



The Effect of Mother Tongue and Translation in Reading Comprehension

Maryoumah Ateeyah Alduweebi* and Samir Al-rubshi

Department of English, Faculty of Human Sciences-Girls, Alasmarya Islamic University, Zliten, Libya.

*E-mail: mryomaatiaadweby@gmail.com

تأثير اللغة الأم والترجمة على استيعاب وفهم النصوص المكتوبة

مريومة عطية الذويبي* وسمير الرشي

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية العلوم الإنسانية للبنات، الجامعة الأسمرية الإسلامية، زليتن، ليبيا.

Abstract

Reading comprehension heavily relies on the self-study of learners. This research aimed to determine the reasons behind the challenges learners face, specifically the effects of their mother tongue and the use of translation on comprehending written texts. The study sought to identify problems and gaps in reading comprehension strategies, to address the lack of effective translation techniques, and to provide learners with methods to minimize the influence of their mother tongue when learning a second language. A questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 52 EFL Libyan female students at Alasmarya Islamic University in the Faculty of Human Sciences for Girls, with ages ranging from 22 to 26 years old, who were in their seventh and eighth semesters. Additionally, interviews were conducted with four English teachers from the faculty. Data collected from the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed systematically. The findings indicated several reasons why students struggle to comprehend written texts effectively. These include: a lack of practice in reading strategies at home, neglecting the use of reading comprehension strategies, failing to take initiative in improving their reading skills, viewing learning English merely as a means to obtain certification and scores, not engaging deeply with the language, not becoming more academically inclined by using available websites and applications, and not considering their future careers as teachers.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Translation, Mother Tongue.

الملخص

تعتمد مهارات الفهم القرائي بشكل كبير على الدراسة الذاتية للمتعلمين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الأسباب وراء التحديات التي يواجهها المتعلمون، وخاصة تأثير لغتهم الأم واستخدام الترجمة في فهم النصوص المكتوبة. سعت الدراسة إلى تحديد المشاكل والفجوات في استراتيجيات الفهم القرائي، ومعالجة نقص التقنيات الفعالة للترجمة، وتزويد المتعلمين بأساليب لتقليل تأثير لغتهم

الأم عند تعلم لغة ثانية. تم توزيع استبيان على عينة من 52 طالبة ليبية تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعة الأسمرية الإسلامية في كلية العلوم الإنسانية للبنات، تتراوح أعمارهن بين 22 و26 عامًا، وكن في الفصلين السابع والثامن. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم إجراء مقابلات مع أربعة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية من الكلية. أشارت النتائج إلى عدة أسباب تجعل الطلاب يواجهون صعوبة في فهم النصوص المكتوبة بشكل فعال. تشمل هذه الأسباب: نقص الممارسة في استراتيجيات القراءة في المنزل، إهمال استخدام استراتيجيات الفهم القرائي، عدم اتخاذ المبادرة في تحسين مهارات القراءة، رؤية تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مجرد وسيلة للحصول على الشهادات والدرجات، عدم الانغماس بعمق في اللغة، عدم التوجه نحو التعلم الأكاديمي من خلال استخدام المواقع والتطبيقات المتاحة، وعدم التفكير في مستقبلهم كمعلمين.

الكلمات الدالة: الفهم القرائي، الترجمة، اللغة الأم.

1. Introduction

English is one of the most widely used languages globally and serves as a second language for many. Learners can acquire English effectively, sometimes surpassing their proficiency in their first language, depending on their learning methods.

The mother tongue, or first language, is acquired from birth and is crucial for social identity and educational development. Its influence is significant during language acquisition, as children primarily develop linguistic skills through interactions with their caregivers (Yadav, 2019).

Reading plays a central role in educational, professional, recreational, and social contexts. It is essential for social and economic advancement and enhances overall language proficiency (McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Snow et al., 1998; and Karshen & Brown, 2007). Reading is a complex skill that allows individuals to update their knowledge and enjoy information. It enables independent practice and fosters understanding of others' thoughts and contributions (Al-Ashab & Lakshmi, 2013). Bardos (2000) emphasizes that reading should not be seen merely as a mechanical process. He identifies four levels of reading in a foreign language: letter recognition, decoding meanings, understanding grammar, and text interpretation. Comprehension depends on language proficiency, cultural competence, background knowledge, and interests.

Beginning readers may vary significantly in their decoding abilities. However, language comprehension often develops early, becoming increasingly vital for overall reading comprehension as children improve their decoding skills (Nagy & Scott, 2000).

Translation is a key tool in communication and education, facilitating cultural exchanges. It is typically unidirectional, moving from a source to a target language (Catford, 1978). Newmark (1988) notes that translators face various linguistic challenges, including their own competence and knowledge of grammar and style. Many students rely on translating texts into their first language, which can lead to misunderstandings based on their interpretations rather than the author's intent. Brown (2007) defines transfer as the influence of the native language on a second language, while Vannestål (2009) describes



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interference as the contact between native and foreign languages. So, this study investigates the effects of the mother tongue and translation in reading comprehension.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Despite previous research, the challenges posed by the mother tongue and translation on reading comprehension remain unresolved. Learners often struggle to apply effective reading strategies and translation techniques. This study aims to explore the relationship between the mother tongue, translation, and reading comprehension, identifying methods to mitigate these issues and enhance understanding of the author's intended meaning.

