EXPLORING THE USE OF CHILDREN’S STORYBOOKS TO EXPLICITLY TEACH READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES IN LIBYAN EFL CLASSROOMS

By

AL TIYB AL KHAIZYALI

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of AL TIYB AL KHAICYALI find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

________________________________________
Barbara A. Ward, Ph.D., Co-Chair

________________________________________
Tariq Akmal, Ph.D., Co-Chair

________________________________________
Robert Eddy, Ph.D.
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EXPLORING THE USE OF CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOKS TO EXPLICITLY TEACH
READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES IN
LIBYAN EFL CLASSROOMS

Abstract

by Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali, Ph.D.
Washington State University
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Co-Chair: Barbara Ward
Co-Chair: Tariq Akmal

Reading comprehension is an essential part in developing any language and literacy program. Many literacy programs have taken care to focus on improving reading comprehension instruction at different grade and ability levels, including English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). Despite these efforts, there are classrooms that ignore the need for instruction in reading comprehension, and there seems to be little consensus on the best type of reading comprehension instruction.

This dissertation study is an attempt to elicit the general perceptions of English as a Foreign Language learners and their teachers toward one promising approach incorporating children’s picture books to initiate explicit instructional practice with reading comprehension strategies. Two English language teachers and 40 students from the seventh and eighth grades at two different urban schools in Sabha City, Libya participated in this study. Participants’ semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were implemented as primary data sources, while surveys and classroom documents were used as secondary sources during data collection. Based on holistic firsthand analysis of the collected data, findings indicated that Libyan EFL
students in the participating classrooms reacted positively toward using picture books to learn some reading comprehension strategies. Additionally, both Libyan EFL teachers affirmed that using children’s picture books for explicit comprehension strategy instruction increased the students’ abilities to understand what they were reading. Other specific findings demonstrated that Libyan EFL seventh and eighth graders were able to apply several types of comprehension strategies including cognitive and metacognitive strategies while reading picture books and the English language textbook sections. Students’ preferences for reading some of the assigned picture books aligned with their preferences for using different types of reading comprehension strategies. Despite some concerns that were reported by the participants regarding time and vocabulary instruction, this study could contribute to enrich the body of research in the area of reading comprehension instruction, particularly in Libyan EFL classrooms.
ملخص الدراسة

تعتبر القراءة والفهم جزئين أساسيين في تطوير أي لغة. لذلك، أصبح اهتمام العديد من الباحثين والدراسات على تطوير مهارات القراءة والاستيعاب لغة إنجليزية كلهجات ثانية أو لغة أجنبية. إن النظر عن المجهودات الحديثة في هذا المجال يعتبر تدريس مهارات الاستيعاب وخاصة لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية هاجسًا يورق معلمي ويحات اللغة في مختلف بلدان العالم. لذلك، هدفت هذه الاطروحة لوضع علاج لهذه المشكلة من خلال دراسة مدى تفاعل طلبة ومدربين اللغة الإنجليزية عند استعمال القصص المصورة وهي إحدى أنواع أدب الأطفال كوسيلة مساعدة لتدريس مهارات الاستيعاب. على وجه التحديد، اثنين مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية و40 طالباً من الصفوف السابع والثامن في مدارس في المناطق الحضرية في مدينة سبيها، ليبيا شاركوا في هذه الدراسة. وأستخدمت مشاريع متعلقة بتطوير اللغة والمحترفيون وتم دراسة ومثل التعليمات التي تم الحصول عليها من الطلبة والمدربين المشاركون في الدراسة، شملت أن طلبة الصفوف السابع والثامن المشاركون في الدراسة قد استجابوا وبشكل إيجابي للدراسة من خلال استعمال بعض مهارات الاستيعاب بشكل متماسك والممارسة المتمسلطة في معظم تدريبات القراءة والاستيعاب. كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة قدرة المدرسين المشاركون على ملء الفراغات الموجودة في المناهج وذلك باستخدام القصص المصورة بشكل متماسك لتدريب الطلاب على مهارات الاستيعاب واستخدام الطريقة الظاهرة المرنة والتي تعتمد على تعريف المهارة وتوضيحها وتقديم كيفية ووقتية استعمالها.

على الرغم من بعض المخاوف التي تم الإبلاغ عنها عن قلة الطالب والمعلمين المشاركون في هذه الدراسة والمتعلقة المتبقي ببعض المفردات والوقت، إلا أن هذه الدراسة قد تعتبر إطلاعاً لإثراء البحث العلمي وخاصةً بتدريس مهارات الاستيعاب لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وكهجة ثانية.

والباحث
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Dedication

In The Name of Allah The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

[Moses] said, "Oh My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance], And ease for me my task, And untie the knot from my tongue, That they may understand my speech.

(Surat Taha Verses 25-28)
To the memory of my mother

To my beloved father

To my wife and children

To all my sisters and brothers
Chapter One

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a vital component to the development of any language and literacy program. Therefore, most reading experts and theorists consider it to be “the essence of reading” (Durkin, 1993, p. 4), “the heart of reading” (Moore & Hall, 2012, p. 24), or “the central driving force for reading” (Leu et al, 2007, p. x). As several researchers have found, reading comprehension is critically important for the development of first and second language learners’ reading proficiency and their ability to improve other language skills including writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking (Alkhawaldeh, 2011; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Fahim, Barjesteh, & Vaseghi, 2012; Kouri & Telander, 2008; Snow, 2002). Additionally, reading comprehension is considered a fundamental factor that contributes to the success of language and literacy programs (Farstrup & Samuels, 2002; Hock & Mellard, 2005; Reid & Lienemann, 2006).

Despite its inarguable importance in reading instruction, reading comprehension continues to elude a specific definition that can be accepted by all researchers or practitioners. Many researchers and theorists struggle to provide a straightforward and concise definition for the very term “reading comprehension” (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012; Paris & Stahl, 2009; Willis, 2008). According to a considerable number of researchers and teacher practitioners, over the years, reading comprehension has been viewed as a complicated process that depends mainly on different indicators including behavioral, linguistic, cognitive, and metacognitive elements (Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2000; Cohen, 1998; Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). As defined by Bormuth (1969), reading comprehension is “a set of generalized knowledge-acquisition skills which permit people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a
consequence of reading printed language” (p. 50). Additionally, Kirmizi (2011) defined reading comprehension as “the act of thinking and constructing meaning before, during, and after reading by integrating the information presented by the author with the reader’s background knowledge” (p. 290). Snow (2002) crystallized the definition of reading comprehension as the extent to which the reader interacts and reacts to the text. She defined reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (p. 11).

There has been a growing consensus among many researchers that reading comprehension could be defined as a reader’s cognitive, metacognitive, or linguistic abilities to understand the text with the frequent support of different strategies and skills that essentially build on direct instruction (Hillerich, 1979; Randi, Newman, & Grigorenko, 2010). Thus, cognition, metacognition, linguistics, motivation, engagement, interaction, and involvement were considered vital prerequisites for any reading comprehension process.

Despite the general perspectives of most literacy researchers about reading comprehension, no straightforward definition has been determined (Pressley, 2006). This was essentially due to the following two factors: (1) the lack of research in reading comprehension and (2) the high cognitive complexity of reading comprehension (Basaraba, Yovanoff, & Alonzo, 2013). Taking these perspectives of comprehension into account, reading comprehension instruction is nevertheless often a neglected practice in many classrooms, particularly in the English as a Foreign Language context (Durkin, 1978; Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Ness, 2009; Pardo, 2004; Pressley, 2002). Moreover, many teachers do not know when to, how to, and/or why to teach text comprehension and are often not equipped to explicitly teach reading comprehension (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007; Tovani, 2000).
Therefore, using strategies and tactics practiced by skillful and competent readers began to be considered one of the best approaches to improve the comprehension of struggling and unskillful readers (Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Grabe, 2009; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007). Accordingly, many reading experts agree that competent or strategic readers are those who use their prior or cognitive knowledge to understand the text (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Reading and literacy experts have ascertained that competent readers use various abilities and skills to understand, monitor, and repair their understanding whenever they read (Karbalaei, 2010; Pressley, 2000). In addition, strategic readers tend to use different tactics to understand what they read (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). They are engaged cognitively (deliberately use strategies) and metacognitively (think about and monitor the use of strategies) in a reading task using multiple ways to make sense of what they read (Block, 1992; Samuels & Farstrup, 2011; Yang, 2006).

Understanding what strategic readers do and how reading strategies are generated is essential to decide when and how to teach reading comprehension (Cheng, 1998; Grabe, 2009). Being strategic means the conscious ability to use specific tactics, actions, procedures, techniques, and steps to understand reading materials (Brantmeier, 2002; McNamara, 2007; Oxford, 1990). Therefore, teaching poor or struggling readers how to be strategic and skillful is essential in facilitating their overall comprehension of text. This assumption has been supported by Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) who wrote, “It is important, however, to promote both skilled and strategic reading because students need to know how to read strategically” (p. 369).

In order to provide a straightforward approach to comprehension instruction, several researchers have emphasized the use of direct and explicit reading instruction (Block & Parris, 2008; Harris & Pressley, 1991; Ness, 2011), the flexible use of authentic (relevant to learners’
lives), and motivating materials (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Loh & Tse, 2009; Morrow, Freitag & Gambrell, 2009; Soalt, 2005), creating a supportive and effective learning environment (Duffy, 2009; Goldenberg, 1992), and enhancing students’ motivation and engagement (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; McElhone, 2012). In addition, teachers’ guiding, modeling, and scaffolding were emphasized (Lloyd, 2004; Pressley, 1999).

In this regard, the rationale of using children’s picture books to enhance various language and literacy abilities was overtly and covertly stated by many researchers and theorists including Ghosn (2002), Lado (2012), Rosenblatt (1994), and Paivio (1971). According to Rosenblatt (1994), particularly at the beginning and basic stages of engaging with text, readers need to transact with what they read. Rosenblatt suggested two types of transactions: “efferent” and “aesthetic” (pp. 22-27). She described an “efferent” transaction as the factual, analytical, and logical reactions of readers as a result of the quantitative aspect of readings. Along the same line, Rosenblatt considered the emotive, affective, and qualitative transactions as a result of literary and narrative aspect of readings to be the “aesthetic” transaction. She recommended that educators should place great attention on promoting the “aesthetic” stance of reading because of its essential contribution to readers’ interests, attitudes, and motivation. Throughout her writings, Rosenblatt strongly suggested the use of literary materials such as children’s literature to encourage the aesthetic stance among readers, but she also acknowledged that much reading could be considered somewhere on the continuum between the two stances.

In addition, in his dual-coding theory Paivio (1971) provided important evidence about the role of illustrations and pictures (the fundamental characteristic features of picture books) in facilitating readers’ understanding and comprehension of the text. He explained that images or illustrations play a vital role in supporting the working memory of readers by saving and
processing some information from the reading text (Sadoski & Paivio, 2013). Thus, according to Paivio, pictures and illustrations that appear in some types of reading such as children’s literature could help readers maintain pieces of information in the working memory and recall these pieces of information whenever needed. Finally, Ghosn (2002) pointed out that picture books could be effective resources to language learning and students’ motivation in ESL classrooms. According to Ghosn, the authenticity and the multicultural characteristics of many picture books were among the major attributes that could contribute to support the use of picture books in any language learning contexts.

Consequently, and because of their multiple rationale and flexible uses, children’s picture books may be assumed to play an essential part in leading flexible and explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction, particularly in low achieving environments (e.g., ESL/EFL classrooms). This is likely because children’s picture books have been described as authentic (they contain natural everyday language, realistic, and usually connect to students’ experiences) (Malloy, 1999; Valentine, 2008), easy to read (Burns, 2010), motivating (Doiron, 2003; Polette & Ebbesmeyer, 2002), comprehensible, multi-thematic (Lado, 2012), and engaging materials (Elia, Heuvel-Panhuizen, & Georgiou, 2010; Lohfink & Loya, 2010).

Also, children’s picture books have been used in different learning settings to teach various language strategies and skills (Hsiu-Chin, 2008; Mundy & Hadaway, 1999). For example, children’s picture books have been used successfully to teach speaking, listening, writing, and critical thinking skills in many English language learning classrooms (Heitman, 2005; Lado, 2012; Smith, DeMarco, & Worley, 2009). In addition, reading picture books usually does not consume much time, and they have been used frequently to teach various language skills such as phonemic awareness, graphemic awareness, and vocabulary (Lado, 2012; Smeets
& Bus, 2012). Therefore, the use of children’s picture books to explicitly and flexibly teach comprehension strategies could have the potential to make important contributions to reading instruction and development, particularly in EFL settings.

Since they have been proven to be useful in teaching different language and literacy skills, picture books could likely be appropriate resources to teach basic comprehension strategies to learners in countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Additionally, picture books could support teachers’ scaffolding and modeling of comprehension instruction, especially in EFL classrooms. This is because despite their success in various educational contexts, picture books had never been used in some EFL learning contexts (Al Khaiyali, 2013). For example, picture books had not used in the Libyan context either in supporting teaching English or for any other educational purposes. More importantly, explicit comprehension strategy instruction is not an approved practice in many various educational settings, particularly ESL and EFL classrooms (Fotovatian, & Shokrpour, 2007; Mihara, 2011; Miller & Perkins, 1990; Yang, 2006). Therefore, the overarching purpose of this study was to utilize children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies and to investigate the general perceptions and experiences of EFL students and teachers toward their use.

Rationale

The rationale of this study emerged from my interest to address some of the challenges in EFL reading comprehension instruction and provide some suggestions to deal with these challenges. According to a considerable numbers of research studies, reading comprehension is an important component in ESL and EFL learning process and should be emphasized in different levels of education (Ahmadi, Ismail, & Abdullah, 2013; Hou, 2013; Pressley, 1999). For instance, Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011) maintained that comprehension
instruction is an area of concern and indeed is one of the top priorities of ESL and EFL students after completing elementary English courses. Despite this awareness, the teaching of reading comprehension strategy remains largely neglected, particularly in the fields of teaching English as a Second and Foreign Language. Teaching reading comprehension explicitly and flexibly was considered a major challenge that was affirmed by many researchers and educators (Duffy, Roehler, & Herrmann, 1988; Duke & Pearson, 2008; Durkin, 1978; Pressley, 2000).

Understanding the primary challenges that hinder the students’ comprehension of text and providing new instructional materials as picture books could initiate significant ways to resolve or determine a resolution to students’ comprehension challenges and concerns.

Thus, English language learners might need to be taught using simple and interesting materials that could scaffold and enhance their understanding and motivation to learn. They also might need to acquire effective strategies to meet the actual demands of reading comprehension and understanding what they read (Hellekjaer, 2009). Based on their educational values and rich content, picture books are expected to provide flexible and explicit instructional grounds through which teachers and practitioners develop resources for effective teaching and learning of English, especially in settings where English is taught as a foreign language. Not only have I developed an affinity for picture books while studying in the United States, but I have become convinced of their usefulness in classrooms in my home country of Libya where there are few picture books available and where literacy instruction tends to consist largely of direct instruction focused on a reading textbook.

**Problem**

This study was conducted in Libya where teachers rely on the EFL textbooks as the sole method of English language instruction (Embark, 2011; Sawani, 2009). In the Libyan EFL
context, being a proficient English reader in the educational system is essential. Although English as a Foreign Language is introduced to Libyan students starting in the third grade, most students have trouble understanding the texts they read because of their length, complex content, and technical vocabulary (Pathan & Al-Dersi, 2013). Specifically, some of the principal causes of reading comprehension weakness among most Libyan EFL students are summarized as follows:

1. Most Libyan EFL students are not taught or trained how to explicitly understand what they read. This claim was supported by Pathan and Al-Dersi (2013) who conducted a study to investigate the major problems encountered by Libyan EFL learners in reading comprehension performance. Surveys were distributed to 100 university students in the southern region of the country (Libya). The main finding of this study indicated that Libyan EFL university students exhibited limited understanding of what they read, despite the fact that they were at high educational levels (university level). It was reported that the central sources of this finding were the dearth of vocabulary knowledge and lack of motivation among the students, in addition to the quality of materials used to prepare those students to read adequately.

Thus, the findings of this study revealed some concerns about the general comprehension achievement gaps of Libyan EFL learners. Similar results were previously affirmed by some other Libyan researchers and authors including Ahmad (2012), Al Moghani (2003), and Shihiba (2011).

