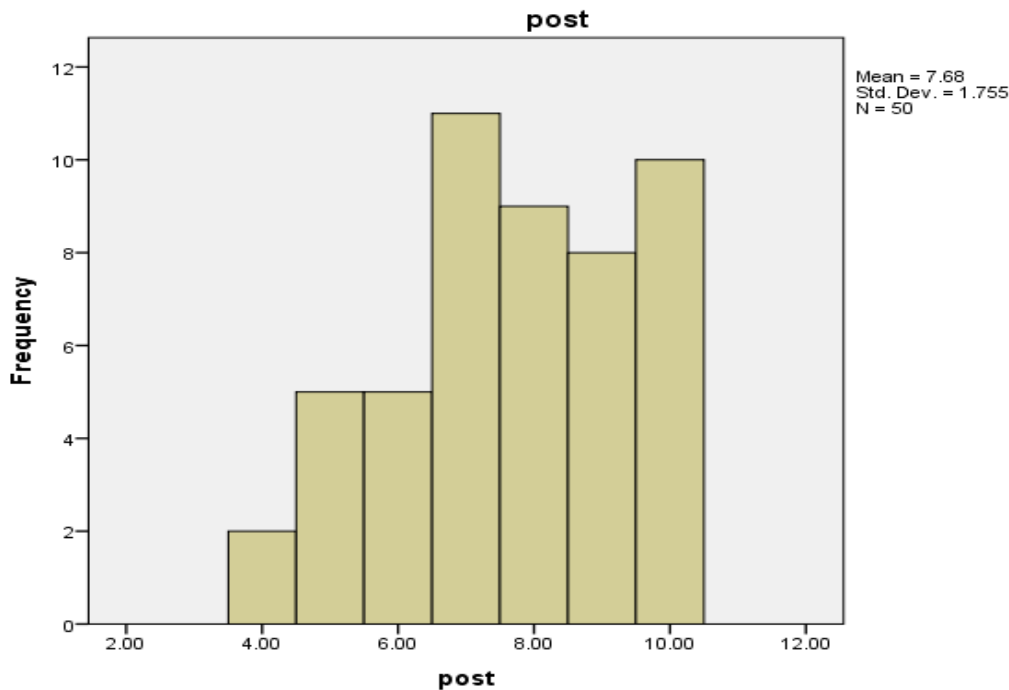| Grades	0.4	5.6	7.8	9.10
Number of student	2	10	21	17
100%	4%	20%	42%	34%

Figure (2)
According to Table and Figure 48 students out of 50 get pass and there are (2) students fail their scores between(0.4) and 10 students get good between (5.6) and 21 get between (7.8) very good. and 17 students get excellent between (9.10). It is clear that the post reading have good effect in students reading comprehension.

Treatment Stage (Post-Test)
The two group sat for the post-test after treatment stage, but after 8 weeks of about 16 hours of classes of treatment program, and at the end of the classes of treatment program, the researcher gave the same group (after treatment stage) the same test but with change in ordering of the questions to avoid any remembering the pretest questions. (96%) had passed after treatment stage at the posttest scoring between 5 to 10 and 2 failed after treatment stage at the posttest scoring between 1 to 4 marks out of 10

Table (5) Post-test result

Result/Students	Students	%
Pass	48	96. %
Fail	2	4.%
Total	50	100%

Posttest students who pass the post-test grades out of 10
Table below shows students grades out of 10 the full marks as the researcher notices in reference to the bellow table the academic rates had increase in relation to the program ,48 students score between 5-10 , which indicates the progress which occur according to the treatment program .And only 2 students score 0 to 4 (4%).

Students posttest scores grades (Table 4:5)
The researcher transfers the students' grades out of word to elicit the students' actual successful result.
Table (6) Students posttest scores grades

Result in word	Pass	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total
Number of student	10	21	8	9	48

9 students get Excellent (10), with comparing of pretest no student get excellent degree, which consider as good indicator the second treatment stage, whereas 8 of students got Very good (8)   whereas 21 of students got good (7-8), if the researcher compare this with the pretest, we can find that, in the pretest only 8 (16%) student get good, which will be consider as a good responders of the treatment program.