1.2. Research Questions

- Why do the learners face problems on reading comprehension even they know its strategies?
- How can the learners use the techniques of translation effectively to comprehend the text while reading it?
- How can the learners reduce the effects of their mother tongue to comprehend the written texts?
- What are the ways to prevent using the mother tongue and self-understanding to comprehend the written texts?

1.3. Reasons for Choosing this Topic

- To investigate a significant problem faced by students in their field of study.
- To identify gaps in learners' abilities while reading written texts.
- To address the lack of understanding of texts as intended by the authors.
- To raise awareness among reading instructors about these challenges during teaching.

1.4. Objectives and Aims of the Study

- 1) To identify challenges and gaps in the application of reading comprehension strategies.
- 2) To enhance the effective use of translation techniques through targeted guidance.
- 3) To assist learners in minimizing the influence of their mother tongue when learning English.
- 4) To provide techniques for avoiding reliance on the mother tongue in understanding written texts.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study aims to examine the effects of the mother tongue on translating written texts and comprehending the author's meaning, rather than relying on the direct translations of words. It will help learners avoid conflating their first language with the intended meanings in English.

1.6. Scope/Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in Zliten, Libya at Alasmarya Islamic University, specifically within the Faculty of Human Sciences for Girls, English Language Department. It involved approximately 52 female students from the seventh and eighth semesters during the autumn 2022 and spring 2022 terms, with an average age of 22-26 years. Moreover, four expert tutors in the same faculty, two tutors who taught both translation and reading comprehension courses, one tutor who taught only translation course, and the forth who taught only reading comprehension course.

1.7. Hypothesis of the Study

Students often misunderstand written texts due to inadequate comprehension skills and neglect of reading strategies. Many learners struggle to answer questions on reading exams—both online and on paper—due to self-understanding, limited vocabulary, and insufficient reading practice. Although most students have internet access to improve their reading skills, they do not utilize it outside of exam preparation. Moreover, students often fail to use long breaks to enhance their English skills, relying solely on lecture content. Also, many students do not view English as significant in their lives, seeing it merely as a certification requirement. Future teaching aspirations are often overlooked, leading to a lack of concern for their English proficiency.

1.8. Definitions of Terms

Mother Tongue: The first language one learns to speak as a child (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries).

Translation: The process of converting written or spoken content into another language (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries).

Reading Comprehension: The ability to read text, process it, and understand its meaning, relying on word reading and language comprehension (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries).

Language Transfer: The influence of a first language on the acquisition of a new language (Lexico).

Interference: The action or process of interfering with language learning (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

EFL: English as a Foreign Language, referring to learning English in a non-English-speaking country (Reading Horizons).

L1: First Language, the initial language learned by an individual (Macmillan Dictionary).

2. Literature Review

This review explores key research related to the impact of the mother tongue and translation on reading comprehension, providing a foundation for the current study.



2.1. Previous Studies

Several studies have examined the relationship between translation, mother tongue, and reading comprehension in EFL learners. Nourinezhad and Kashefian-Naeeni (2020) examined the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners and lecturers towards translation as a tool for enhancing reading comprehension. Their findings suggest that translation activities positively impact reading comprehension in L2 classrooms, supporting the idea that incorporating the mother tongue can facilitate learning in ESL/EFL contexts.

Whereas Abu Abeeleh et al. (2021) identified reading comprehension problems among EFL students at Ajloun National University. A questionnaire revealed significant challenges related to text complexity, anxiety, and word recognition, with female students facing greater difficulties than males. While Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) investigated reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners in higher education. Their survey of 100 Arab students highlighted a significant inability to recognize different types of texts, which adversely affects both language proficiency and academic performance.

In addition, Sayer (2013) explored the connection between misunderstanding and language comprehension. The study identified inconsistencies in how linguistic messages are interpreted, emphasizing the role of emotional factors in comprehension. Moreover, a study at the University of Illinois (Beckman et al.) compared sentence processing in L2 learners and native speakers. Findings indicated that L2 learners utilize syntactic information similarly to native speakers, suggesting that comprehension strategies differ primarily in degree rather than kind. Furthermore, Farahani & Siyyari (2015) investigated the effects of teaching reading comprehension skills on the translation quality of Iranian EFL learners. Although improvements in translation quality were noted, the correlation with reading comprehension skills was not significant, highlighting a gap in understanding the neurocognitive aspects of reading.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Importance of Reading:

Reading is essential for language proficiency and academic success. It encompasses both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (writing and speaking) skills. Comprehension difficulties often stem from insufficient vocabulary knowledge and prior knowledge, affecting EFL learners' ability to connect new information with existing knowledge (Nozen et al., 2017; and Vacca, 2002).