2. The use of inadequate English teaching materials contributes to the problem since English textbooks are the primary means to teach English in Libya. These materials are not appropriate to develop the learners’ reading comprehension since they are not prepared and equipped for that. This argument came from the fact that the main focus of the seventh and
eighth EFL textbooks *English for Libya* (Quintana, O’Neill, McGarry, & Barker, 2012) is to develop vocabulary, grammar, communicative skills, writing, and listening (Orafi, 2008). This emphasis omits comprehension instruction completely, leaving it as a secondary focus and often resulting in a failure to meet the students’ needs in understanding the reading materials. (Appendix L shows the contents of seventh and eighth grade English language textbooks that affirm the lack of explicit comprehension instruction in these materials.)

3. Libyan EFL teachers are not trained appropriately to create a secure, motivating, and rich learning environment for explicit reading comprehension instruction (Ahmad, 2012).

4. The general English language background of most Libyan EFL students is not sufficient to meet the needs of independent comprehension of reading. This result was explicitly indicated in the overall decline of reading comprehension achievements in most Libyan EFL students, particularly in the Standardized Test Scores.

5. Research on Libyan EFL students’ reading comprehension is considerably limited (Ahmad, 2012; Al Khaiyali, 2010; Pathan & Al-Dersi, 2013), particularly addressing lower grade levels. In spite of the fact that many researchers and theorists have emphasized the importance of comprehension strategies in developing reading comprehension, research on comprehension strategy instruction is still rare (Conley & Wise, 2011; Durkin, 1993; Ghuma, 2011; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Pressley, 2006). As is the case for first-language readers, becoming strategic readers and tacit comprehenders of texts is the ultimate goal for most EFL students, especially those seeking to understand the texts they are reading and succeed in future educational programs (Rathvon, 2008).

Thus, the weakness of Libyan EFL reading comprehension instruction has been considered one of the most serious problems faced by the country’s education system even
though it was a problem that had not received the attention of many EFL teachers and researchers (Ahmad, 2012; Al Khaiyali, 2010, 2013). Teachers might need to use different authentic and easy-to-read materials and models to help their students know and practice how to use comprehension strategies while they read, internalize this knowledge, and then use them to understand other reading materials (Duke & Pearson 2002; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994).

Last but not least, research on exploring new diverse approaches to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to EFL students seems to offer promising possibilities for instructional choices.

**Purpose**

Even though improving reading comprehension strategies is the ultimate goal of reading and future academic achievement (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010), many EFL students in Libya are not appropriately equipped to comprehend texts or exhibit any comprehension abilities when they are reading (Ahmad, 2012; Al Khaiyali, 2010). These assumptions were basically indicated in the general standardized results of the students’ test scores and affirmed by the findings of Pathan and Al-Dersi’s (2013) study. Pathan and Al-Dersi discovered that about 75% of Libyan EFL students at the university levels were unable to understand what they read. According to them, this problem was due to the paucity of comprehension instruction, the complexity of materials used to teach reading, and the lack of appropriate vocabulary among those students that may help them understand what they read.

Additionally, Rajab (2007) detected the general decline of Libyan EFL learners in various high school levels. He realized that part of this problem was due to the quality and the quantity of comprehension instruction in addition to the lack of interesting easy-to-read materials that could guide flexible and explicit instruction and sustain other complicated reading materials.
Since many Libyan teachers are not sure what strategies could effectively work, they have no idea about which comprehension strategies to teach to their students, when, or even how to deliver that type of instruction. Therefore, in order to understand the problem and suggest possible solutions, this study aimed to explore the experiences and perceptions of EFL students and their teachers in Libya while using authentic and easy-to-read materials, such as picture books, in facilitating teaching and learning reading comprehension strategies.

**Research Questions**

The study’s main aim was to explore the potential uses of children’s picture books to teach comprehension strategies as well as the overall experiences and perceptions of incorporating children’s picture books in EFL reading comprehension classrooms. Working from this perspective, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study’s data collection, description, and analysis:

- What comprehension strategies did Libyan EFL students use when they were taught English using children’s picture books?
- How did Libyan EFL students experience the use of children’s picture books to learn reading comprehension strategies?
- How did Libyan EFL teachers experience the use of children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies?
- How did using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?
- What challenges or difficulties did Libyan EFL students and their teachers encounter in using children’s picture books to learn and teach comprehension strategies?
Significance

Providing Western picture books to scaffold and guide explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction across-the-board of the Arab EFL context was the main suggested contribution of this study. This is because children’s picture books have been successfully used in various educational contexts to teach different school subjects (Smith, DeMarco, & Worley, 2009). Since picture books carry unique features that can fit some Arab EFL settings including the Libyan education system (e.g., short, not time consuming, authentic, interesting, vivid, multicultural, and cover wide area of topics), they are expected to succeed in teaching reading comprehension strategies in these classrooms. In the same vein, the study provided a systematic pedagogical approach to teach reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL classrooms. This approach was informed by explicit instruction. In the explicit teaching approach, teachers were trained to model, use guided practice, reinforce reciprocal teaching, encourage independent practice, and support constructive feedback and scaffolding (Almasi, 2003). This rich and sophisticated pedagogical teaching approach was used for the first time in Libyan EFL classrooms to teach reading comprehension strategies. Some of the basic principles of this approach, such as modeling, could be used by Libyan EFL teachers to teach other language skills and strategies in other different school areas. Finally, the study could contribute to enrich the body of research on using children’s picture books in comprehension strategy instruction of ESL and EFL classrooms, particularly when considering the fact “no Libyan research has been conducted on reading strategy use” (Ahmad, 2012, p.2).

It is assumed that children’s picture books were used in various classroom settings to successfully teach various language skills (Early, 1991; Heitman, 2005; Kasten, Kristo, McClure, & Garthwait, 2005; Kooy, & Chiu, 1998; Kuo, 2005; Lado, 2012; Reid, 2002; Spooner &
Woodcock, 2010). Therefore, they could succeed educationally when they are used to teach reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL contexts. Also, explicit comprehension strategy instruction was successfully implemented in various classroom settings to improve reading comprehension instruction (Pressley, Brown, El-Dinary, & Allferbach, 1995). For this reason, explicit comprehension strategy instruction could contribute to the development of reading comprehension instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms.

**Definitions of terms**

Many terms were used to describe and analyze the main focus of this study; however, for the purpose of this study the following terms have been defined as follows:

**Children’s picture books.** Genre of children’s literature in which text and illustration complete each other and function together as a whole unit (Nespeca & Reeve, 2003).

**Cognitive strategies.** In this dissertation cognitive strategies are considered an essential part of reading comprehension strategies. Therefore, these strategies are defined as mental processes and procedures used by the reader to understand the text (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). Some of the major strategies that are used under this category are guessing, predicting, and determining big ideas.

**Comprehension strategies.** In this study, comprehension strategies mean the processes and techniques that are consciously used by readers in order to make sense of what they read (Block & Pressley, 2002).

**Direct instruction.** A teaching model that stresses face-to-face instruction. A teacher often delivers explicit explanation of strategies, models how strategies are used and when they should be used. At the end of the instruction, the teacher is encouraged to support the students’ independent practice and use of strategies (Kim & Axelrod, 2005).
**EFL.** The acronym for English as a Foreign Language, which mainly focuses on teaching and learning the English language in countries where English is not spoken as a mother tongue (Nation, 2009).

**ESL.** The acronym for English as a Second Language, which mainly focuses on teaching and learning the English language to non-English language speakers in countries where English is spoken as a mother tongue (Crystal, 2012).

**Explicit instruction.** In this dissertation, explicit instruction of comprehension strategies means the teachers’ explanation of the strategy, what it is, how, and when it should be used. Teachers should take an active role in teaching the strategy by modeling how it is used, giving the students opportunities to use it, and independently practicing it (Pressley, 2000; Pressley, Brown, El-Dinary, & Afflerbach, 1995).

**Literature circles.** Students grouped or gathered to discuss a book, usually a story they are reading or have finished reading (Moen & Artell, 2004).

**Literature-based instruction.** It is a teaching approach that supports the use of literary readings to sustain learners’ literacy development (Machado, 2010). In this approach, the use of rich content materials including novels, picture books, fictions, poetries, and other literary tools is fundamental for language and reading instruction (Neuman & Dickinson, 2003).

**Metacognitive strategies.** In this study, metacognitive strategies are used as another sub-category of reading comprehension strategies. In many cases, metacognitive strategies are overlapped with the cognitive strategies, but they are not the same. Thus, in this dissertation, metacognitive strategies were defined as procedures used to track and monitor cognitive strategies such as a question-answer strategy (Yang, 2006).
Motivation. For the purposes of this study, motivation is defined as the student’s interests and desires toward reading (Nakata, 2006).

Read-aloud. A teaching approach which is built on the oral reading of a book or a story (Guzzetti, 2002). Trelease (1990) defined a read-aloud as an activity or a technique that is used by readers to demonstrate their reading abilities.

Reading comprehension. For the purpose of this study, reading comprehension is a process of constructing and building up meaning from written texts (Snow, 2002; Teele, 2004).

Reciprocal teaching. An instructional approach which is based on teacher-student and student-teacher instructional role shifting. It supports four reading comprehension strategies: Clarifying, questioning, predicting, and summarizing (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Westby, 2011).

Response to literature (Transactional Theory). The relationship between the reader and the text, and how the reader makes assumptions in order to understand the text (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Schema. In this dissertation, schema (singular) or schemata (plural) is used to explain how and why students use certain comprehension strategies to understand the text. According to Harris and Hodges (1995), schema is defined as “a view that comprehension depends on integrating new knowledge with a network of prior knowledge” (p. 227).

Think-aloud. It is the oral reflection of thoughts. It is usually used to analyze the speaker’s semantic discourse (Denhiere & Rossi, 1991).

Dissertation Overview

In this chapter, I have described an overview of the study’s background, the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature that informs a theoretical foundation for the dissertation. Chapter Three describes the methodology for the study on exploring the students’ and teachers’ experiences of using
children’s picture books as supplementary materials to teach some basic comprehension strategies. Chapter Four reports the overall findings of the study, which are basically related to the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers of using children’s picture books in teaching and learning comprehension strategies. Chapter Five provides a general discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter Six sheds light on the implications of the study as well as suggesting directions for further research in the practice of incorporating children’s literature into EFL comprehension instruction classrooms.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

One of the fundamental goals of language learners is to understand what they read. In order to achieve this goal, a considerable numbers of researchers in the area of reading comprehension and literacy have emphasized the importance of teaching reading strategies in comprehension instruction (Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; McNamara, 2007; Yang, 2006). Moreover, researchers affirmed that understanding the nature of the learners’ weaknesses in comprehension could be part of the solution of their problems in understanding the text (Durkin, 1978; Pressley, 2000). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of EFL learners and their teachers in using children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. In order to obtain a general understanding of the problem of the study, this section revolves around the main research and theoretical constructs that explained reading comprehension strategies, what they are and why they should be taught. Additionally, the review sheds light on the general perspectives of using children’s picture books in language teaching and learning.

Evolution of Reading Comprehension Instruction

Historically, reading comprehension was seen to be “caught rather than taught” (Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992, p. 2). During the 1950s and the 1970s, several reading comprehension researchers and educators believed that reading comprehension is the outcome of decoding (Bormuth, Manning, & Pearson, 1970; Fries, 1962). This means that knowledge of the meaning of words leads to the knowledge and understanding of the whole text. The basic explanation of reading comprehension and the teachers’ instructional beliefs were built on this assumption for several decades (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Flavell, 1976; Gough & Tunmer,
In the 1960s, some researchers reported that reading comprehension is the result of the integration of various subskills (Rosenshine, 1980; Smith, 1965). These subskills included drawing conclusions, determining the main ideas, predicting the story outcomes, and sequencing the story events. According to these researchers, reading comprehension could be improved by teaching each of these subskills. In the 1970s, considerable mounting of research had documented a decline in students’ overall reading comprehension achievements (Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Durkin, 1978), and many teachers found that their students did not understand much of what they read (Durkin, 1978; Kingen, 2000; Tovani, 2000).

In the late of 1970s and the early 1980s, many researchers and theorists in the fields of reading, literacy, and linguistics conducted various investigations into possible explanations of issues and challenges in teaching reading comprehension (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996; Duffy, 2002; Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012; Rosenblatt 1978). For example, at the end of the 1970s, significant views were revealed that contributed to the historic change in reading comprehension instruction. These views indicated that reading comprehension could be taught (Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Durkin, 1978; Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003). Additionally, a considerable numbers of researchers realized that reading comprehension instruction had been neglected (Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Durkin, 1978). In a similar vein, researchers discovered that reading subskills could not be taught because of their “automaticity” (p. 309), which means that subskills can develop automatically while strategies are intentionally learned (Pressley, Goodchild, Fleet, Zajchowski, Evans, 1989; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, & Kurita, 1989). Finally, reading comprehension instruction was not merely based on vocabulary and readers’ schemata (Pressley, 2000); rather, it
was based on a combination of strategies that were triggered by readers’ cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral knowledge. As a response to the calls for teaching comprehension, many researchers emphasized the flexible and the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies (Almasi, 2003; Corte, Verschaffel, & Ven, 2001; Duke & Pearson, 2008; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Loranger, 1997; McNamara, 2007; Yang, 2006).

**Reading comprehension should be taught.** Until recently, some researchers argued that comprehension cannot be taught (Bransford & Johnson, 1972; Carver, 1987; Grimes, 1975). This argument was built on the belief that teaching individual words and decoding could lead to understanding the text, and this is not necessarily an indication of teaching comprehension per se. Additionally, many proponents of this assumption assumed that reading comprehension is abstract and cannot be seen; hence, it could not be taught or even explored except in very limited and uncontrollable situations (Carver, 1987). Despite all these arguments, a great deal of research seemed to prove that students can learn strategies to improve their reading comprehension, thus, indicating that comprehension can be taught (Almasi, 2003; Block & Parris, 2008; Duffy, Roehler, & Herrmann, 1988; Durkin, 1978; Pearson et al., 1992; Pressley, 2002). This view was built on the fact that direct, explicit, and flexible explanation of some reading comprehension strategies could develop the reading comprehension achievements of poor readers (Ness, 2011; Pearson et al., 1992; Pressley, 2000). Moreover, this assumption was encouraged by an increasing numbers of researchers and educators in the field of reading and literacy education (Almasi, 2003; Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa, & Madden, 2010; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Staul, 2004; Tsai, Ernst, & Talley, 2010).

For example, Pressley (2002) argued that flexible and explicit strategy instruction could positively influence readers’ understanding and comprehension of the text. To advocate the
effective use of reading strategies in improving reading comprehension, Pressley suggested the following strategies that could be used to help students repair miscomprehending of the text: (a) rereading, (b) asking and answering questions during reading, and (c) using semantic or graphic organizers. Pressley (2002), Duffy (2003), and many other researchers in the area of reading comprehension indicated that teachers’ modeling and scaffolding of students’ learning strategies are fundamental indicators to explicit reading comprehension instruction. Similarly, Cheung, Tse, Lam, and Loh (2009) argued that teaching reading comprehension strategies to poor comprehenders could contribute to building their comprehension abilities and subsequently, enhance their understanding of what they read. One of the examples in supporting this argument came from Staul (2004) who conducted an experimental study on testing the use of some reading strategies in developing the comprehension abilities of K-2 students. Staul found that explicit comprehension instruction of particular cognitive strategies such as activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, and summarizing contributed significantly to K-2 students’ understanding and the development of their reading comprehension abilities.

**Reading comprehension instruction had been neglected.** Despite the evidence that teaching reading comprehension showed significant improvement in learners’ reading comprehension achievements (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; McNamara, 2007; Pressly, 2000), reading comprehension instruction is still not receiving the attention that it deserves (Durkin, 1978; Ness, 2011; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, & Echevarria, 1998). Since the late 1970s, many studies have been conducted to ascertain the methods used in developing teaching and learning of reading comprehension in first and second language classrooms (Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Durkin, 1978; Ness, 2011; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, & Echevarria, 1998). One of the most well-known studies in
this regard was conducted by Durkin (1978). In her study, Durkin investigated the implementation of comprehension instruction in core reading programs at several elementary schools in the State of Illinois. She discovered that only 50 of 17,997 minutes (about 5.3 %) of the teachers’ overall reading classes focused on reading comprehension instruction. According to Durkin, most elementary school teachers in the State of Illinois devoted their reading instruction time as following, 32.6% practice, 18.4% reading preparation, 17.4% assessment, and 15.6% application.

In a subsequent different investigation, Duffy, Lanier, and Roehler (1980) observed the teachers’ use of comprehension instruction in first and second elementary grades. Despite the fact that all teachers were observed in their reading classes, the overall observation findings showed little comprehension instruction in these classes. Similarly, Miller and Perkins (1990) observed the amount of comprehension instruction in English language learning classrooms. Findings exhibited that comprehension instruction was very limited and most classroom instruction emphasized vocabulary, syntax, and grammar.