Pre and Post-test Statistical Result

Table (7) Total Results of the two Parts of the Test

Section	Pre test				Total		Posttest				Total	
Result	Pass	%	Fail	%	N	**%**	Pass	%	Fail	%	N	**%**
Students	13	26%	37	74%	50	100%	48	96. %	2	4 %	50	100%

Descriptive Statistics of the results:

(Table 8) Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	*P*re	3.2400	50	2.16239	.30581
	post	7.6800	50	1.75476	.24816

Table (9) Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pre & post	50	.704	.000

Table (10) Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1pre – post	-4.44000-	1.55393	.21976	4.88162	-3.99838-	20.204	49	.000

The above tables prove that there are significant results of the pretest and post-test as the mean value scores show. The mean value of the posttest (7.6800) is greater than pretest (3.2400). This indicates that the posttest result shows a significant advantage over the posttest with regard to the grade in the posttest. Apparently, not all students improve their performance from their both tests score. This could be affected by outside factors; however their participation in the class is increase. The test aims to assist the EFL students' abilities in reading English comprehension through both a pre-posttest. The study aims to test students' abilities in reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. The sample consists of (50) EFL students from Sinnar University Faculty of Education- English Language dept. Learners are given test before and after the reading comprehension. The researcher used statistical analysis to know the variation of the statistical function between the samples. The following are results:

Paired Samples Test

Table (11) Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1pre – post	4.44000	1.55393	.21976	4.88162	3.99838	20.204	49	.000

The statistical analysis of table above pretest shows that the learners' weaknesses. It indicates that learners achievement in the pretest before the treatment was (4.6) as the result of the marks of the learners and stander error mean was (.219) while the stander deviation was (1.55) which reflected the learners' weaknesses English reading comprehension. Students found difficulties in reading skill. Most of the learners read the text carelessly and some of them are not able to choose the suitable items in vocabulary to match the meanings in the test.

Whereas, in the posttest students made a progress as the analyses in table showed which indicated that (7.68) of the students in posttest after reading the passage. Moreover,(48) of the students' reading ability improved after the strategies and treatments used through the 56 days after pretest which indicated that the techniques were very useful in reading, in posttest .

The Correlation between pre-test and post-test is (.704) shows that: there is a strong relation between them.

Paired Samples Correlations
Table (12)Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pre & post	50	.704	.000

The value of (T- test) =(20.204) shows that there is a progress within the two tests (pre- posttest) so that improved student ability in reading comprehension . From the above statistical analysis the posttest showed that, most of the sample answered the questions in the posttest better than in the pretest. This means that some progress had been achieved by the learners after the treatments and strategies used to overcome those difficulties.

Conclusion, Findings
And Recommendations

Conclusion:
The results and the findings of this thesis have come up with in terms of the extent to which it has confirmed the hypotheses and the answers of the questions of the study. To sum up, this thesis investigate pre-reading activities to improve reading comprehension of second language learners at university level, besides solving the difficulties which face the learner when reading comprehension. The results reported in chapter four indicate fifty students at Sinnar University, faculty of education.

As an overall conclusion we may say that the pre-reading activities in EFL classes shouldn't be limited to the development of vocabulary building, but should lead to the internal development of reading comprehension ability. Understanding the student's needs and coaching the student to become a real learner are the typical gifts that many have developed in earlier pedagogical practice. So, teachers should dive in different activities of pre-reading and then encourage students to these activities as well. Teachers and learners showed positive attitudes towards these activities and are all aware of the numerous benefits of these activities. For students the presence of these activities in the classroom will make reading comprehension more enjoyable and help them to practice this skill better than they do in the reading –out-door (intensive reading) where they do not have such an opportunity.

Findings:
In the light of the analysis the study has reached the following findings:
a. Crowded classes don't allow teacher to evaluate the techniques used in reading class.
b. The time given to teach reading comprehension in University level is not enough
c. Using pre-reading activities for example pictures and videos enable students to be familiarized with authentic materials.
d. Explaining the meaning of new words is good techniques for encouraging learners to read the text.
e. Reading aloud is one of the types of reading that can be used to check the students' pronunciation.
f. Techniques used in teaching reading comprehension need to be evaluated.
g. Good comprehension instruction includes both explicit instruction in specific comprehension strategies and a great deal of time and opportunity for actual reading, writing, and discussion of text.
h. Teachers should use CDs - room, projectors and flash card in teaching reading comprehension in EFL classes to help students in learning.

Recommendations:
a. Teachers should stimulate students to infer the meaning of word rather than looking them up in a dictionary.
b. Teacher should care of literature and short stories to improve student's reading skills.
c. EFL learners should be motivated through using different reading activities.
d. Students should be encouraged to read extensively outside the classroom.
e. Pair work activities should be assessed through learners' production.
f. Universities should be equipped by English labs to increase reading performance.

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