2.2.2. Reading Comprehension:

Bardos (2000) emphasizes that reading involves not just recognition but interpretation and understanding. Key components of reading comprehension include recognizing letters, decoding meanings, understanding grammar, and interpreting texts.

2.2.3. Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension

Numerous factors influence reading comprehension. Internal factors include the reader's cognitive abilities, while external factors encompass environmental conditions and parental support. Motivation and anxiety also play significant roles in comprehension outcomes (Dennis, 2008; and Hollowell, 2013).

2.2.4. Reading Strategies

Effective reading strategies are crucial for enhancing comprehension. Nuttall (2000) categorizes these strategies into skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading, each serving different purposes in text engagement.

2.2.5. Challenges and Considerations

Reading comprehension presents challenges for many students, often linked to internal factors such as complex sentence structures and ineffective reading strategies (Duarte & Barner, 2005; and Barfield, 1999). External factors, including home and school environments, also significantly impact comprehension abilities (Freeman & Long, 1990).

2.2.6. Theories of Reading

Four major theories inform our understanding of reading

Traditional View: This perspective emphasizes stimuli-response connections but often overlooks the active engagement of the reader (Dole et al., 1991).

Cognitive View: This theory highlights the importance of integrating prior knowledge with text information to enhance comprehension (McCormick, 1994).

Schema Theory: Proposed by Rumelhart (2017), this theory focuses on cognitive structures that organize and interpret information, allowing readers to make sense of new material based on existing knowledge.

Metacognitive View: According to Zhang (2001), this perspective stresses the importance of awareness and control over one's cognitive processes during reading, enabling readers to self-regulate and improve their comprehension strategies.

2.2.7. Strategies for Enhancing Comprehension:

To improve reading comprehension, various instructional strategies can be employed, including reciprocal teaching, visualization, and ongoing assessments (Pressley, 2002). These strategies empower learners to develop independent comprehension skills.

This literature review examined significant research regarding the impact of the mother tongue and translation on reading comprehension. The findings suggest that translation can positively influence reading comprehension for EFL learners, as evidenced by Nourinezhad and Kashefian-Naeeni (2020). Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly concerning text complexity, anxiety, and difficulties in text recognition, as



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highlighted by Abu Abeeleh et al. (2021) and Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018). Furthermore, emotional factors significantly affect comprehension, indicating a need for more nuanced instructional approaches that account for these influences (Sayer, 2013).

The review also uncovered gaps in understanding the relationship between reading comprehension and translation quality, as noted by Farahani & Siyyari (2015). This highlights the necessity for further exploration into the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension. Theoretical frameworks, such as cognitive theory and schema theory, underscore the importance of integrating prior knowledge and fostering reader engagement throughout the comprehension process.

By synthesizing these findings, this review emphasizes the critical need to address the influence of the mother tongue and the effectiveness of translation strategies in enhancing reading comprehension. This sets the stage for the current study, which aims to investigate these dynamics in greater depth, ultimately contributing to improved educational practices for EFL learners.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the reading comprehension challenges faced by EFL students.

3.1. Participants

The study involved 52 students from the Faculty of Human Sciences for Girls at Alasmarya Islamic University in Zliten, including those in their seventh and eighth semesters during the Autumn 2022 semester, as well as seventh-semester students from Spring 2022. Additionally, four expert tutors in the same faculty, two tutors who taught both translation and reading comprehension courses, one tutor who taught only translation course, and the forth who taught only reading comprehension course.

3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 12 closed-ended statements and five open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions utilized a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," allowing for quantitative analysis. The open-ended questions aimed to gather qualitative insights into students' perspectives on reading comprehension.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed systematically. The questionnaire responses were categorized into empirical values corresponding to "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Uncertain," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." Each question was analyzed individually.

The interviews yielded diverse responses, with each question generating its own unique set of answers. These responses were analyzed through a thematic discussion to identify common patterns and insights

4. Findings & Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire data and interviews revealed significant insights into the reading comprehension challenges faced by students studying English as a foreign language.

4.1. Findings and Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

This section provides an analysis of data gathered through a questionnaire distributed to 52 students at the Faculty of Human Sciences for Girls at Alasmarya Islamic University in Zliten. The participants consisted of students in their seventh and eighth semesters during the Autumn 2022 term, as well as seventh-semester students from Spring 2022. The questionnaire included 12 closed-ended statements with response options that ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," in addition to five open-ended questions aimed at capturing perspectives related to the research hypotheses.

4.1.1. Results of Closed-ended Questionnaire:

A closed-ended question is one in which the researcher offers participants a set of predefined response options for their answers. This format generally consists of 12 statements for evaluation.

1) I apply reading strategies wrongly to comprehend passages and written texts.