Eight years later, Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, and Echevarria (1998) conducted an observational study to investigate the extent to which reading comprehension was explicitly taught in the fourth and fifth grades. Observations were extended from November 1995 to May 1996 with a focus on teachers’ use of explicit comprehension instruction. Results showed that the amount of reading comprehension instruction increased slightly, comparing to the findings of Durkin’s observation. Moreover, the general comprehension teaching practice was based on showing how students could use comprehension strategies and not what these comprehension strategies actually mean.
Recently, Ness (2011) observed the extent to which teachers from first to fifth grades used comprehension instruction in their language arts classrooms. Based on observing the teachers in the participating classrooms, Ness discovered that a total of 25% of the language arts teaching practices focused on explicit reading comprehension instruction. This score was the highest compared to the findings of Durkin, Duffy, Lanier, and Roehler, and Pressley et al. These studies and others that were conducted on reading comprehension instruction (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Flood, Lapp, Squire, & Jensen, 2003) contributed remarkably to the field of reading comprehension since they reminded many researchers that reading comprehension instruction was still not receiving the necessary attention. Also, these studies showed that the more explicit and flexible the comprehension strategy instruction, the higher the reading comprehension achievement would be, particularly in poor and limited achieving learning environments (Ness, 2011; Pearson, Dole, Duffy, & Roehler, 1992; Pressley et al., 1998).

**Reading Comprehension and Strategy Instruction**

Traditionally, teaching reading comprehension was built on explaining how learners can decode words (Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 2006; Reitsma & Verhoeven, 1998) and text memorization (Frederiksen, 1972; Mandler & Johnson, 1977). Recently, the concept of teaching reading comprehension has evolved, and dramatic changes were proposed to explain the process of reading comprehension instruction. One of the leading assumptions in this regard advocated the implementation of strategies used by skillful readers to teach and improve the reading comprehension abilities of poor or less skillful readers (Brown, Armbruster, & Barker, 1986; Moats, 2005). Reading comprehension strategies were considered powerful indicators in developing the reading comprehension achievements of many native and English language
learners who were considered poor comprehenders (Duke & Pearson, 2002; The National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Tompkins, 2006).

**Definition of reading comprehension strategies.** Since Durkin’s pioneering work, more attention has been placed on comprehension strategies and hence, many different definitions were proposed to identify these strategies (Barnett, 1988; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Oxford, 1990; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Reid & Lienemann, 2006). In order to accurately identify reading comprehension strategies and determine strategic from nonstrategic readers, it became necessary to define what is meant by the term “comprehension strategies” (Folman & Sarig, 1990).

Therefore, Garner (1987) defined comprehension strategies as “generally deliberate, planful activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure” (p. 50). According to The National Reading Panel Report (2000), comprehension strategies were considered “specific procedures that guide students to become aware of how well they are comprehending as they attempt to read” (NRP, 2000, p. 40). Brantmeier (2002) described comprehension strategies as “the comprehension processes that readers use in order to make sense of what they read” (p. 1). The terms “activities,” “procedures,” and “processes” were utilized differently to denote similar implications and were all performed by readers. In addition, the consequences of these implications were differently termed but may refer to the same broad notion of understanding: “remedy perceived cognitive failure” (p. 50), “well comprehending while reading” (p. 40), or “make sense of reading” (p. 1). Along the same line, Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) used “deliberate, goal directed attempts” and the consequence was to “control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode the text” (p. 365). The differences in terms
and words that were used in these definitions indicated that there was no concise and straightforward definition of comprehension strategies.

Nevertheless, there was a consensus among most researchers that strategies are the reader’s conscious or subconscious use of activities, procedures, and processes to understand the text (Block & Pressley, 2002; Brantmeier, 2002; McNamara, 2007). For the purpose of this study, comprehension strategies have been defined as various techniques and processes consciously used by readers to make sense of what they read. This definition was favored because it implies an open insertion of various aspects and practices (e.g., behavior, cognition, metacognition, and linguistics) that could be learned and used by the student to make sense of the reading piece. In addition to identifying what comprehension strategies mean, determining what strategic readers do was essential in identifying specific strategies and how to teach these strategies (Samuels & Farstrup, 2011).

**Understanding what strategic readers do.** Understanding what good readers do before, during, and after they read has become an essential prerequisite to establish strategies for poor and noncompetent readers (Duke, 2001; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). To determine what good and strategic readers do, Pearson, Dole, Duffy, and Roehler (1992) indicated that strategic readers connect what they know to the new information that they need to learn, ask questions about what they read and discriminate important from less important ideas. Also, strategic readers are skillful in synthesizing information and monitoring their comprehension. As pointed out by Vacca (2002), strategic readers are able to use their prior knowledge before, during, and after they read. While they are using their prior knowledge, they can determine what is relevant in the text, synthesize, infer, ask questions, monitor understanding, and fix any faulty understanding. Similarly, Flood, Lapp, Squire, and Jensen (2003) listed the following features to
distinguish strategic readers from less or non-strategic readers: extracting meaning from the text, monitoring understanding, questioning, reviewing, rereading, summarizing, evaluating, predicting, and inferring. Likewise, Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007) used similar strategies and added “visualization” to the list. Moreover, Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) found that strategic readers can have the ability to understand the reading piece literally, inferentially, or sometimes evaluatively. In other words, strategic readers can decide what, when, and how to use strategies while reading. Some reading experts became convinced that understanding what good readers do in order to understand a text could be helpful and supportive in determining what strategies should be taught to unskillful readers (Alavi & Ganjabi, 2008; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).

Thus, understanding the general characteristics of strategic readers could provide straightforward guidelines to teachers and researchers in determining and planning decisions regarding teaching reading comprehension strategies. Therefore, proponents of using comprehension strategies to teach comprehension focused on strategic readers’ tactics and reading processes (Gill, 2008; Tankersley, 2005). They considered that these strategies are very important because readers who used them demonstrated success in reading and understanding the text (Coyne et al., 2009; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).

**Categories of reading comprehension strategies.** Traditionally, word decoding and identifying text structure have been considered the sole categories of comprehension strategies (Carrell, Gajdusek, & Wise, 1998; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). Shokrpour and Fotovatian (2007) categorized strategies as bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up processes deal with the micro-knowledge (e.g., letters, words, and phrases) of the reading text to the higher level of knowledge of the whole reading text (e.g., sentences, paragraphs, text, and schemata).
On the other hand, top-down processes start from the more general aspects of text knowledge to the more specific (e.g., general prior knowledge, schemata, and expectations) text knowledge aspects (Bang & Zhao, 2007; Shokrpour & Fotovatian, 2007). Recently, researchers investigated thoroughly the strategies that competent readers use when they read (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Pressley, 2000; Yang, 2006). They realized that comprehension strategies should not be restricted to the categorization of specific list of strategy(ies). Rather, strategic and skillful readers could go beyond the scope of these limited categories.

Most researchers became clear that in order to understand what best strategies are, teachers should teach unskillful readers to use the effective strategies used by skillful readers (Pressley, 2000; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Therefore, many researchers realized that there are different types of strategies that strategic readers use when they want to make sense of what they read. These strategies have been classified and termed differently among researchers. For example, some strategies were called “the word-level” or “text-level” (Barnett, 1988, p. 150), “global” or “local” (Barnard, Harley, Graziella, & Tom, 1980, pp. 405-410), and recently rephrased “cognitive” and “metacognitive” (Alavi & Ganjabi, 2008, p. 208; Grabe, 2009, p. 222; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2008; Yang, 2006, p. 315). Metacognitive strategies are related to readers’ self-evaluation and thinking about their learning process (O’Malley et al., 1985). On the other hand, cognitive strategies are related to tasks, processes, and efforts that are applied to make sense of the reading materials (Yang, 2006). Grabe and Stoller (2011) categorized reading comprehension strategies into “global,” “monitoring,” and “support” (p.226). These strategies implied previewing, predicting, answering questions, inferring, creating mental images, summarizing, monitoring, identifying reading difficulties, repairing faulty comprehension, rereading, taking notes, using the dictionary, and paraphrasing.
Typical strategic readers rely on the integration of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in order to make sense of what they read (Yang, 2006). According to these assumptions, several researchers emphasized the integration of cognitive and metacognitive strategies to better improve the comprehension abilities of readers (Neupert & McDonal-Miszczak, 2004). Janzen and Stoller (1998) infused all these strategies into the following list: identifying purpose for reading, checking prediction, finding an answer to a question, connecting text to the prior knowledge, previewing, asking questions, summarizing, connecting one part of the text to another, and recognizing text structure. Palincsar (1982) used predicting, questioning, seeking clarification, and summarizing when she introduced the reciprocal teaching approach. Keene and Zimmerman (1997) added prior knowledge or what has come to be called schema, being metacognitive, making connections, inferring, asking questions, determining big ideas, evoking images, monitoring comprehension, fixing-up strategies, and synthesizing. Likewise, Harvey and Goudvis (2007) used the same strategies with slight modification in terminologies. They came up with a comprehension strategy list that contained activating background knowledge, making connections, questioning, making inferences, visualizing, determining importance, summarizing, synthesizing, and monitoring.

The National Reading Panel (2000) proposed seven strategies that demonstrated a significant role in readers’ comprehension development. These strategies included monitoring, cooperative learning, using graphic/semantic organizers, question generating, question answering, story structuring, and summarizing. Similarly, Oczkus (2004) proposed “the super six” (pp. 22-31) comprehension strategies and suggested that these six strategies were helpful and could have a high support to incompetent or less skillful readers. These strategies included building background/making connections, predicting/inferring, questioning, monitoring,
summarizing, and evaluating. Finally, Grabe (2009) proposed summarizing, asking/answering questions, prior knowledge activating, monitoring, using text-structure, visualizing, and inferring.

It is worth noting that the application and selection of reading strategies are usually determined by the students’ needs and the lesson’s objectives. In presenting these strategies for any reading classroom, many researchers emphasized that teachers need to identify what, when, and how to use the strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2008). Duke (2001) proposed the following elements for the accomplishment of successful, explicit, and flexible instruction of comprehension strategies: (a) an explicit identification of a strategy, when, and how should it be used; (b) teacher/student and/or student/teacher modeling of the selected strategy(ies); (c) applying and using strategy(ies) collaboratively and independently (d) guided practice and the use of strategy with gradual release of responsibility (from the teacher to the student); and (e) using the strategy(ies) independently. In teaching comprehension, all these strategies are considered helpful because each strategy is supposed to accomplish specific reading comprehension goals (Rich & Pressley, 1990).

**Research on Using Comprehension Strategies to Teach Reading Comprehension**

**Comprehension strategies in EFL/ESL classrooms.** Since Durkin’s (1978) study, attention was also paid to English language learners’ reading comprehension using various comprehension strategies (Block, 1986; Fotovatian, & Shokrpour, 2007; Mihara, 2011; Miller & Perkins, 1990; Yang, 2006). Most of the research that was conducted in ESL and EFL classrooms placed heavy emphasis on the relationship between comprehension strategies, academic reading comprehension achievements (Iwai, 2008; Maasum & Maarof, 2012; Mihara, 2011), and differences in using these strategies among language learners. In addition, great
attention was placed on the implications of using these strategies in first and second language settings (Tsai, Ernst, & Talley, 2010; Upton, 1997). One of the pioneering works in this regard was conducted by Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989). In their research, they divided 26 ESL students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Arabic, Japanese, Malaysian, Chinese, Greek, Spanish, and French) into experimental and control groups. In their reading programs, the experimental groups received metacognitive strategy training while the control groups did not receive any strategy training programs. Semantic mapping and the experience-text-relationship were the only metacognitive strategies that were used in the study’s training program to facilitate the experimental groups’ understanding of the text. Reading comprehension posttests were utilized to measure the participants’ overall differences in reading achievements. Results revealed that the experimental groups outperformed the control groups in the reading comprehension test scores. Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto argued that ESL learners could typically benefit from the implementation of metacognitive strategy in developing the overall reading practices, particularly when the strategy is explicitly instructed and modeled.

On the other hand, Fotovatian and Shokrpour (2007) investigated the power of comprehension strategy instruction on fostering EFL learners’ reading comprehension abilities. They examined the effects of reading comprehension strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective) on Iranian EFL reading comprehension development. The study’s participants were 31 Iranian EFL university students. The participants were taught 24 different comprehension strategies during reading comprehension courses. The strategies were distributed as following: (a) cognitive strategies (e.g., rereading, note-taking, questioning, elaborating, deducing, inducing, decoding new words, inferring, decoding single words, translating, summarizing, simplifying, imaging, and exemplifying), (b) metacognitive strategies (e.g.,
anticipating, monitoring, evaluating, using direct attention, and recognizing text structure), and finally, (c) socio-affective strategies (e.g., questioning, explaining the text, showing emotion about the text, commenting on the text, and comparing attitudes). At the end of the assigned courses, the participants were tested using standardized comprehension questions to measure their general reading comprehension progression. Chi-square tests results indicated that good readers (readers who scored higher percentage in the tests) exhibited dramatic progression in various types of metacognitive strategies (pp. 52-59). More importantly, metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension improvement were positively correlated.

One of the leading and distinct studies on observing comprehension instruction in English language classrooms was conducted by Miller and Perkins (1990). The researchers observed reading comprehension instruction in language learning classrooms. Despite the fact that Miller and Perkins observed reading classes, they found out that very little time was devoted to reading comprehension instruction. It is worth noting that there was no consensus among most researchers of what type of materials might best be used to teach comprehension strategies (Ness, 2009). In addition, most researchers indicated that reading comprehension instruction is still not receiving the required attention and more research is still needed to improve explicit comprehension instruction, particularly in English language learning classrooms.

**Children’s Picture Books**

Throughout their long history, children’s picture books have occupied a special place in education (Cho & Kim, 1999; Goodwin, 2008; Sharp, 1991). This is because picture books cover broad areas of topics, contain delightful words, comprehensible illustrations, unique styles, interesting cultural variations, and information density (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). These attributes demonstrated considerably important effects on facilitating teaching and learning any
pieces of information from picture books (Heuvel-Panhuizen, Boogaard, & Doig, 2009). For example, illustrations and drawings in some picture books were considered motivating, engaging, and greatly supporting the learners’ memories and information recall (Columba, Kim, & Moe, 2009; Paivio, 1971). These two features could help readers remember and retain information. This assumption was strongly supported by findings from some previous studies which affirmed that the depth and richness of picture book illustrations could support readers to uncover the meaning of the reading piece regardless of their vocabulary knowledge (Elliott & Dupuis, 2002; Nodelman, 1996; Verhallen & Bus, 2011). Nodelman (1996) explained this relationship:

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 our unfolding knowledge of the story. (p. 219)

Therefore, all the distinctive characteristics of picture books open new horizons to their use in teaching reading comprehension explicitly in language and literacy classrooms.

**Definition of picture books.** There has been general agreement among children’s literature authors and experts that a picture book is considered a genre of children’s literature in which illustrations, design, and words usually tell the story (Overturf, Montgomery, & Smith, 2013). Similarly, Culham and Coutu (2008) defined picture books as the meaningful integration of illustrations, words, and design. In picture books, illustrations and words usually complete each other and readers can often understand the story by looking at the illustrations, reading the words, or looking at the illustrations and reading the words at the same time (Jalongo, 2004).
Mitchell (2002) combined most picture books’ features and definitions in her explanation of the meaning of picture books:

“...picture books” evokes images of brightly colored, beautifully illustrated books that beg to be read. No matter what our age, most of us still enjoy reading them because of their vibrant pictures, rich and evocative language, and poignant and meaningful themes. Picture books speak to us in the same way photographs do. They touch our emotions, delight our senses, appeal to our whimsy, and bring back memories of our childhood. Picture books invite us to curl up and read them. (p. 71)

Moreover, Lado (2012) added more elements to the characteristics of picture books. These elements included aesthetic (beautifully and artistically designed), easy-to-read, flexible (they cover various topics using various styles, simple, complicated, rhymed, and wordless), and thematic materials that could be used to teach different pieces of information. Additionally, Culham (2001) described picture books as, “short on pages, but long in meaning” (p. 2).

**Types of picture books.** Based on the fact that authors of picture books use different styles, illustrations, designs, themes, and wordings when they create stories, picture books have been categorized according to these variations (Bolton, 2003; Huck, Helper, Hickman, & Kiefer, 2001; Silvey, 1995). Therefore, there are many different types of picture books that serve multiple educational purposes. Accordingly, the most common types of picture books are alphabet books, counting books, wordless picture books, easy-reading picture books, concept books, rhymed books, multicultural picture books, pop-up picture books, informational picture books, fiction picture books, non-fiction picture books, folktales, digital picture books, science picture books, fair trade picture books, song picture books, and postmodern picture books.
Despite their variations, the types of picture books have possibilities for various instructional uses in classroom education.