As illustrated in Figure (1), 42% of participants responded with "Agree," 25% chose "Strongly Agree," 14% selected "Neutral," 15% indicated "Disagree," and 4% marked "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that a significant portion of students (42%) believe they incorrectly apply reading strategies due to insufficient practice in both classroom and home environments. Many students seem to understand and memorize the definitions of these strategies, yet they do not engage in practical application.

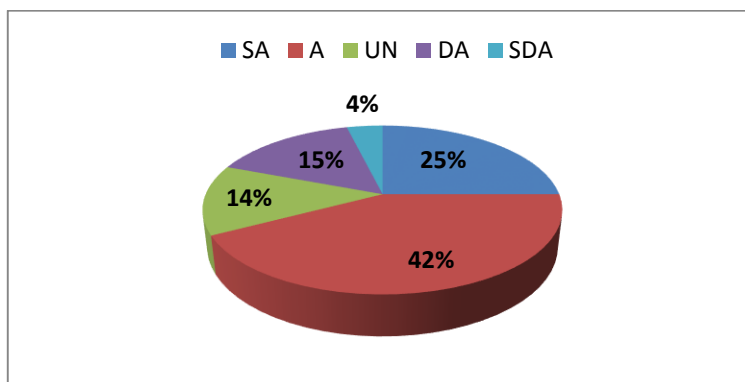


Figure 1. Shows the percentage of students' choice

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2) I spend a lot of time to skim and scan the texts for good comprehension.

As shown in Figure (2), 38% of participants responded with "Agree," 27% chose "Strongly Agree," 23% selected "Strongly Disagree," 12% indicated "Disagree," and 0% were "Uncertain". This suggests that 38% of students believe they spend excessive time on skimming and scanning to comprehend texts, primarily due to a lack of understanding and differentiation between these strategies. Additionally, they appear to lack effective application and tend to read texts without utilizing reading comprehension strategies, focusing instead on grasping the general idea and answering questions.

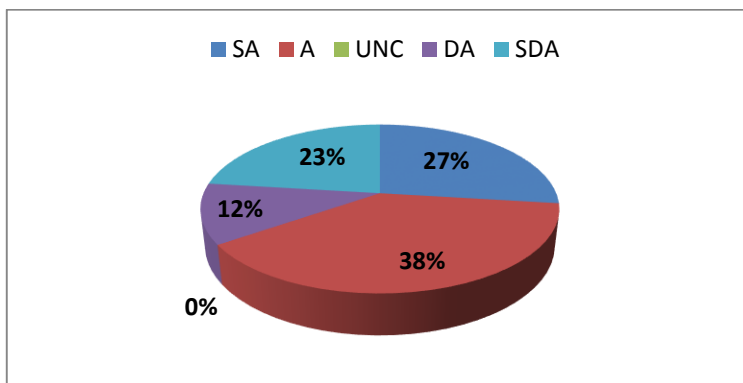


Figure 2. The percentage of students' choices

3) I fail to answer comprehension questions because I translate vocabularies and sentences, as I understand in my mother tongue.

Based on the data shown in Figure (3), 44% of participants responded with "Agree," 19% selected "Strongly Agree," 17% indicated "Uncertain," 14% chose "Disagree," and 6% marked "Strongly Disagree". This suggests 44% of students find it challenging to answer comprehension questions related to texts. Contributing factors may include a limited vocabulary, insufficient practice with reading strategies, and a reliance on word-for-word translation from dictionaries. Additionally, students often fail to recognize that effective language learning focuses on acquisition rather than mere translation.

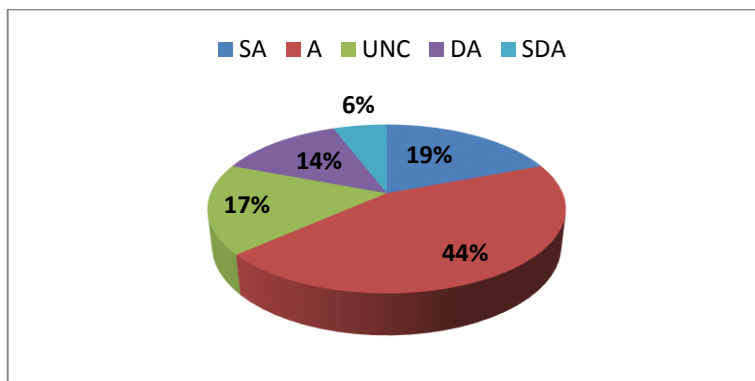


Figure 3. The percentage of students' choices

4) I have to read more and more in English to be familiar with different styles of writers.

The data reveals that 61% of students selected "Strongly Agree," 33% chose "Agree," while 2% selected "Uncertain," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree." This indicates that the majority of students believe reading comprehension relies significantly on self-study and individual effort. In this context, the role of the teacher serves as a guide, providing instructions and strategies rather than ensuring comprehension of all English texts. The 2% who disagreed or expressed uncertainty typically engage with the English language solely for exam preparation and certification purposes.