**Selection of picture books.** The variations of picture books present a challenge for many teachers when they consider using them in their classrooms. In order to obtain supportive results in the use of picture books in the classrooms, teachers need to select the right picture books, at the right time, to teach the right theme or strategy. For this reason, children’s literature experts have provided different criteria to select picture books when they are used for different classroom purposes.

For example, Costello and Kolodziei (2006) suggested some guidelines to be considered when selecting picture books to support teaching different art and content area topics. These criteria included identifying the purpose of using the story, meeting the lesson’s objectives, considering the students’ needs and cultures, containing rich vocabulary, and comprehensible illustrations. On the other hand, Moss (1995) highlighted picture books’ “interest-ingness” (p. 123) to the student and their relevancy to the curriculum. Lado (2012) added certain criteria that should be considered when picture books are used to teach English as a Second Language learners. These criteria included easy-to-read (contain fairly simple language), appropriate in length, interesting, motivating, use a greater proportion of high-frequency words, thematic, well-illustrated, containing simple vocabulary, “tell-able” (p. 4), and comprehensible. Stewart (2002) proposed nine features that any picture books should have in order to be used successfully to teach at any type of classroom. These features were: (a) physical quality- picture books are recommended to have robust high quality paper and be attached firmly; (b) illustrations-colorful and attractive illustrations, clear, bright, bold, and large texts; (c) language-predictable, simple, appropriate to the learners’ level, related to the theme, and consistent to the illustrations; (d) rich-
contains various illustrations and language that enrich learning, (e) readability—simple word use, short sentences, and clear illustrations; (f) preferences—appeal to the learners’ cultures; (g) stereotype—gender, race, and class; (h) appeal to ethics and morality; and (i) meet the learners’ needs and lessons’ objectives. In addition, Marantz and Marantz (2006) included the “accessibility” (p. 92) of picture books (the extent to which students have access to picture books). This feature is very important, particularly when picture books are brought to English language classrooms because learners at this level could need to have access to the picture books in order to able to prepare and read them at home and discuss them easily in the classroom.

Finally, teachers need to consider the available instructional time when selecting a picture book. Picture books that are used in a classroom should not be lengthy, particularly in language learning classrooms (Deed, Bellhouse, & Johnston, 2007). This feature plays an essential role, especially in EFL classrooms where picture books could be used as supplementary materials to the English textbooks in teaching the English language. Additionally, being short with high frequency words provide an appropriate space for multiple strategy exposure and use. This trait is fundamental, particularly when we consider the individual needs of some EFL students.

**Research on the use of children’s picture books in ESL/EFL classrooms.** Because of their various features and educational power, picture books have started to find their place in many ESL and EFL classrooms (Early, 1991; Kooy, & Chiu, 1998; Lado, 2012; Reid, 2002). They have been used in language learning classrooms to teach different language skills including reading (Kasten, Kristo, McClure, & Garthwait, 2005), writing (Heitman, 2005), speaking (Spencer & Slocum, 2010), and listening (Spooner & Woodcock, 2010).

In addition, picture books were used to enhance ESL/EFL learners’ critical thinking (Kuo, 2005) and basic literacy skills (Manarino-Leggett, 1995). For example, Hsiu-Chih (2008)
investigated the general benefits of children’s picture books in Taiwanese classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). The study placed a great emphasis on the teachers’ perceptions of using children’s picture books in the English language classrooms. Teachers’ perceptions revealed some fundamental educational values of using children’s picture books in English language learning classrooms, which were categorized into “linguistic value”, “the value of the stories”, and “the value of the pictures” (p. 48). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were used as a primary source to collect data from the teachers. Findings indicated that children’s picture books had linguistic benefits in which learners could improve their vocabulary learning, reading, and critical thinking. Along the same line, illustrations of picture books could help to trigger students’ motivation in learning. Finally, using picture books was helpful to assist students to actively engage in the classroom when they learn from them.

Moreover, Ghosn (2002) explored the use of children’s picture books to enrich language learners’ learning at primary grade levels. Ghosn proposed four reasons to explain the rationale of using picture books in language learning classrooms at primary levels: First, picture books provide authentic “natural” (p. 173) language context that stimulates meaningful and motivating space for language learning. Second, the illustrations in children’s picture books can facilitate the learning of new words through context. Third, children’s picture books stimulate learners’ communicative and critical thinking skills. Finally, children’s picture books can enhance learners’ attitudes toward learning the language. Not only did children’s picture books demonstrate great success with young ESL/EFL learners, but also when they were used in adult language learning classrooms.

In a study conducted by Ho (2000), Chinese undergraduate English language learners were taught literacy and language courses using picture books for three years. The participants
were divided into three groups of 20 students. The students were observed and interviewed after the end of the course sessions. The overall results of this study showed that students participated positively in most language, literacy tasks, and activities that included pronunciation, developing literacy competence, critical reading, and multicultural awareness. The results of this study showed that picture books are not linear instructional tools that are used in specific situations to facilitate and/or accomplish specific goals. Rather, picture books can function in multiple dimensions to meet the needs of various language learning goals. Furthermore, considerable numbers of studies were conducted to investigate the role of children’s picture books in developing different language and literacy abilities of English language learners (Hsiu-Chih, 2008; Mundy & Hadaway, 1999; Strasser & Seplocha, 2007). It is worth noting that most studies considered think-aloud, read-aloud, literature circles, retelling, response to literature, and reciprocal teaching as the major instructional approaches for incorporating children’s literature into ESL and EFL classrooms (Barkaoui, 2011; Heydon, 2003; Hu, 1995; Richardson & Carleton, 1996).

**Research on the use of children’s picture books to teach comprehension strategies.**

Despite the fact that picture books are widely used for various educational purposes, their specific use in teaching comprehension strategies and improving comprehension is still narrow (Trehearne & Doctorow, 2006). Most research studies focusing on using children’s picture books to teach comprehension strategies have been conducted in classrooms where English is taught as a native or first language (Baumann, Hooten, & White, 1999; Berne & Clark, 2008; Rich & Blake, 1994; Youngs & Serafini, 2011). For example, Berne and Clark (2008) examined the use of children’s literature in teaching some comprehension strategies through discussion groups. Students were explicitly instructed to talk about the stories using various comprehension
strategies. All students were placed in peer-led groups to talk about the stories. While they were engaged in talking about the stories, students practiced the use of some comprehension strategies. Results showed that all students progressed dramatically in strategy use because they learned strategies from their teachers and their peers. Berne and Clark’s study indicated that stories were essential tools to motivate and engage students in conducting any task and thereby achieve learning. Similarly, some authors including Harvey and Goudvis (2007), Lado (2012), and Zimny (2008) emphasized the incorporating of picture books to scaffold reading comprehension strategy instruction in reading and literacy classrooms. They recommended the use of picture books to teach a wide range of reading comprehension strategies including summarizing, synthesizing, visualizing, determining importance, questioning, connecting, and monitoring.

Without doubt, research in reading comprehension and comprehension strategy instruction provided rich contributions to the body of reading comprehension development. Researchers from various learning contexts affirmed that reading comprehension is neglected, reading comprehension should be taught explicitly, and reading comprehension strategies should be implemented in any explicit reading comprehension instruction. There is a mounting evidence that strategies that are used by skillful readers could be taught to less or non-skillful readers to improve their reading and comprehension abilities. Nevertheless, there was little consensus among most researchers of which type of materials could be more effective in implementing flexible and explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction. Additionally, researchers did not talk about cross-context comprehension strategy instructions. In other words, researchers did not indicate the power of comprehension strategy instruction in some learning contexts such as the Arab EFL learning contexts. More importantly, most of the research that was conducted in
explicit comprehension strategy instruction targeted adult and high school learners and there was no much research on young and low grade learners. To fill these gaps, I explored the implementation of explicit comprehension strategy instruction using specific type of learning materials (children’s picture books) in one of the Arab EFL contexts (Libyan EFL context) with an emphasis on young language learners.

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Anfara and Metz (2006), a theoretical framework in qualitative research helps to construct the general frame of the study, supports the formation of questions, and leads the focus of the research process and methodology. Therefore, the theoretical rationale of this dissertation was informed by a combination of several previous theories, approaches, insights, and propositional perspectives. Reading comprehension plays an essential role in developing language and literacy education in different fields, including English language learning. Hence, several research studies reported a growing interest in providing means to improve reading comprehension instruction. As a response to these calls, a considerable numbers of research studies shed light on the use of comprehension or/and reading strategies to consolidate the teaching of reading comprehension. Most of these studies indicated that providing flexible and explicit instruction to comprehension and reading strategies would significantly influence the development of reading comprehension achievements. Even with a body of knowledge highlighting the impact of comprehension strategies instruction on the growth of learners’ comprehension abilities, many EFL teachers did not include explicit comprehension instruction in their teaching agenda. This is because comprehension strategy instruction requires explicitness, good modeling knowledge of strategies, time, and the use of appropriate materials (Block & Lacina, 2009; Dole, Nokes, & Drits, 2009; Pressley, 2006; Pressley et al, 1989).
Thus, investigation of using children’s picture books to systematically and explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies could help teachers and researchers find rich resources to initiate reading comprehension instruction at different school levels and to different types of learners. Picture books contain numerous distinguished features that provide useful resources in teaching various school topics including reading strategies. For example, Paivio (1971), Rosenblatt (1994), and Ghosn (2002) exhibited an important theoretical evidence of the role that can be played of picture books in any educational process.

Through her transactional theory, Rosenblatt (1994) demonstrated how children’s picture books could facilitate the “efferent” and “aesthetic” stances of children’s reading abilities (pp. 22-27). Paivio (1971) provided important evidence in his dual-coding theory about the role of illustrations and pictures (the distinguished features of picture books) in facilitating readers’ understanding and comprehension of the text. According to Paivio (in Sadoski & Paivio, 2013), meaningful illustrations are very essential in promoting the working memory to process the factual information of any text. Finally, Ghosn (2002) suggested four reasons to support the incorporation of children’s picture books in language learning classrooms. These reasons included: (a) picture books are motivational, (b) picture books are authentic (provide language in the learners’ natural context), (c) picture books enhance students’ literacy and critical thinking, and finally, (d) picture books support the emotional and cultural understanding of language. In addition, many studies reported that picture books were successfully used to teach different school areas and at different school levels (Smith, DeMarco, & Worley, 2002). Nevertheless, their use in teaching reading comprehension strategies was limited, particularly in English as a Foreign Language learning classrooms. Consequently, this study attempted to enrich the field of reading comprehension instruction by providing authentic and interesting materials (some
selected picture books) to be used to fill this gap (lack of materials) in comprehension strategy instruction.

In this particular study picture books were used for the first time to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to Libyan learners of English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, the study was based on qualitative-exploratory design. The questions and the instruments were designed to obtain inductive and exploratory data from the participants. On the other hand, comprehension strategies were used because they could have an important impact on developing reading comprehension if they are taught explicitly and systematically. In addition, most comprehension strategies were built on the major reading and learning theories including schema theory, constructivist theory, transactional theory, and motivation theory.

**Schema theory.** Schema theory places heavy emphasis on the interrelationship of new knowledge with previous knowledge to form an understanding of the new knowledge (Harris & Hodges, 1995). According to Rumelhart and Ortony (1977), readers’ schemata are paramount and central to the comprehension process because they are the core of their information-processing systems. Schema theory provided an important explanation to the relationship between comprehension strategies and reading comprehension in which readers often rely on their schema/schemata when they use some strategies (Carr & Thompson, 1996; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013). Therefore, schema theory was considered fundamental to distinguish strategic from non-strategic readers by showing how some readers use their prior knowledge to demonstrate their understanding while others cannot (Carr & Thompson, 1996; Yusuf, 2011). Schema theory could assist teachers to determine that some comprehension strategies such as connecting and inferring may require building students’ prior knowledge to be taught effectively (Nassaji, 2002; Yusuf, 2011).
**Relating schema theory to comprehension and reading strategies.** Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) provided an important evidence of the relationship between readers’ schema, reading comprehension strategies, and comprehension. They considered readers’ schema as the basic unit of the information-processing system and hence, the backbone to comprehension processing. Readers can comprehend specific knowledge by recalling schema that is relevant to that certain piece of knowledge. For instance, to understand a text about lions, a reader needs to recall schema about lions either by connecting some information in the text to his/her knowledge about the lions he/she saw in the zoo or a story he/she read about lions. Similarly, Rumelhart (1980) argued that correct comprehension of the text is related to the recalling of the correct and consistent schema or schemata. In other words, readers could miscomprehend or provide wrong information about the text if they used inconsistent or wrong schema of the text they are reading. Consequently, schema theory played an essential role in this study by facilitating the selection of some comprehension strategies as well as how they should be taught and assessed. Keene and Zimmermann (2013) affirmed this fact when they wrote, “The more background knowledge a reader brings to the text, the more he or she will comprehend, and the more he or she comprehends, the more he or she knows” (p. 605).

**Constructivist theory.** Comprehension strategy instruction is considered a social constructivist process (McLaughlin, 2012; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). According to constructivists, meaning is constructed through the reader’s knowledge connection of what is already known to what is going to be known (Cambourne, 2002; Garcia et al., 2011; Law, 2008). Hence, reading comprehension is considered a constructivist act (Almasi, 2003). Constructivists viewed the acquisition of comprehension as a reciprocal process that takes place within a social context (Dell’Olio & Donk, 2007; McLaughlin, 2012). According to constructivists, knowledge
and reality are socially constructed by both students and teachers (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978) in which teachers and students work together to construct the understanding of knowledge. It’s worth noting that some constructivist tenets were strongly connected to schema in that they were based on learners’ construction of knowledge using their own experiences (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). Specifically, when readers learn new knowledge they construct the meaning of the new knowledge using their schemata and information about the text (Piaget & Inhelder, 1973).

**Relating constructivist theory to comprehension and reading comprehension strategies.**

Since the learning process requires teacher-to-learner and learner-to-learner interaction, this is an essential part in comprehension and comprehension strategy instruction (Block & Parris, 2008). Constructivist epistemology is based on co-constructing of knowledge as a result of the interaction between teachers and students or students and students. Teachers need to introduce and model specific strategy(ies), provide an opportunity to students to practice it, and finally, encourage students to independently use it (Duke, 2001). Therefore, the process of comprehension strategy instruction was considered “social constructivist” (Duke, 2001, p. 11) and learners can construct understanding of knowledge through active interaction with teachers and peers (McLaughlin, 2012). Moreover, constructivist theory could facilitate determining an explicit and flexible basis to comprehension strategy instruction and could help answer the pedagogical and instructional inquiries of this dissertation.

**Transactional theory.** Students’ prior knowledge is not the only indicator of their comprehension and understanding of the reading text. Rather, the interaction between the reader, the text, and the context are fundamental in understanding any text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Through the interaction of these elements, comprehension takes place (Pressley et al., 1992; Rosenblatt,
Using children’s literature as the main material to explain this theory, Rosenblatt (1978) argued that readers’ responses fall on a continuum between aesthetic and efferent when they read any piece of literature. The efferent stance is usually adopted when the reading purpose is to acquire factual, logical, and quantitative aspects of meaning while the aesthetic stance is adopted when the purpose is to acquire affective, emotive, and qualitative aspects of meaning. Similar to schema theory, transactional theory helped me to explain part of the comprehension strategy instruction process in which the meaning of any new information could be derived from the relationship between the reader and the text (Farrell & Squire, 1990). Moreover, transactional theory helped me to justify the role of using aesthetic materials such as picture books in motivating the participants and then triggering their understanding of the text (Pressley et al., 1992).

**Relating transactional theory to comprehension and reading comprehension strategies.**

In Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, a great emphasis was placed on the relationship between the reader, the text, and the context. Comprehension usually takes place through this relationship (Almasi, 2003). The interaction between the reader and the text could involve the integration of the reader’s schemata which results in comprehension (Almasi, 2003). In addition, transaction could take place by creating a context through which active interaction between the reader and the text is essential in constructing positive and active comprehension. According to Rosenblatt (1978), active transaction could be accomplished by the incorporation of authentic and easy reading materials, such as children’s picture books, which might contribute to reader-text or text-reader relationship. This type of relationship, according to Rosenblatt, is fundamental to the establishment of meaning and understanding of the reading text.
**Motivation theory.** Motivation plays a major role in developing any learning program (Moser & Morrison, 1998). Motivation was considered one of the key indicators in comprehension strategy instruction (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Taboada & Buehl, 2012). This is because reading comprehension was considered an effortful cognitive activity that requires readers’ motivation and self-efficacy to eliminate its complexity (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Strategic readers must be motivated in order to reach a full understanding of the text (Moje & O’Brien, 2001; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). Motivating variables that include effort, anxiety, and curiosity play a vital role in readers’ overall performance (O’Neil & Drillings, 1994). Some motivation theories, specifically those surrounding intrinsic motivation are important to this study, since intrinsic motivation is considered an essential component to active engagement (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008). These general features of motivation theory contributed significantly to determine the materials and the instructions’ quality when teaching reading comprehension.

**Relating motivation theory to comprehension and reading comprehension strategies.** According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencevich (2004), readers who are intrinsically motivated are usually more interested in what they are reading and in using strategies and thus more likely to understand it. In other words, readers’ interests in the reading text could increase the comprehension opportunities of that text. Based on these premises, using children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies could provide a rationale to increase students’ opportunities to motivate and comprehend what they are reading. Also, motivation theory contributed to determine what type of activities, tasks, and exercises teachers might
choose in order to sustain the students’ engagement in using comprehension strategies (Grabe, 2009). Figure 1 demonstrates the study’s theoretical framework flowchart.

The chart illustrates the integration of reading comprehension strategies, picture books, and the basic explicit practices in order to inform systematic conclusive reading comprehension instruction.

Figure 1. The theoretical framework flowchart
This flowchart shows how reading comprehension outcome is the result of the interaction of these reading comprehension strategies, the use of quality picture books, and the implementation of explicit instruction. The process goes downwards where the use of picture books (because of their comprehensible attributes) could be used to explicitly teach any of the cognitive or metacognitive reading comprehension strategies (e.g., questioning, inferring, monitoring). The use of the tools (picture books) and the approach (comprehension strategies) should be mediated by explicit instruction (vocabulary instruction, modeling, scaffolding, and independent practice). Throughout systematic and well-organized use of this method, reading comprehension development would be expected.

Summary

Until fairly recently, reading comprehension was not taught and was not expected to be taught in many classrooms (Block & Pressley, 2002). Since 1978, research on reading comprehension instruction received the attention of a considerable numbers of researchers (Almasi, 2003; Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Durkin, 1978; Flood, Lapp, Squire, & Jensen, 2003; Ness, 2011; Pressley, 2000; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, & Echevarria, 1998). Most of the researchers’ assumptions indicated that students’ overall reading comprehension achievements were very low, students with low comprehension achievements need explicit and flexible reading comprehension instruction, and effective comprehension instruction was based on teaching strategies used by skillful and competent readers.

In order to provide effective means to teach reading comprehension strategies, some literacy experts proposed using children’s picture books. Their potential usefulness was based on effective and successful results when they were used to teach different language skills to ESL and EFL learners. The results of numerous research studies exhibited different roles played by
children’s picture books in language learners’ motivation, engagement, improving vocabulary, writing, speaking, critical thinking, and many other language skills. The significant results of most of these studies provided an important justification that picture books might be successful and supportive resources when used to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies and hence develop reading comprehension achievement of low comprehension achieving learners, particularly in EFL and ESL classrooms.
Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to explore EFL learners’ and teachers’ experiences of using children’s picture books for explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants’ experiences and perceptions as they respond to the use of picture books, this study was built on the paradigm of qualitative inquiry (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Ragin, 1987; Rihoux, 2006; Thiem & Dusa, 2013). According to Brantlinger et al. (2005), qualitative inquiry is “a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context” (p. 195).

The rationale of using qualitative methodology in this study drew on the researcher’s interests in reporting the students’ and teachers’ authentic experiences of using children’s picture books in reading comprehension instruction. The authentic experiences of participants, according to Silverman (2011), can only be extracted through qualitative inquiry. This implies that the participants’ voices and real experiences can be viewed primarily through observations and interviews. Another rationale for using qualitative inquiry in this study was that qualitative data could provide naturalistic, rich, and in-depth description about the problem of study (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Therefore, qualitative inquiry was an appropriate method to explore the experiences and perceptions of Libyan EFL students and their teachers in using children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. Qualitative methodology was also selected in order to provide appropriate responses to the main questions and to propose further experimental research grounds to the problem of this study. This was because many researchers might not be
familiar with how the participants of this study could respond to any intervention related to using children’s picture books to improve reading comprehension.

To sum up, qualitative methodology was selected because it was important to provide an in-depth and clear understanding of the participants’ views about children’s picture books and learning comprehension strategies for future educational interventions and decisions. Accordingly, all data that were used in this study were collected qualitatively, transcribed, categorized, sorted, and securely saved. In order to track any changes in the participants’ experiences and perceptions, the differences in the collected data were reported (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

**Epistemological and Ontological Foundations**

This dissertation was built on constructivist epistemology (Piaget, 1972; Reyes & Vallone, 2008; Steffe & Gale, 1995). According to constructivists, learners use different ways to construct knowledge and knowledge construction is fundamentally based on collaboration, learner-centered, and the interaction between the learners or the learners and their teachers (Crotty, 1998; Gagnon & Collay, 2006; Matthews, 1998). Constructivism provided numerous assumptions that supported language learning classrooms and were considered central to this dissertation. Some of these assumptions were: (a) complex and authentic learning environment is crucial to active language learning and important in the use of knowledge in real life, (b) collaborative construction of knowledge is vital to active learning, (c) learning is socially constructed and meaning is often prompted by problem-solving practices, questions, and authentic tasks, and finally, (d) the essence of meaning generation is always social and arising in and out of the learners’ interaction in their learning environment and the conditions under which learning takes place (Cambourne, 2002; Crotty, 1998; Uden & Beaumont, 2006). Additionally,
since constructivism deals with the understanding of how people construct knowledge and make sense of the world around them, it is typically associated with qualitative research methods and often requires qualitative inductive analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). Therefore, this dissertation was based on data collected qualitatively from Libyan EFL students and their teachers about their interaction and reaction when they constructed specific types of knowledge (new experiences and views about reading comprehension) using children’s picture books.

The ontological foundation of this dissertation was built on the generalizable and the subjective realities. Specifically, knowledge (the understanding of the problem of this study) was based on different realities (experiences, conceptions, views) and these realities are not unitary. Rather, realities and our understanding of peoples’ conceptions were socially constructed and contextually framed (different people could have different lenses through which knowledge was constructed). Therefore, our interpretations to these various experiences were not controllable, and hence, could not be objective (Searle, 1995).

Design

According to Given (2008), a qualitative exploratory design can be used when knowledge about the research group(s), activity(ies), situation(s), or process(es) is limited or not well defined. In this case, the study was focused on the experiences and perceptions of groups (Libyan EFL learners and their teachers in seventh and eighth grades) who used new materials (children’s picture books) to understand a new process (explicit comprehension strategy instruction) for their first time in their teaching and learning language programs.

Churchill and Iacobucci (2010) provided a rationale for selecting exploratory design to qualitatively investigate a specific problem. According to them, exploratory research designs:
are characterized by flexibility with respect to the research methods used...investigators frequently change the research procedure as the vaguely defined initial problem is transformed into one with more precise meaning...exploratory research is appropriate for any problem about which little is known...exploratory research is the foundation for a good study. (pp. 60-61)

Consequently, the exploratory design is assumed to contribute to rigorous and conclusive findings for future research by providing an in-depth understanding of the use of children’s picture books in teaching reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL classrooms.

**Participants**

The participants of this study were selected from two different preparatory schools in the city of Sabha, Libya. The purpose of using participants from two different sites was to elicit broad insights from the study’s participants (Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, a prompt acceptance and approval to participation were obtained from these two schools. Both schools consist of 24 classrooms including four classes in each of the following grade levels: seventh, eighth, and ninth. Only two classes (one from the seventh and one from the eighth grades) were selected from each school. The purpose of selecting only seventh and eighth grades was that these grade levels were the first grades in which English is taught as compulsory subject in Libyan classrooms.

Initially, a total of 47 students (27 females and 20 males) and two teachers (one male and one female) from the seventh and eighth grades (22 from the seventh and 25 from the eighth) participated in this study. In the third week of the fieldwork of this study, the total number of students for the study was reassigned to 40 students because the collected data became saturated (Macnee & McCabe, 2008). In other words, the number of the students was reduced to 40 (20
females and 20 males) because the students’ responses were redundant and repeated over the course of the fieldwork of this study, and some students were not regularly attending the assigned classes. I stopped obtaining data from seven students who were representing the two participating groups at that point because those students provided similar or nearly identical responses to most questions in the surveys and the interviews, and also did not regularly attend some of the fieldwork actual classes. Specifically, on the third week of the fieldwork of this study, I noticed that most students’ responses were identical; however, the excluded students were not continuously participating. Therefore, they were eliminated from the study.

Libyan students and teachers were selected for this study for many reasons, including my own previous teaching and research experiences with Libyan EFL classrooms, my familiarity with the language and culture of the study’s population, and my proximity to participants. Additionally, my interest in improving the way reading comprehension was taught in the Libyan EFL context was strong, and I was convinced that the results of this study could contribute to teachers’ future decisions about comprehension instruction and comprehension instructional materials. According to data collected from the participants’ demographic surveys and pretests, the overall level of the participants’ English language proficiency was considered pre-intermediate. All the participants were taught English using only the English language textbook (Embark, 2011; Sawani, 2009), and the introduction of children’s picture books as part of their English language instruction was a new experience for them. Moreover, the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies was introduced for the first time to the students and the teachers in these grade levels.

Using purposeful sampling, the participating students were selected from two focal seventh and eighth classes. Purposeful sampling was implemented because it was considered
feasible in making the focal groups representative of the school’s populations (Merriam, 2009). This was because I selected two groups from two different schools based on specific attributes that were common to most classrooms in the assigned grades. These attributes included age, gender, English language level, reading comprehension experience, and the experience of learning English using picture books. In addition, the core rationale of using purposeful sampling in this study was indicated by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) in their definition of purposeful sampling, which stated that “purposeful sampling is the process of selecting particular subjects to include because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory” (p. 65).

In this study, EFL students and their teachers at seventh and eighth grades were selected as participants, and exploring their views of the use of children’s picture books to teach comprehension strategies was considered as an approach that needed developing.

**Teachers’ Professional Development and Preparation for the Study**

Two English language teachers participated in this study. Both teachers speak Arabic as a native language. The teachers of both classes possessed a B.A. in English language teaching from a Libyan University. The teachers’ philosophies of teaching adhered to the Grammar Translation Method, which meant that they are convinced that translating to the students and teaching grammar are fundamental to teaching English. Also, based on the teachers’ background information that was collected in the background surveys and during the professional development program, both teachers maintained that teacher-centered learning, drill and practice, and memorization of vocabulary are crucial to language learning.

Despite the revolutionary change in the English language curricula in Libya (English language curricula and pedagogy of teaching were developed to meet the communicative approach philosophy), both teachers held on to their traditional beliefs about their teaching. The
teachers justified their instructional choices by stating, “Indeed, we got a new set of English curricula and pedagogy, but we were not professionally prepared or trained to handle these major changes in teaching English in the country” (Salima, the seventh grade teacher).

Overall, the gap between the philosophy and the mechanism of teaching English has become a remarkable issue of teaching English in Libya since the introduction of the new English curricula English for Libya in 2000. This is because most Libyan EFL teachers had been trained and used to teach by traditional ways that relied on memorization of vocabulary, translation, teacher-centered classroom, and drill and practice. In 2000, a new series of EFL curricula, English for Libya, was introduced to teach English in Libyan schools. According to the publishers of this series, English for Libya (2000) is built on the communicative teaching approach. In this approach, the goal of English language teaching is to develop the learners’ communicative competence (Littlewood, 1981). Libyan English teachers were not trained appropriately in using new approaches to teach these materials and are still using the mechanically-focused traditional methods to teach the new EFL materials. This pedagogical problem contributed to expanding the instructional gap in teaching English in Libya (Ahmad, 2012; Rajab, 2007). Consequently, as part of this study, each teacher received a short five-day training program from the researcher to familiarize them with children’s picture books, comprehension strategies, explicit comprehension instruction, and modeling using picture books.

The training program was intended to prepare the teachers to teach reading comprehension by introducing picture books to the teachers, introducing some basic comprehension strategies, telling both teachers about the purpose and objective of the study, and showing them how and when they can use picture books to supplement their English language classes. The teachers’ training program focused mainly on the principles and approaches using
picture books to supplement the English language textbooks to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. The training program started a week prior to the start of the spring semester and lasted for five days. It took place in the teachers’ classrooms and extended from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the first school and from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the second school. During the training program, teachers were coached separately about picture books that they would use and how each picture book could be used to teach comprehension strategies and specific sections in the target units of the English language textbooks.

Prior to introducing the selected picture books to the participating teachers, I affirmed the quality and the applicability of each picture book in teaching reading comprehension strategies and supplementing the English language textbooks. This process underwent some sophisticated steps that included answering questions about each book:

- Is the picture book selected according to standard criteria?
- Does the picture book share a relevant theme with the English language textbook section(s)?
- Could the picture book be used to teach different reading comprehension strategies?
- Is the culture presented in the picture book universal and not stereotypical?

After I finished the first stage of picture book selection, I showed all the selected picture books to the teachers, explained the rationale for selecting these picture books and gave them an opportunity to confirm or disconfirm my selections. Once I received a confirmation approval from both teachers that the selected picture books were appropriate to their practical teaching program, I gave four picture books to each teacher to be used in the classroom. In addition, I introduced some basic comprehension strategies (e.g., previewing, activating prior knowledge, summarizing, retelling, questioning, predicting, connecting, determining big ideas, visualizing,
synthesizing, inferring, and monitoring) to the teachers, defined them, and gave examples about how and when these strategies could be used. The strategy overview was accompanied with different teaching models that were borrowed from previous research (Almasi, 2003). These models included explicit instruction, explaining the strategy, modeling the strategy using think aloud, using guided practice to sustain students’ learning of the strategy, and releasing responsibility by encouraging students’ independent use of the strategy. These teaching models were selected because they were encouraged by previous researchers and demonstrated increasing success of reading comprehension achievements in many different classroom settings (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012; Ness, 2011; Pressley, 2002; Pressley et al., 1998).

Additionally, I introduced some classroom instructions, activities, and tasks that could help teachers motivate and engage their students in the class and make teaching comprehension strategies more beneficial and interesting (e.g., KWL chart, read aloud, think aloud, literature circles, reciprocal teaching, and response to literature). These instructions, activities, and tasks were also built on previous research studies (Almasi, 2003; Duffy, 2009; Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Zimny, 2008).

For example, a think aloud was considered an important instructional approach that has been used frequently by many teachers to model various reading strategies (Smith, 2006; Wilhelm, 2001). Therefore, a think aloud was selected as one of the main approaches to be used as an instructional tool to the explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies. All the selected instructional methods were defined and exemplified, and teachers were trained about when, where, and how to use them. Despite the preference for some strategies over others, the teachers were given the freedom to decide whatever approach to use and whatever strategy to teach based on their lesson plan, need, and purpose. I recommended that both teachers teach
strategies in isolation; that way, multiple strategies of instruction could be emphasized. The rationale of teaching strategies in isolation and then in groups was that, students need more time to use and practice the strategy. Also, teaching a group of strategies in a one class period will confuse students and will consume a lot of time (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

Finally, I recommended that teachers organize their lesson plans and provided them with many suggestions to use whenever possible in their classroom to help the students’ learning improvement. More specifically, I encouraged the teachers to support and encourage their students as much as they could, provide a space for students to work individually and in teams, use a variety of instruction, activities and tasks, and to define, model, and exemplify concepts whenever possible. On the last day of the training program, the teachers completed the pre-surveys. The teachers’ pre-surveys contained questions informed by a pilot study conducted a year prior to the fieldwork of this study.

Pilot Study

In fall 2010, I carried out a pilot study with the seventh and eighth EFL classrooms at the Libyan School in Denver, CO. The pilot study was conducted to serve three purposes: (a) to pilot the possibility of using some children’s picture books as supplementary materials in the Libyan English language learning contexts, (b) to examine the use of some qualitative tools for future data collection which included surveys, interview questions, and observations, and finally, (c) to observe to what extent reading comprehension instruction was used in these classrooms.

Teachers were asked to use picture books as supplementary materials to the English language textbooks to teach general English, reading, and literacy skills. Students completed the pre- and post-surveys, were observed, and finally, interviewed. All the collected data were qualitatively reduced, represented, analyzed, and reported. Findings supported the possibility to
incorporate children’s picture books as supplementary materials to teach different language and literacy skills. Specifically, picture books were frequently used by most participating students and their teachers and, thus, might be appropriate to supplement the English language textbooks and teach comprehension strategies. The participating teachers focused only on teaching general language skills such as speaking, writing, and reading and there was no place for reading comprehension instruction in their classrooms (Al Khaiyali, 2013). After the initial administration during the pilot study, all the used surveys were scaled back to a convenient number of questions to probe students’ thoughts on using children’s picture books as supplementary materials to teach text comprehension strategies.