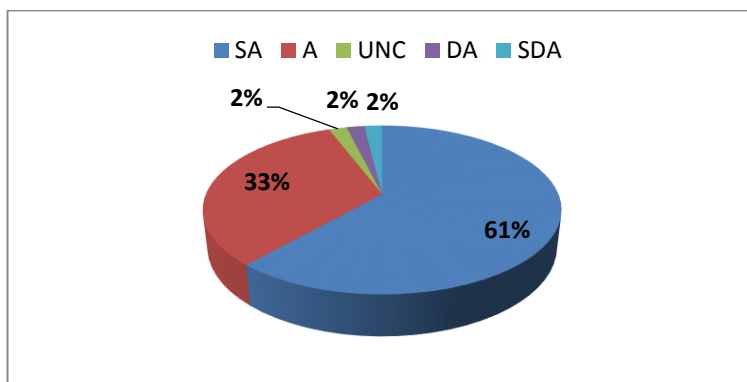


Figure 4. The percentage of students' choices

5) I demand on myself to improve my translation skills and reading skills.

The data shown in Figure (5), 46% of students selected "Disagree," 2% chose "Strongly Disagree," 10% selected "Agree," and 8% were "Uncertain." This indicates that the majority of students do not take personal responsibility for improving their translation and reading skills, often focusing solely on the materials related to exams. They overlook the fact that learning English is about acquiring knowledge rather than merely

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achieving scores or certification. Consequently, students do not engage in academic pursuits beyond the curriculum.

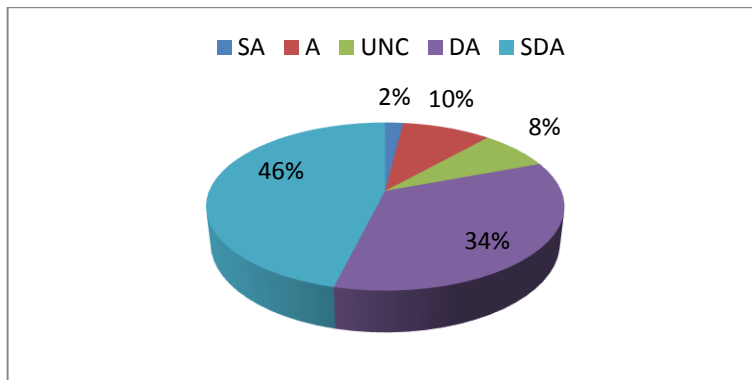


Figure 5. The percentage of students' choices

6) I use the internet websites and applications to enhance my abilities to comprehend written texts correctly.

The data shown in Figure (6) indicates that 50% of students selected "Agree," 27% chose "Strongly Agree," 13% selected "Disagree," 10% were "Uncertain," and 0% chose "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that 13% of students do not take advantage of online resources and applications designed to enhance their reading comprehension and overall English skills. These students prioritize entertainment on social media over improving their reading abilities, limiting their English learning to the classroom or last minute exam preparation.

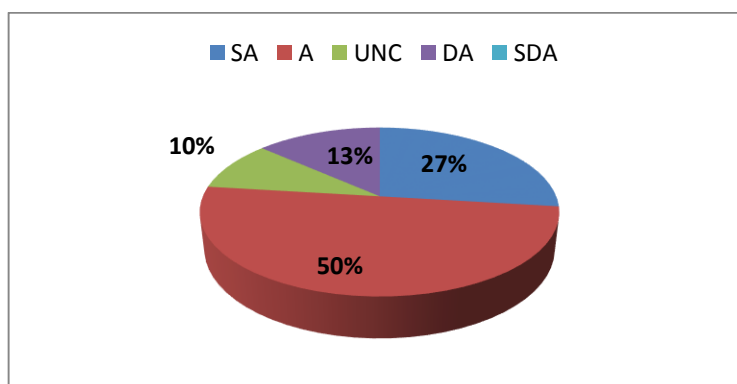


Figure 6. The percentage of students' choices

7) I do learn academic vocabularies and use them in different contexts correctly.

The data shown in Figure (7) reveals that 38% of students selected "Disagree," 19% chose "Agree," 14% selected "Strongly Agree," and the lowest percentage went to "Strongly Disagree." This indicates that most students do not practice any of the four English language skills at home. Learning academic vocabulary requires not only understanding pronunciation and spelling but also using it in writing and comprehending its meaning in various contexts. When encountering unfamiliar words, students tend to rely on dictionary definitions without considering their context, category, or polysemy. Consequently, they are distant from effective self-study and practice, hindering their progress in acquiring the English language.

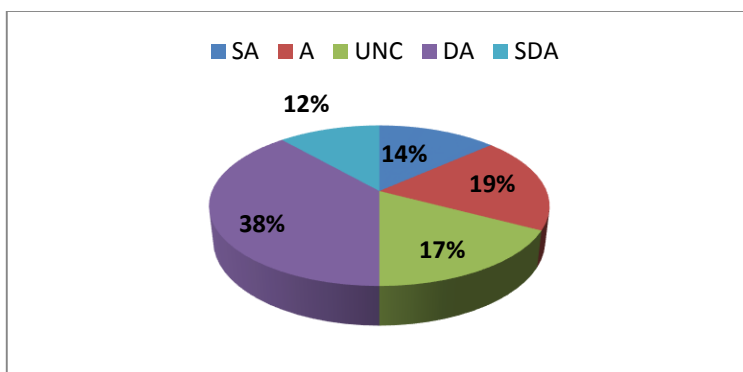


Figure 7. The percentage of students' choices

8) I have to learn the different meaning of vocabularies and different uses in different contexts.

The data shown in Figure (8) indicates that 52% of participants selected "Strongly Agree," 34% chose "Agree," 8% were "Uncertain," 4% selected "Disagree," and 2% chose "Strongly Disagree." This suggests that 6% of participants do not effectively learn or acquire academic vocabulary in various contexts and fail to practice its application, which is essential for enhancing text comprehension.

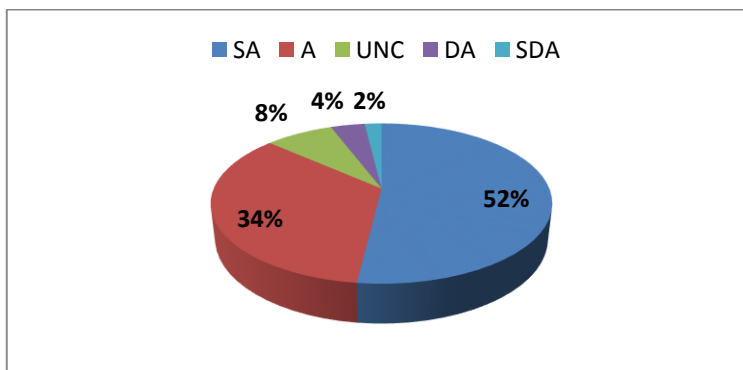


Figure 8. The percentage of students' choices

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9) I know the differences of meaning and using between the structures of sentences in my mother tongue and English language.

The data in Figure (9) shows that 50% of participants selected "Disagree," 17% chose "Strongly Disagree," 15% were "Uncertain," 14% selected "Agree," and 4% chose "Strongly Agree." The highest percentage indicates that 50% of participants find it difficult to identify the structural differences between their mother tongue and English. This lack of understanding can lead to misinterpretations of written texts and a loss of meaning, resulting in significant mismatches between the two languages. Additionally, learners often confine their studies to classroom materials and fail to engage with the English language outside this limited context, hindering their ability to address these challenges.

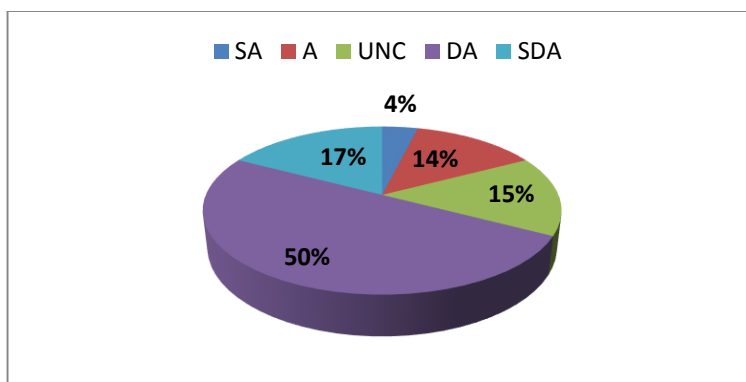


Figure 9. The percentage of students' choices

10) I may expose to the culture of the English language and using of idioms in different contexts.

The data shown in Figure (10) indicates that 50% of participants selected "Agree," 23% chose "Uncertain," 11% selected "Strongly Agree," 10% chose "Disagree," and 6% opted for "Strongly Disagree." The 16% of participants who disagreed may not be adequately exposed to English culture and idioms, resulting in limited engagement with the language. This lack of immersion contributes to difficulties in accurately comprehending texts and leads to reliance on literal translation and the mother tongue to grasp ideas.

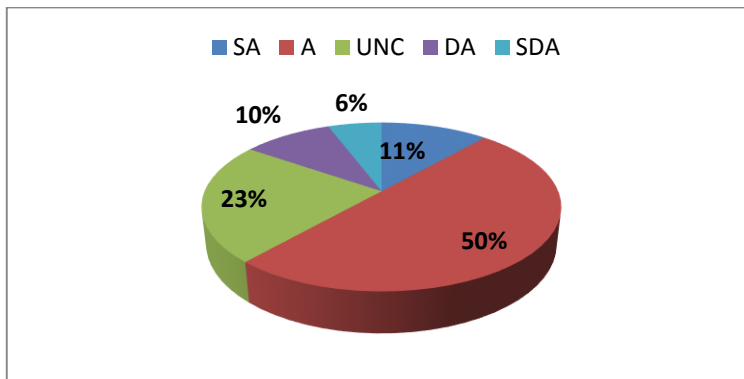


Figure 10. The percentage of students' choices

11) I might be closer to the English language to achieve a balance between the mother tongue and the foreign language.