The pilot study also showed that teachers needed more time for training, the students needed more time to use picture books in the classroom, and the English language textbooks required further supplementary materials to accomplish any reading and literacy purposes. In addition, the pilot study helped me narrow my research focus to reading comprehension strategy instruction instead of focusing on various other language skills. This adjustment occurred because one of the major findings of this pilot study was that reading comprehension instruction was not implemented in Libyan EFL classrooms.

**Instruments**

In order to triangulate the data collected for this study and obtain holistic and in-depth understanding of the students’ and teachers’ perceptions and experiences in using picture books to teach comprehension strategies, several sources were used to collect data. These were divided into primary and secondary resources:

**Primary sources.** Observations and interviews were considered the major sources to collect data for this study. The rationale of using these two instruments as essential sources for
collecting data in this study was that they could help the researcher assure rigorous, holistic, and naturalistic findings about the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Classroom Observation.** According to Merriam (2009), classroom observation is conducted in qualitative inquiries to afford in-depth knowledge and sufficient details about the context, incidents, and behaviors of the phenomenon and problem under investigation. Also, classroom observations could be used to capture the participants’ actions and behaviors in authentic and naturalistic fashion (Saldana, 2011). In order to provide rich and in-depth knowledge about Libyan EFL students and their teachers of their English classes and how they reacted to the use of picture books in reading comprehension strategy instruction, I observed them regularly. All classes that participated in this study were observed from the beginning to the last day of the field study (Mack et al., 2005).

Each classroom observation lasted a minimum of 45 minutes (the time period which is allotted for each class in Libyan schools) per a class period. During the observation, I recorded first-hand and detailed notes. I also videotaped each class. As the result of using video recordings, the observation notes included students’ and teachers’ verbatim interactions. Additionally, the video segments added additional details to my observation notes, were very helpful in confirming my observation results, and helped me detect what I could not see in my direct observation (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). Permission to videotape was gained prior to any video recording. I looked at how long teachers spent in teaching a reading comprehension strategy and how they organized their time in identifying, modeling, practicing, and scaffolding a strategy. Also, I observed how long students took to practice a skill, what strategies most students often used, and how they performed specific tasks about the strategies. In addition, descriptions of the students’ and teachers’ activities, tasks, and comments were provided.
Finally, supportive informal memos were regularly written in order to report general ideas that were learned during the observation (Merriam, 2009).

**Student interviews.** Interviews were considered essential sources for the data used in this dissertation because they reflected the direct experiences and perceptions of the participants after they experienced using picture books in teaching reading comprehension strategies (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). In order to obtain more in-depth explanations of the study’s inquiries and to follow up on students’ responses, semi-structured interviews were implemented (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lichtman, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Three structured questions guided the interview sessions. These questions included:

- What do you think of learning comprehension strategies using picture books?
- What do you like about this experience?
- What do you dislike? How and why?

These questions were extracted from a longer list of questions used in the previous pilot study that was conducted before this study. The rationale for focusing on only these questions was that they met the main purpose of this study and were particularly relevant to the main inquiries of this study (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Moreover, follow-up questions were generated based on the students’ responses to the main questions. The interviews were conducted individually after the end of the study’s fieldwork and lasted from five to ten minutes for each student. In order to assure the students’ confidence in their responses to the questions and establish better understanding of the questions and answers, interviews were conducted using the students’ native language (Mack et al., 2005). All interview sessions were audio-recorded, translated into English, transcribed, and reviewed.
Teacher interviews. Similar to the student interviews, teacher interviews were considered valuable sources to collect data for this dissertation. The teacher interviews were conducted at the end of the field study, and each teacher was interviewed independently. The interviews were semi-structured in that they contained structured and unstructured questions that were related to the general scope of the study’s objectives and questions. Specifically, the structured questions were about each teacher’s general views about using picture books to teach comprehension strategies:

- What do you think of teaching comprehension strategies using picture books?
- What do you like about this experience?
- What do you dislike about this experience? Why?

Also, the questions for the teachers’ interviews were selected from some of the questions used in the earlier pilot study (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The unstructured questions were follow-up questions that built on teachers’ responses and comments about the interviews, surveys, and some notes from the classroom observations. The purpose of all these types of data from the teachers’ interviews was to elicit an in-depth understanding of the teachers’ use of children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed by the teachers themselves in order to assure credibility (Maxwell, 2013).

Secondary sources. In addition to observations and interviews, other secondary sources that included surveys and documents were used as a means to triangulate and consolidate data that were collected for this study. The purpose of using these sources was to supplement and support the data collected from students and teachers. Also, these sources were used to uncover details about the participants that could not be caught by observations and interviews such as the
participants’ practical knowledge of comprehension strategies and some of their background and educational information.

**Student surveys.** Surveys are rarely used in qualitative inquiry, but when the focus of the qualitative inquiry is to explore new problems or phenomena they are highly recommended (Jansen, 2010). According to Jansen, the main purpose of using surveys in exploratory qualitative research is to establish meaningful sense of the participants’ interests and experiences and not to generate numbers. Therefore, the main focus of the student surveys was to uncover and reconfirm general ideas about the students’ background, experiences, and perceptions of using children’s picture books in developing reading comprehension strategies. Hence, the surveys were divided into two broad sections (pre- and post-surveys). Each section was divided into three sub-sections (background, attitude, and comprehension), and each sub-section included various open-ended and multiple choice-questions that provided rich data that could help to understand the phenomenon and problem under investigation. The surveys helped to enrich the explanation and the response of some major inquiries of the study. The principal source of the survey questions was the pilot study that I conducted before the fieldwork of this study to explore the Libyan EFL students’ and teachers’ perceptions of using children’s picture books to supplement teaching English. Also, the survey questions were constructed according to the general purposes of the study and its main questions. Some of the major questions in the student surveys were consistent with the main inquiries of this study (See Appendix G). This consistency was very important in supporting the answers of the main questions of this study. In order to explore what the participants already knew and what they learned later, the pre-surveys were distributed before the start of the field study and the post-surveys were distributed at the end of the field study. All survey questions were translated into the students’ native language in order to
obtain relevant and appropriate answers to the students’ responses to the surveys (Mackey & Gass, 2012). For more details about the student surveys see Appendices A and B.

**Teacher surveys.** The purpose of the teachers’ surveys was to establish more triangulated avenues to the data collected from the teachers (Jansen, 2010). Also, the teacher surveys aimed to obtain multiple perspectives about their experiences in using picture books in teaching comprehension strategies. Similar to the student surveys, the teacher surveys included pre- and post-surveys. The pre-surveys were distributed at the beginning of the field study and during the teachers’ professional development while the post-surveys were distributed at the end of the field study. The pre- and post-surveys contained similar questions and were divided into three sub-surveys including attitude, background, and reading comprehension (See Appendices C and D for more details about the teacher surveys).

**Documents.** In addition, some of the students’ work, activities, and tasks were used to reaffirm students’ overall knowledge of comprehension strategies (Silverman, 2011). The rationale for using some of these documents was to supplement data that were collected in the surveys, observations, and interviews. Also, they helped to provide more details and understanding of the students’ learning of some comprehension strategies when using picture books (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005). These documents were based on the students’ daily classroom tasks, activities, and exercises.

**Student pre-and post-tests.** All the participating students in the seventh and eighth grades were pre-tested before the study began in order to ascertain their overall background knowledge of reading comprehension strategies and picture books. The purpose of the student pre-tests was not to measure the impact of using picture books or the students’ progression. Rather, it was to elicit the students’ knowledge of comprehension strategies and confirm their overall reading
comprehension levels. The students’ pre-tests were conducted before the beginning of the field study. Both participating teachers graded the pre-tests and returned the results back during the first week of the field study. After the end of the target units in the English language textbook (Units One and Two) and before the interviews, students were given a post-test. The purpose of the students’ post-tests was to determine the overall differences in students’ knowledge of comprehension strategies and to support data that were collected from the surveys, observations, and interviews. All the questions that were used in the pre- and post-test were formulated by the researcher and the participating teachers. These tests included multiple-choice questions, and they covered some sections in the seventh and eighth grade English language textbooks (see Appendices E and F for more details about the seventh and eighth grade tests).

**Student exercises and activities.** The student exercises and activities included the daily activities and exercises students completed in order to demonstrate their general understanding of comprehension strategies. Some of the students’ exercises, tasks, and activities were considered important evidence to support their views and general perceptions of using picture books to learn some basic comprehension strategies. In addition to these sources, some of the researcher’s memo notes were used to report and affirm some basic findings of this study. These memos were mainly based on the teachers’ and students’ think alouds, notes about all the collected data, and some remarks from the classroom instructions.

**Materials**

In addition to Unit One and Unit Two in the English language textbooks of seventh and eighth grades, eight children’s picture books were used. The selected picture books included

*Telling Time: How to Tell Time on Digital Analog Clocks!; Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?; Free Fall; The Gardener; Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What is an Adjective?; Around*
the Year; Dear Peter Rabbit; and The Giving Tree (See Appendix K for the annotated-bibliography and more details about these picture books).

Picture books for the study were selected according to Jalongo’s (2004), Columba, Kim, and Moe’s (2009), and Lado’s (2012) criteria of selecting picture books for educational purposes. These criteria included that picture books must be: (a) interesting, (b) authentic, (c) artful/well-illustrated, (d) meet the lesson’s objectives, (e) meet the students’ needs, (f) aesthetically presented, (g) motivating, (h) culturally appreciable, (i) easy-to-read, (j) use high frequency words, (k) comprehensible, (l) cover various themes, (m) short, and (n) not time consuming. The selection of these picture books was rechecked and confirmed by the teachers in order to assure that teachers understand why these stories were chosen. Both teachers checked the language of picture books, the illustrations, the cultural components, and their length. Then, they affirmed that the selected picture books were appropriate to their students. In contrast, the English language textbook series, English for Libya (2012), was first introduced by The Libyan National Education and Research Center and The British Garnet Publication Company in 2000. Both textbooks, one each for seventh grade and one for eighth grade, contain ten units and come with the student workbooks, audio-cassettes, and teacher’s guidebooks. Despite the fact that these materials are considered the core means for teaching English in Libya, they did not cover all the basic English strategies and skills, including reading comprehension and reading fluency.

For example, the seventh and eighth grade textbooks cover general skills of English that include vocabulary instruction, grammar, listening, usage, speaking, and some writing activities. Explicit comprehension and reading strategy instruction are not essentially considered in these materials regardless of their importance in language learning. (Appendix L shows the minor and major contents of the seventh and eighth grades English language textbooks)
Procedures

In their English language instruction, both teachers followed similar routines. Typically, they started their lessons by introducing any new vocabulary words, and then introducing the strategy, modeling it, using guided practice, encouraging the independent use of the strategy, and releasing responsibility by encouraging students to use the strategy with peers and independently. Finally, they provided constructive feedback and scaffolding for students. The following scenario is an example of the regular instructional practices each teacher followed when explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies using picture books. In this scenario, Mohmoud, the eighth grade teacher, introduced The Giving Tree as an instructional tool to teach connection strategies (text-to-text and text-to-self/world):

**Seventh grade classroom instructional scenario: (Thursday 01/26/2012 11:00 a.m.).**

*In an eighth grade classroom, on a sunny afternoon English language class, Mohmoud enters the class and says, “Good afternoon.”*

*All the class responds out loud, “Good afternoon, Teacher.”*

*Mohmoud sits on a chair at the front of the class and asks all the students to have a seat. He then takes out The Giving Tree. Mohmoud starts writing a list of new words from the story on the board. Students open the story, and many of them turn and move the pages of the story back and forth, look at the illustrations, and talk to each other in Arabic. Mohmoud finishes writing the list of words on the board and starts previewing the story. He says, “Today, we are going to read a new story. The story’s title, as you see here, is The Giving Tree. I read the story yesterday, and I found it interesting. I loved it. It was awesome, and I hope you get some time to read through it and enjoy it. On the board, I wrote the words that I think you might not be familiar with. Before I read these words, I want you to scan the story and find any other words*
you think are new for you.” Each student has his/her copy of the story that the researcher brought from the US. before the fieldwork of the study.

   Students start scanning the story and talk in Arabic about the story for about five minutes. Mohmoud interrupts the students and asks them whether they need to add any new words to the list that is shown on the board. Some students share the words that they found and six new words are added to the list and thus the total number of the whole list becomes 26 words.

   Mohmoud starts reading the new words aloud and asks the class to repeat them after him. He explains the meaning of each word in English and translates it into Arabic. Mohmoud asks the class if the words are clear and if they have any questions about them. All the students affirm that they understand the new words. After he finishes explaining the meaning of the new words, Mohmoud tells the class, “Now I will start reading the story, but before I do so, I would like to remind you that our main purpose of reading this story is to understand it, and this can be easily done by using some reading comprehension strategies. So, first I read the story aloud.” Mohmoud starts reading the story aloud in English and explains it using English and sometimes Arabic.

   After finishing reading the story aloud, Mohmoud asks the class, “Who can read the story aloud again?” Some students raise their hands, willing to read the story aloud (about seven students). Mohmoud picks one student. The student starts reading the story aloud. The student seems to face some difficulties pronouncing some words. Mohmoud allows the student to read only six pages and then asks another student to continue reading the story. The other student sounds more fluent and confident in reading the story. After completing the story, Mohmoud asks the students to talk about the story in groups of three or four. Although the classroom setting was designed for independent or pair work because the desks were organized into rows and were
attached to the floor, the teacher encourages the students to work in groups of three or four. In their group discussion, the students are using Arabic, talking differently about the story, and moving between the groups to get more ideas from their peers. Mohmoud stops the students and asks each student to go back to their seats. Mohmoud tells the class that he will introduce a new reading comprehension strategy that helps the students understand the story. He introduces the term “connection.” He provides the meaning of connection, translates it into Arabic, and then models how the students can implement connection using The Giving Tree. Using a think aloud, Mohmoud says, “You know, this story reminds me of many things and stories I read in the past. This is how connection can be used. We can connect what we read to other readings we did in the past or to things we saw or experienced in our life.” Mohmoud gives an example of the different types of connections, including a text-to-text connection, by telling the class that the story reminds him of a story he read in Arabic which talks about love, generosity, and happiness. Then, Mohmoud tells the class that the story reminds him of the relationship between parents and their children, which is an example of a text-to-world connection. After he finishes explaining the strategy using The Giving Tree, Mohmoud asks the students to work in groups of four and try to apply different types of connection using the story. Mohmoud goes around the groups listens to their discussion and provides comments and feedback to each group. Mohmoud concludes the class by asking the students to use the strategy and read the story for next class discussion.

This teaching vignette represents typical occurrences in the seventh and eighth grade classrooms and shows how the participating teachers adjusted their teaching procedures to meet the needs of explicit comprehension strategy instruction by identifying and employing the strategies in reading comprehension of picture books.
**Teaching procedures.** The study’s theoretical foundation for the teaching procedures was built on Almasi’s (2003) strategy instruction model (SIM). The strategy instruction model implies several assumptions that included: (a) building motivation and safe environment for understanding and using strategies, (b) providing explicit and flexible instruction to the selected strategies, (c) providing an opportunity for teachers to gradually demonstrate the use of strategy using a think-aloud to the whole class, and (d) providing an opportunity to students to demonstrate their understanding of the strategy and supporting them by regular constructive feedback and scaffold. Four picture books were used to supplement Unit One and Unit Two in the English language textbook of the seventh grade and four to supplement the same units in the eighth grade English language textbook. Teachers started introducing the strategies according to their need, using a picture book followed by a section from the English language textbook. In most of their instruction, both teachers tended to teach reading comprehension strategies according to the objectives of the readings they delivered and their students’ needs. In their daily instructional routines, both teachers defined the new strategy, translated its meaning into the students’ own language, and modeled how the strategy should be implemented using think aloud.

Teachers then gave an example or some examples of how, where, and when the strategy might be used. The main goal of both teachers was to sustain the students’ three layers of reading comprehension knowledge (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983). These layers included the declarative knowledge (what does the strategy mean?), the procedural knowledge (how should the strategy be used?), and the conditional knowledge (when and why should the strategy be used?). Finally, teachers released responsibility by giving the students opportunities to practice the strategy, using it collaboratively and independently. Teachers were very careful about several important steps that they used during their comprehension instruction. These steps included
explicit and direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, scaffolding, and providing regular feedback. Moreover, each proposed strategy was introduced in isolation from the other strategies and then integrated according to its relevancy to other strategy(ies). Once strategies were presented in isolation (each strategy was taught independently) and in groups (some strategies were taught simultaneously), they were divided into three phases, before reading, during reading and after reading in order to facilitate the students’ understanding of the text.