The data in Figure (11) shows that 61% of participants selected "Agree," 21% chose "Uncertain," 10% selected "Disagree," 8% opted for "Strongly Agree," and 0% chose "Strongly Disagree." Notably, 21% of students are uncertain about their proximity to the English language, while 18% assert that they are not close to it. These students may not have adequate proficiency in their mother tongue, which impedes their ability to balance it with English. Achieving proficiency in English requires acquiring the language without relying on literal translation methods, as many English expressions lack equivalents in their native language. Additionally, idioms, phrases, and proverbs often lose meaning when translated literally. Students remain influenced by traditional teaching methods in secondary schools, which restrict their understanding of texts by encouraging vocabulary translation without considering the diverse styles authors use to convey main ideas.

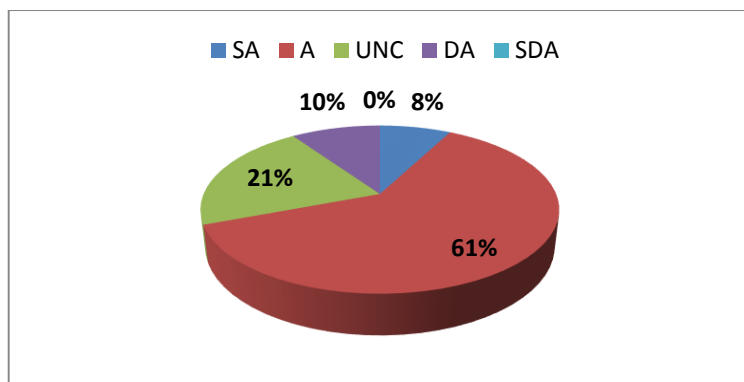


Figure 11. The percentage of students' choices

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12) I do my best to increase my abilities in reading skills and translation in correct ways.

The data shown in Figure (12) reveals that 38% of participants selected both "Strongly Agree" and "Agree," 12% chose "Uncertain," and 12% selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." This indicates that 12% of participants do not make an effort to enhance their reading skills or translate texts accurately. Their lack of practice and reliance on classroom materials—such as worksheets or textbooks—coupled with underutilization of available online resources, reflects a focus on merely passing exams rather than prioritizing English language acquisition. As future educators, these individuals will be responsible for imparting knowledge to their students, emphasizing the need to prioritize language learning in their own lives.

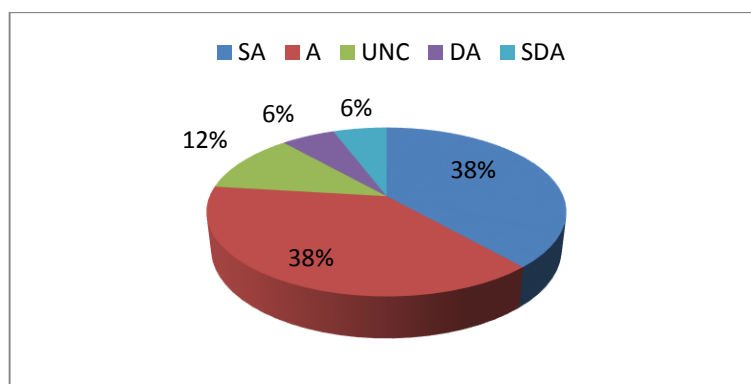


Figure 12. The percentage of students' choices

Implications of Key Findings;

Reading Strategies: The high percentage of students reporting incorrect application of reading strategies suggests an urgent need for targeted training. Educators should focus on practical applications rather than theoretical knowledge.

Skimming and Scanning: Many students' confusion over skimming and scanning indicates that clearer instruction on these techniques is necessary to enhance effective comprehension.

Translation Reliance: The reliance on translation significantly affects comprehension, highlighting the importance of vocabulary building and encouraging students to engage directly with English texts.

Extensive Reading: The recognition of the need for more extensive reading suggests that programs should promote regular reading practices to familiarize students with diverse writing styles.

Self-Responsibility: The lack of personal accountability for skill improvement points to a need for motivational strategies that encourage students to take charge of their learning.

Online Resources: While many students use online resources, there is a gap in effective utilization. Instruction on how to leverage these tools can enhance learning outcomes.

Vocabulary Acquisition: The struggle with vocabulary acquisition indicates that contextual learning strategies should be implemented to support students in applying vocabulary in various contexts.

Cultural Exposure: Limited exposure to English culture can hinder comprehension of idiomatic expressions. Integrating cultural elements into the curriculum may enhance understanding.

Structural Awareness: The lack of awareness regarding sentence structure differences necessitates targeted instruction on how these differences affect comprehension.

Motivation and Skill Enhancement: The mixed levels of motivation for improving skills suggest that a more holistic approach to language education, focusing on long-term goals rather than immediate exams, may benefit students.

4.1.2. Discussion of Results:

The questionnaire results align with the research questions:

- Issues related to incorrectly applied reading strategies highlight the need for better training and practice.
- Emphasizing self-directed learning and the potential of online resources can enhance comprehension.
- Improving vocabulary acquisition and understanding idiomatic expressions is crucial for effective communication.
- Consistent exposure to English and practice is essential for overall comprehension improvement.

4.1.3. Open-ended Questionnaire:

The open-ended questions aimed to explore participants' insights regarding reading comprehension. The questions included:

- **Awareness of Reading Comprehension Strategies:** Do you know any strategies for reading comprehension? What problems do you encounter?
- **Challenges in Understanding Texts:** What difficulties hinder your ability to understand texts?
- **Translation Techniques:** How do you prevent the influence of your mother tongue when interpreting written texts?
- **Avoiding Negative Understandings:** What strategies do you use to mitigate misunderstandings caused by your mother tongue?
- **Overall Comprehension:** Do you understand all written texts correctly? If not, what issues contribute to misunderstandings?



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4.1.4. Open-ended Questions Analysis and Discussion:

Responses to the first question indicated awareness of reading strategies, though many faced challenges with complex texts. The second question revealed that issues like vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural references hinder understanding. The third question showed that students often resort to direct translation but strive to think in English. The fourth question elicited varied responses, with some students utilizing English-English dictionaries and recognizing structural differences, while others lacked effective strategies. The final question highlighted factors contributing to misunderstandings, including failure to identify key words and cognitive difficulties.

4.2. Findings from Teachers' Interviews

The unstructured interviews were conducted with four English teachers, focusing on their perspectives regarding the challenges students face in reading comprehension. The questions aimed to explore factors affecting understanding, the role of translation, and the effectiveness of teaching strategies:

- What problems do students face in reading comprehension?
- Why do students sometimes fail to understand the author's intent?
- Do you think studying translation will help students avoid literal translation?
- Will learning translation techniques improve comprehension?
- Do you allow students to explain texts in their mother tongue? Why or why not?
- What reasons do you see for persistent reading challenges across academic levels?

4.2.1. Analysis of Interviews:

Problems in Reading Comprehension: Teachers identified key challenges, including vocabulary deficits, poor pronunciation, and a lack of independent practice.

Understanding Authors' Intent: Difficulties stem from insufficient foundational knowledge and a lack of effective strategies, with many students not extending learning beyond the classroom.

Impact of Translation Courses: Teachers agreed that translation courses require significant time to be effective.

Learning Translation Techniques: Opinions varied on the timing of translation instruction, with some suggesting earlier introduction would enhance comprehension.

Use of Mother Tongue in Explanation: Teachers were divided; some believed it hinders understanding, while others felt it could facilitate fluency.

Challenges across Academic Levels: Ongoing difficulties were attributed to traditional teaching methods, insufficient English proficiency, and lack of independent practice.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of the mother tongue and translation practices on students' reading comprehension. Key findings reveal that students struggle to effectively apply reading strategies, often relying on memorization and traditional translation methods, which hinder comprehension.

The research emphasizes that effective language acquisition relies on self-study, immersion in English, and the use of online resources. To mitigate the influence of their mother tongue, students should engage with complex English structures and avoid direct comparisons with their first language. Furthermore, fostering an environment that prioritizes English language exposure and cultural immersion is essential for enhancing comprehension. Students must take ownership of their learning and adapt to dynamic instructional methods. Overall, the study highlights the necessity for targeted interventions that promote effective reading strategies and independent learning.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. For Teachers:

- Increase Course Time: Instructors might advocate for additional time in reading and translation courses to enhance student engagement and comprehension.
- Revise Course Structure: Consider proposing the introduction of the translation course in the eighth semester to focus on practical applications.
- Assign Homework: Educators might assign regular homework to reinforce reading strategies, encouraging students to practice independently.
- Focus on Acquisition: Emphasize teaching reading through language acquisition rather than relying solely on translation methods.

5.2.2. For Students:

- Self-Study: Students might prioritize self-directed learning and practice English at home to improve their skills.
- Utilize Online Resources: Take advantage of internet resources to enhance English proficiency and comprehension.
- Engage Actively: Move beyond passive learning; students might actively seek out opportunities to engage with English outside the classroom.
- Career Mindset: Reflect on future career aspirations to motivate improvement in English language skills.



The Effect of Mother Tongue and Translation in Reading Comprehension

- Prioritize Learning: Students can become proficient English speakers and effective teachers by making English learning a top priority.

5.2.3. For Further Studies:

- Expand Research Scope: Future researchers are encouraged to continue this line of inquiry by expanding the scope to identify additional strategies for overcoming reading comprehension challenges.
- Explore Innovative Approaches: Researchers might explore creative methods to mitigate the influence of the mother tongue on reading comprehension.
- Use as a Reference: This study can serve as a foundational reference for future research on the impacts of the mother tongue and translation on reading comprehension.

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