Figure 2. The classroom teaching procedures

Both teachers focused on delivering explicit, intensive, and extensive instructions of comprehension strategies in order to sustain their students’ skill and autonomy of using these strategies. After completing and practicing the strategies, all students were introduced to the English language textbook and were asked to apply the strategies that they already learned when
they used the picture books (Figure 2 illustrates the regular teaching procedures in the participating classrooms). As demonstrated in Figure 2, the teaching procedures were circled but with no systematic order. Interestingly, both teachers started and ended in different orders and this was because they usually end their classes in different ways (usually, they were systematic but started differently). For example, in one English class, the seventh grade teacher started the class by presenting a new strategy (visualization) because in the previous class the teacher finished the class by inviting the students to read the picture book independently.

Despite some irregularities in the instructional management of some classes in the seventh and eighth grades, the English language class was essentially divided into two sections; in the first section, the students were introduced to the comprehension strategy(ies) using some selected picture books, and in the second section, the same strategies were introduced using the English language textbooks. In the time of the instruction practices, students were taught the regular assigned topics in the English language textbooks and the workbooks with some focus on how to practice and apply the learned strategies.

**Data collection procedures.** Two classes from the seventh and eighth grades were involved in this study. Both classes were taught English using the English language textbooks and eight selected picture books (four different picture books for each class). The rationale of using only eight picture books in both classrooms was that the time allotted for the English language classes in Libya was very short, only 45 minutes per class. In addition, teaching cognitive and sophisticated approaches (reading comprehension strategies) using different materials (picture books and the English language textbooks) required a good amount of time. Both classes focused on some text comprehension strategies that were divided into three phases: before, during, and after reading (Al Khaiyali, 2013).
Specifically, before-reading strategies included strategies that helped to introduce the students to the reading piece. These strategies often included previewing, activating prior knowledge, predicting, connecting, and questioning. The second phase included strategies that were used when the reading session had started. These strategies were used in this phase because they could help the students understand what they were reading. These strategies often included questioning, predicting, inferring, connecting, and visualizing. Finally, in the after-reading phase, students were introduced to some strategies that could help determine the full picture of the text and show how students could understand what they read. These strategies included summarizing, retelling, synthesizing, monitoring, determining big ideas, visualizing, and questioning. All participating students were pretested and surveyed before the beginning of the classes.

Then, the classes were regularly observed. The purpose of classroom observations was to extract naturalistic and holistic views from the participants and understand how they experienced the study. In order to gain detailed scrutiny of the observation notes, all observations were video-recorded. At the end of the fieldwork of the study, all the participants were interviewed in order to reconfirm some details about how the participants experienced the study. All the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and finally, member-checked.

**Role of the Researcher**

My primary role in this study was that of a participant-observer. At the beginning of this study, I conducted a short training program for the two teachers who participated in this study. In the training program, teachers learned general ideas about picture books, comprehension strategies, and some instructional guidelines to use picture books to teach these comprehension strategies. Then, I distributed surveys to both teachers and their students, took notes from the classroom observations, and finally, interviewed the teachers and students. The teachers’ training
program was short and intensive. In addition, the training program was a very good opportunity to establish a friendly and positive relationship with all the participating teachers. I considered that having positive and rapport-relationships with both teachers and their students was fundamental for the success of the study and the process of data collection. Therefore, the first two weeks in the fieldwork of this study were devoted to build this type of relationship with both the students and the teachers who were part of this study.

**Positionality of the Researcher**

**Researcher background.** After I graduated from the Department of English at Sabha University/Libya in 1999, I started teaching English as a Foreign Language at different school levels including elementary and high school. In 2005, I was appointed as a high school principal in my hometown (Sabha). At the same time, I was pursuing my Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics and Curriculum Evaluation. In February 2006, I completed my M.A. from Tripoli University and started teaching undergraduate university students in the Department of English at Sabha University/Libya. This combination of professional, academic, and research experience was very significant in my life as a novice researcher. Throughout my experience as a student, teacher, and principal, I encountered various methods of teaching and learning as well as different problems and difficulties. I often thought about how students, teachers, and sometimes decision-makers can create better (or worse) lives for our students and the people around us. I also thought about today’s students as those who will be in positions of authority one day. Once I became a teacher, I found myself thinking even more about future generations. Thinking of some small ideas (e.g., helping students become good readers) might help in building larger projects (e.g., helping students become good comprehenders). Based on this premise, I decided to focus
on the comprehension part of reading, particularly for the students of English as a Foreign Language.

Although comprehension seems to be the most important element in reading, it is totally neglected because many teachers in the schools in which I was teaching, including myself, were focusing on evaluating the comprehension part of the students’ knowledge and marginalizing comprehension instruction. This contradictory way of teaching comprehension reflected negatively on the overall comprehension performance of many of my students. In order to suggest better ways to facilitate my students’ overall comprehension problems, I tried to provide other methods of teaching despite the fact that I was expected to follow the assigned syllabus. One way was through presenting other materials that could help students develop their reading skills and could help me teach comprehension better and more explicitly. I began to think that comprehension strategies were very important, not just in learning, but in all aspects of our lives. This was because using good strategies in any part of life could help us save time, effort, and maybe even money. For example, using specific reading comprehension strategies such as summarizing and synthesizing could help readers differentiate between the most and least important pieces in any reading. In any reading text, the less important information usually consumes time and effort.

Using interesting materials to teach and facilitate teaching of specific strategies might contribute to the development of any learning goals including reading comprehension and motivation. I started using supplemental materials when I was teaching reading courses to my undergraduate EFL students in Libya. One of the major expectations of those courses was to teach reading comprehension strategies. However, there were no straightforward guidelines of what and how to teach these strategies. Eventually, I used *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest
Hemingway (1952) because of its accessibility in the Department Library to demonstrate some strategies such as prediction, summarization, questioning, and visualization that might be helpful to understand chapters of this novel or may be the whole novel. Additionally, this novel was very interesting with its universal themes and authentic plots and characters. Despite the novel’s length, complicated vocabulary, and lack of illustrations, most of my students enjoyed it and learned to use some of the strategies I taught them throughout the courses. Many students showed great abilities in summarizing, questioning, predicting, and visualizing the novel or some of its chapters. Meanwhile, some students were reluctant and confused about how to use this novel to understand comprehension strategies or even to understand the novel. Others were not aware that the purpose of using some comprehension strategies was to help them understand the story and support them to internalize these strategies to be used in other readings and courses. Part of those students’ complaints was about the length and some of the vocabulary used in this novel. This experience was an important opportunity to understand that short, simple, easy reading with more illustrations might be more practical and effective to help the students to understand the reading piece and use comprehension strategies better.

When I came to the U.S. in August 2008 as a Ph.D. student, I learned about children’s picture books and started considering their possible uses in literacy instruction and language acquisition. Interested in testing out their overall role in language learning classrooms, I conducted an exploratory pilot study at the Libyan School in Denver, Colorado in December 2010. My main purpose was to explore the perceptions and experiences of Libyan ESL learners about using picture books in teaching different language and literacy skills. Moreover, I was interested in observing the comprehension instruction offered in these classrooms. The students and teachers who participated in the study reported interesting and important ideas about the
powerful role of picture books in their language learning program. For example, many students considered picture books interesting and enjoyable materials and they helped them understand many concepts when they used them in the classroom. Based on this assumption that was shaped by my positionality, I thought picture books might be effective tools and could contribute to students’ reading comprehension improvement. The results of my classroom observation showed that comprehension instruction received very limited attention comparing to other language skills (Al Khaiyali, 2013).

**Researcher’s bias.** One of the major concerns of any qualitative researcher is the bias toward specific problems, phenomena, people, or situations. In this dissertation, this could result because I was dealing with a complex naturalistic problem and meeting with many different students and teachers at different school levels (seventh and eighth grades). Additionally, I approached the research study with some biases since I advocate the effectiveness of children’s picture books in EFL and ESL learning processes. Being an insider-researcher might put me in a position of an advocate instead of a legitimate researcher (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). The challenges that contribute to an insider-based research were also affirmed by Kanuha (2000) as she wrote,

> For each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding to a population that may not be accessible to a nonnative scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised. (p. 444)

Therefore, several steps were considered to eliminate these challenges. Through the use of data triangulation and member-checking (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009), I worked to reduce possible biases, making sure to collect data from different perspectives, those
of teachers and students. Surveys, observation notes, researcher’s memos, and interviews were used as a means to the data used in this study. Also, some classroom documents including the students’ test results and regular classroom exercises provided some support for some general findings of this study. Member-checks were used regularly since I showed some of my data interpretations to the teachers and the participating students to make sure that my interpretations were correct and reflected the participants’ views. In many cases, the participants read through the transcript summaries and agreed with the information by confirming the authenticity and accuracy of the obtained data. In contrast, a few participants asked some interesting questions and showed some concerns about the summaries that I showed them. Remarks such as, “What do you mean by this statement?” and “I think I meant this and I do not think I meant what you exactly wrote” were typical responses from those who didn’t always agree with summaries. These questions and concerns were revised with the participants and restated for more credible and valid findings.

**Researcher’s expectations.** Providing a safe, risk-free, and motivating learning environment could support the teachers’ overall operation when incorporating picture books in teaching comprehension strategies. On the other hand and in order to reduce some of the research bias, I kept in mind that some people have different views that were sometimes the opposite of mine. Moreover, I understood that I have to accept other views despite my general understanding of the problem being studied. Finally, in order to attain more credible and valid results, I triangulated my data (used more than one resource to collect my data), used an outsider member to check my interpretations, used direct member checking (asked participants to double check and confirm my interpretations), and I was in a regular contact with the teachers regarding any questions or concerns about the collected data. Additionally, a friend of mine from the English
Department was trained and prepared by some researchers in the Department of Psychology at Sabha University to help me review my interpreted data by asking questions about the data. The training process extended for three days and focused on reviewing the major principles of qualitative data analysis, translation of interview transcripts, fundamental ethics of qualitative research, and principles of qualitative data interpretations. After we both went through the collected data, I visited several students (nine students) and both teachers and asked them some questions that we had about the collected data. The data member checks were used in various times (after the end of ten days observations, after the review of the pre-surveys, after the students’ interviews) and the participants were selected differently to assure rigor from the collected data (Creswell, 2007). These steps usually repeated several times before I started the actual analysis of my data. Knowing that I would be returning to the United States to complete the dissertation, after I finished the preliminary analysis of data and completed the fieldwork of this study, I asked for the emails and the contact information of most of the participants as well as permission to contact them again whenever I had questions about the data.

**Data Analysis**

In exploratory qualitative inquiry, data analysis has been defined as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field-notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 153). Therefore, data that were collected from different sources in this study were thoroughly analyzed. The process of data analysis for this study was informed by its research questions and theoretical framework (Creswell, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This helped me obtain a clear understanding of the participants’ perspectives and experiences and get straightforward responses to the study’s main
questions. The analysis process began before the fieldwork and continued through the post-fieldwork period of this study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In the first analytic step, before I started the fieldwork of this study, I went through the research literature that I used for this study. The purpose of reviewing the previous literature thoroughly was to guide the main questions and purposes of this study and to initiate preliminary codes for the analysis process and the findings. In the second step, in-field analysis took place. The in-field data analysis went hand-in-hand with the data collection process in order to assure more holistic findings at the end of this study (Maxwell, 2013). The third step, however, was the post-field data analysis. In this step, all the collected data were reviewed, compared against each other, and finally reported. Through the analysis processes, the three methods of “data condensation,” “data display,” and “drawing and verifying conclusions” were utilized (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, pp. 12-13) with a major focus on the thematic analysis of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Harding, 2013).

Moreover, ATLAS.ti 7 (2013), a software program designed to analyze qualitative data, was implemented in order to determine any categorical aspects that may have occurred during the analysis of data. ATLAS.ti 7 helped me organize and reconfirm the codes that I had generated manually, systematically reanalyze my data, save time (it helped me import all my data in easy and quickly accessible boxes so I could get them wherever and whenever I needed), and finally, it helped me validate my study’s findings (Friese, 2012). More importantly, ATLAS.ti 7 helped me track the three phases of my data analysis process using my personal computer after I had imported all my data into my computer. The following sections provide an overview of the three phases of the study’s data analysis:

**Data condensation.** According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), data condensation is “a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in
such a way that “final” conclusions can be drawn and verified” (p. 2). This stage started at the beginning of the qualitative research and usually linked to the processes of forming the research questions and constructing the theoretical framework of the study. This stage occurred simultaneously and continually throughout the process of data collection and was directly linked to before-field step analysis. In this stage, I started combining all the data that I had collected from the pre-surveys and the pre-tests in separate files, read and reread the results, began to formulate clear ideas about the participants and their general background knowledge, and then transcribed and extended the classroom observation notes.

After I had finished the interview sessions, I transcribed all the audio-recorded interviews (the students’ and teachers’ interviews) and translated some interviews (the students’ interviews), carefully checked by them against the recordings, and finally saved the material in secure files. The transcripts and row data reviewing involved correcting any inaccurate transcripts and making preliminary decisions about the emerged codes, then the categories, and finally, the themes. Furthermore, this process was helpful to initiate and prepare the data for coding (Figure 3 shows an example of the preliminary levels of data condensation from a seventh grade student’s interview transcription).

As shown in Figure 3, the student’s interview was first transcribed (transcription was in Arabic because the students were interviewed in their native language). Then, the interview transcriptions were translated by a third-party colleague and reviewed by me before it was member-checked. After the transcriptions were validated by the student, they were broken down into preliminary codes. In this example, I used open coding in which I selected important words directly from the transcripts that were related to the major inquiries of this dissertation.
Transcribing raw interviews

Translating raw interview transcripts

Preliminary coding of transcripts

Open codes

Descriptive codes

I like picture books, especially *The Giving Tree* because it was very exciting and interesting. It was talking about our daily life and it indeed reflected our real life and the world that we live in. I liked how this story was designed and layout, the illustrations of this story made it more powerful and simple to the reader.

Figure 3. Preliminary levels of data condensation

Additionally, I used descriptive coding in which I included a phrase to describe the whole transcription script. All the preliminary emerged codes were condensed into relevant groups.

Other relevant codes were found in different data sources that included the student’s surveys, classroom observation notes, and classroom documents (e.g., student pre- and posttests, student classroom activities, students classroom tasks), and the researcher’s memos. Also, the process of data condensation involved the drawing of initial patterns about themes relevant and linked to the research purposes, questions, and theoretical framework. Finally, the reporting of all the collected data was linked to the major questions of the study. The response of each question was supported by direct quotes or scripts from the students, or the teachers, or both.
**Data display.** After I had all the data condensed, most of these data took the shapes of accessible summaries which helped me draw general conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The display of the condensed data took different dimensions.

For example, the observation notes were displayed in charts and tables to demonstrate the time variations in explicit comprehension strategy instruction and other types of instruction.

![Figure 4](image_url)  
*Figure 4.* An example of the initial coding of the students’ data

Also, some other types of data such as the interview transcripts were displayed in matrices where quotations, metaphors, and some phrases were shown to confirm some remarks and findings (Figure 4 demonstrates an example of the initial coding that implies the three major phases of data analysis). As shown in Figure 4, all the collected data were condensed, initial codes were taken from the condensed raw data, and finally, all the collected codes were grouped
into categories. After I finished the manual analysis, the collected raw data were imported into the ATLAS.it7 software and recoded in order to affirm the accuracy of the previous manual codes. Similar to the former manual example, Figure 5 shows a pattern of ATLAS.ti 7 codes of picture book features and the participants’ positive attitude of picture books.

Figure 5. A script of open coding using ATLAS.ti7

The last updated time of code management was shown at the top of Figure 5. The table shows also the total number of the codes that were emerged from the same family. In this example, there were 35 codes that emerged from the participants about the distinctive features of picture books. In the second section of the same script, the figure shows some more details about
the source of the code (in this figure all the codes were originated from the students’ background and attitude surveys), the code, and the frequency of codes in all the data sources that were imported in ATLAS.ti 7. (For more details about the complete list of these codes refer to Appendix H.)

**Drawing and verifying conclusions.** As the data analysis process advanced and after the end of the data display, initial conclusions were identified. All the themes that were identified in the data were classified, reconfirmed, and analyzed across the major inquiries of the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In addition, general phrases, statements, ideas, and concepts that were applied across the participants (the seventh and eighth grade students and their teachers) were identified in a process called “verification procedures” (p. 2) according to patterns, themes, similarities, and differences. As determined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), the “verification procedures” included tracking the frequency of codes, categories, and themes. The identification of the frequencies of these patterns helped me reconfirm that my thematic selection was right and worthwhile.

To sum up, all data that were collected from the participants in this study were analyzed and coded manually and then imported into the ATLAS.ti 7 software program to manage and affirm the analysis process and the findings. After I represented and transcribed data from classroom observations, participants’ interviews, classroom documents, and memos, I manually coded them based on the main purposes and questions of the study. Then, all the collected data were imported into ATLAS.ti 7 to reaffirm my previous manual analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Throughout this process, data were analyzed inductively and then deductively. I read all manuscript draft data that were collected in the fieldwork of the study several times. In the process of data multiple readings, I looked at the repeated words, phrases, and sentences to
determine their coding and labeling categories. Then, I looked at each code and checked if it fitted any of the other codes. After I completed analyzing the collected data inductively, I read the data deductively. In the deductive phase of the data analysis, I identified an emergent code and some relevant codes for each research question. Finally, I added quotes from the participants to support the codes and the themes, and accordingly, the answers for the major questions of the study. For example, the codes “read aloud,” “think aloud,” “showing the meaning of new words,” “defining the strategy,” “translating the meaning of the strategy,” “modeling how the strategy could be used,” “supporting students’ autonomous of using strategies,” “providing scaffolding,” and “constructive feedback” were generated through the inductive and deductive analysis of classroom observation notes and teachers’ responses of the survey and the interview questions. Also, these codes were selected because they were frequently repeated, reaffirmed by ATLAS.ti 7, and were also informed by one of the main questions of this study “How did using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?” To answer this question, all the collected relevant data were discussed in broad categories (See Chapter Four). Then the codes were collated into relevant themes and were used with relevant quotes to provide a focused response to the question (See Chapter Five). This comprehensive qualitative analysis process was carried out through the whole course of the study and was used to validate the findings of this study and present deep understanding of the experiences of Libyan students and teachers in using picture books in the explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies.

**Data Triangulation**

In order to reduce the bias inherent in the study, several triangulation phases (data source, methods, researcher, and theory) were considered (Liampittong & Ezzy, 2005). Specifically,
data triangulation occurred because both observational and performance data were collected from students and teachers in the seventh and eighth grades. Second, triangulation could be performed since multiple primary and secondary sources including surveys, observations, and interviews were used to collect data for this study. Third, triangulation could be met because I implemented member-checks that allowed participants to confirm their general responses. Finally, the use of some supportive documents such as results from tests, exercises, activities, and tasks could help confirm some explanations about the collected data. Thus, I made comparisons through analysis of all documentations, observations, interviews, and performance data that were analyzed and aligned against each other to create transparent and critical understanding of the experience of the participants. At the theoretical level, fidelity to the theoretical framework (theory triangulation) could occur since the study rested on multiple theoretical blocks that included schema, transactional, motivation, and constructivist theories (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004).

**Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is considered a crucial factor to ensure its rigor (Whiting & Sines, 2012; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Therefore, I utilized the three major categories proposed by Williams and Morrow (2009) to achieve trustworthiness of this study. The first category was data integrity in which the data used should be rich, adequate, and inclusive. Williams and Morrow proposed several ways through which data could be integrated, including triangulation, focusing on data quality and quantity, data redundancy, and theoretical saturation.

In this study, triangulation was met through the use of multiple sources for data collection, using member checks, and the integrating of different theories to provide rich and in-
depth explanation of the problem and the inquiries of the study. The second category, however, was focusing on the balance between the meaning of the participant and the interpretation of the researcher. Williams and Morrow put most emphasis on the balance between the researcher’s subjectivity and reflexivity. In other words, researchers should reflect on what they are reporting and clarify their own ideas from what they see or hear from the participants. Hence, a colleague of mine (a staff member from the Department of English) helped me translate most of the collected data from Arabic to English and assisted me in compiling some of the data that I assembled. The data translation focused only on the data that were collected from the students (particularly interviews). This helped me to separate my own interpretations from the participants’ actual meaning of the data. In other words, the external interpreter received all the Arabic native responses of the students’ interview transcripts, translated them, and returned them back to me. I read through the translations and went back again to the students and asked them to check the accuracy of their responses. This multiple-checking method from both the external translator and the participating students helped me assure the accuracy of the obtained data. In addition, I used many direct quotes from the participating groups to demonstrate some of the displayed data. In the third category, Williams and Morrow focused on the clarity and applicability of the findings. Also, the findings should resolve or explain the main objectives and questions of the study. Thus, throughout the analysis process, I tracked my interpretations, taking into account the relevancy of my results to the major inquiries of my study.

**Transferability.** Many qualitative researchers and authors have argued that transferability which deals with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applicable to other studies or contexts is related to the issue of the external validity (Edge & Richards, 1998; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2011). Providing thick and rich
description of the data and findings could help in establishing transferability (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). In order to provide understandable and straightforward data explanation and findings, I provided a thick description of the participants who were involved in this study. Also, detailed description of the context of the study, the background of the problem, and sources that were used to collect data were explicitly indicated in order to facilitate any opportunities for research transferability. In the findings of this study, detailed analysis and then specific descriptive analysis were provided to show the possibility of transferring any of these aspects of this study to other contexts or populations.

**Dependability.** Dependability is related to the notion of reliability and is considered one of the basic components of trustworthiness (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Dependability emphasizes how other outsider researchers might obtain the same results when they apply the same procedures of a study (Creswell, 2007). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) provided some strategies to ensure that the research findings can be dependable. These strategies included inclusive participation in the analysis process and thick description of the methods of the research. Similarly, Creswell (2007) and Merriam (1998) provided general guidelines for qualitative researchers to accomplish dependability. These guidelines included determining triangulation and showing the researcher’s bias. Based on these assumptions and in order to ensure dependability for this dissertation, I collected data through multiple sources, including tests, observation notes, surveys, and interviews. Moreover, I addressed my positionality to explicitly highlight any biases or subjectivities and commented upon some findings and interpretations. In order to ensure inclusive participation, a colleague (from the Department of English) helped translate some of the students’ responses (usually at the end of each data collection phase) and track their interpretations.
**Confirmability.** Confirmability deals with the concept that the findings or procedures of the study could be confirmed by other studies or inquiries (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This concept is very relevant to the idea of objectivity in quantitative research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In order to achieve confirmability, researchers need to demonstrate that the findings of the study are grounded and/or generated from the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Guba and Lincoln (1989) stressed that in order to assure confirmability, researchers need to make sure that “…data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator’s imagination” (pp. 242-243). Based on this premise, the consistency of the data that I collected for this study and its findings constituted the major purposes throughout the process of the data analysis.

Using two different chunks of data representation, comparing these data chunks, and implementing some CAQDAS programs (ATLAS.ti7) to facilitate findings’ determination were very important in establishing confirmability for the study’s findings. Last but not least, I explicitly showed all the steps and processes of data collection and interpretation in order to assure transparency (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). All data collection sources that included surveys, interview questions, classroom documents and data analysis processes were provided to other researchers and outsiders who can then use similar approaches for further confirmability or dependability.

**Validity and reliability.** In qualitative research, credibility and trustworthiness are considered crucial factors to assure validity and reliability (Krefting, 1991). In order to achieve trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were emphasized (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Specifically, I triangulated my data using several sources of data
collection (documents, observation notes, and interviews). Additionally, data member checks were used to ensure data credibility and eliminate bias. Finally, reflexivity and reporting of direct data from the participants were considered. In-depth discussions of the teachers’ and the students’ views of using children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies were also provided.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues must be potentially considered in any research study, particularly in qualitative research (Shaw, 2003). In order to reduce some of the ethical issues or concerns that might appear in this study, I provided consent forms to both teachers and students who were involved in this study. These forms included details about the study and information about what they are required to do in the study. These consent forms were based on the IRB approval, the ministry of education approval, and the schools’ administrative approval (see Appendix M).

In order to assure that the meaning of the consent forms was understood by all students and teachers despite of their linguistic or cultural variations, the forms were translated into the participants’ native language (Arabic), and I attended class during the time when all the participants received the forms in order to explain or answer any questions they might have. To maintain confidentiality, any private data that identified the participants of this study were not reported. Also, all participants’ identities remained anonymous as they signed the consent forms which were saved in a locked cabinet and on password-protected computers so that no one could access them except the researcher and his dissertation committee members.

Finally, the students and teachers were informed that participation in this dissertation fieldwork was voluntary and participants could leave the study any time or choose not to participate.
Limitations of the Study

All research studies have limitations. This study showed some limitations that need to be reconsidered for better understanding of incorporating children’s picture books in the EFL context to explicitly teach comprehension strategies. These limitations included the following:

First, the generalizability of the findings of this study could be limited to the contextual population of Libyan or sometime the Arab EFL students in the seventh and eighth grades. This is one study in two purposefully selected classrooms. If the study were to be expanded to additional classrooms that provided a representative sampling of Libyan classrooms, results might vary or they might also provide support for the findings of this study.

Secondly, this study introduced a limited number of reading comprehension strategies to Libyan teachers and students, but not all reading comprehension strategies. I focused mainly on the most frequent and common reading comprehension strategies that were affirmed by previous research (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Oczkus, 2004; Palincsar, 1982; The Nation Reading Panel, 2000), without considering the specific needs of students (e.g., which strategies could better help and meet the students’ needs). Other strategies might also be beneficial, but because of the timeline of this study the selection of the most commonly used strategies was underscored.

Finally, this was an introductory investigative study and, consequently, in this study I did not focus on specific layers of reading comprehension (literal, inferential, evaluative) because the purpose of this dissertation was only to track the overall experiences and perceptions of the participating students and teachers and to focus on comprehension in its broad sense and not on its specific complicated layers (Basaraba, Yovanoff, & Alonzo, 2013).
**Timeline of the Study**

The study lasted for one full school semester term. It started from the beginning of the spring semester and continued to the end of the same semester. In the first week of the study, the teachers’ professional development program began. It included introducing the study to the participating teachers and providing an overview of reading comprehension strategies and how they were taught using picture books. The teachers’ professional development program lasted for one week. Teachers received pre-surveys at the end of the professional development program. In the second week of the study, the participating teachers started teaching their regular English language classes with a focus on teaching comprehension strategies using picture books. Meanwhile, students received pre-surveys and then were pretested to check their overall knowledge of comprehension strategies.

Table 1 shows the six major phases of the dissertation procedure timeline.

Table 1

**Timeline of the Procedural Phases of the Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>Phase 5</th>
<th>Phase 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ training Teachers’ pre-surveys</td>
<td>Students’ pre-surveys Students’ pre-tests</td>
<td>Comprehension instruction teaching program Classroom observations</td>
<td>Students’ posttests</td>
<td>Students’ post-surveys Teachers’ post-surveys</td>
<td>Students’ interviews Teachers’ interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2nd week 3rd week of January</td>
<td>Students’ pre-surveys (4th week) Students’ pretest (last day in 4th week)</td>
<td>From week 5th to week 12th (March to May)</td>
<td>45 Minutes May 12th, May 13th</td>
<td>May 15th May 16th</td>
<td>From 5 to 11 Minutes May 20th May 21st May 22nd May 23rd May 24th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, I started observing the participating classes four times a week for 45 minutes (the total length of the class period in Libyan education system). In the last week of the semester, all
the students were post-tested and received post-surveys. At the same time, both teachers received the post-surveys. Finally, all 40 students and both teachers were interviewed independently. The time length and schedules of the interviews extended from three to five days, and each interview lasted from five to ten minutes.

**Summary**

In order to obtain holistic and in-depth understanding of the students’ and teachers’ experiences of using children’s picture books to explicitly teach comprehension strategies, this study was built on an exploratory qualitative design. Two seventh and eighth grade English language teachers and 40 students from two different Libyan schools participated in this study. Interviews, observations, and classroom documents were used as an essential means to collect data from both teachers and their students. All of these data were used in order to maintain a broader spectrum of views and perspectives to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data analysis. In order to provide consistent findings for the major inquiries of this study, all the collected data were condensed, displayed, verified, and inductively reported. In addition, various methods were used in order to obtain trustworthiness and credibility of the findings that were extracted from the collected data. These methods included triangulation of data and member-checks. The principles of transferability, dependability, and confirmability were constantly underscored and considered. Finally, some potential limitations were highlighted.
Chapter Four

Findings of the Study

Reading comprehension instruction has been considered a neglected practice, particularly in language learning classrooms (Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989; Miller & Perkins, 1990). The paucity of comprehension instruction in various classroom contexts was due to the lack of explicit instruction in comprehension strategies (Ness, 2011; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995), the cognitive complexity of reading comprehension process (Almasi, 2003), incompetency of the materials used to teach comprehension strategies (Basaraba, Yovanoff, & Alonzo, 2013), and inappropriate in teachers’ and students’ preparation to value the role of comprehension strategies in understanding various types of readings (Duffy, Lanier, & Roehler, 1980; Tompkins, 2006).

Therefore, the overarching purpose of the current study was to explore the experiences of the seventh and eighth grade students and their teachers of using children’s picture books as supplementary materials to facilitate explicit instruction of comprehension strategy in English language learning classrooms. The study was undertaken in order to afford an in-depth-understanding of the possibility of using children’s picture books to fill the gap in any deficiency of comprehension strategy instruction materials in language learning classrooms. Constructivist theory, schema theory, motivation theory, cognitive theory, metacognitive theory, literature-based instruction approach, and strategies-based instruction approach underpinned the theoretical blocks, facilitated the generation of questions, data collection techniques, and led the basic analysis of the results of this dissertation. In other words, all the major inquiries of this dissertation were built on previous theoretical and research grounds and data were collected and analyzed based upon the main questions of this study before any findings were revealed.
### Table 2

**Demographic Profile of Participating Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Native language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Salim</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
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<td>Milad</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<td>Linah</td>
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<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Koter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Libyan English language teachers and 40 Libyan students from two different
schools participated in this study (Tables 2 and 3 show detailed demographic profiles of the
participants).
Table 3

*Demographic Profile of Participating Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Native language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Salima</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mohmoud</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>Arabic Dialect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of this research dissertation based on the qualitative analysis of various types of data that included: (a) classroom observation notes, (b) students’ and teachers’ responses to open-ended interviews, (c) students’ and teachers’ survey responses, and (d) classroom documents that included students’ reading comprehension tests, tasks, and exercises.

The processes of data collection and analysis started hand-in-hand as I started organizing and reporting general findings based on the data that I was collecting. The preliminary findings were informed by the theoretical framework and the purpose of this study. In addition, findings were reported to meet the main research questions of this dissertation:

- What comprehension strategies did Libyan EFL students use when they were taught English using children’s picture books?
- How did Libyan EFL students experience the use of children’s picture books to learn reading comprehension strategies?
- How did Libyan EFL teachers experience the use of children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies?
- How did using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?
- What challenges or difficulties did Libyan EFL students and their teachers encounter in using children’s picture books to learn and teach comprehension strategies?
Consequently, all the collected data were analyzed categorically and thematically in order to fit the study’s main questions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Other themes and categories that were not related to the major questions and purposes of the study were slightly discussed. Data that were obtained from the participating teachers and their students were first condensed, coded, displayed, and finally, reported. In order to develop consistent inductive and deductive analytic categories, a preliminary list of codes was created before and during the analysis of the data. Most of these codes were built on the previous research studies, theoretical framework, purpose, and questions of the current study. Also, all codes were selected because of their frequent appearance in the main sources of data collection. Data were coded manually and then imported into ATLAS.ti7 to be confirmed before they were reported and supported by some direct quotes from the participants. Table 4 shows an example of preliminary coding from some responses of the students’ interviews. The examples from the students’ interviews that were shown in Table 4 were assigned into three unique open codes. These codes appeared frequently in other data sources such as the classroom observation notes and the students’ surveys (more examples about various coding lists are shown in Appendix I). Throughout the inductive and deductive readings of the extracted data, “INTERESTING”, “STUDENT’ POSTIVE ATTITUDE”, and “PICTURE BOOK ATTRIBUTES” were among the most frequent codes that appeared in students’ interview responses.

These codes were combined into broader categories and themes as the coding processes advanced. For example, the code “INTERESTING” was combined into the family category of “picture books’ features” and then into the themes “students’ positive attitudes toward picture books” and “rationale of using picture books in explicit comprehension strategy instruction” and so forth.
### Table 4

**Coding Patterns from the Students’ Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ interview scripts</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I liked picture books because they were interesting and had a lot of pictures.”</td>
<td>INTERESTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is interesting; I liked the picture books because they are very interesting.”</td>
<td>STUDENTS’ POSITIVE ATTITUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think all the picture books were very interesting. I cannot tell which is better than which because every picture books has its own way and style and meets specific goals.”</td>
<td>PICTURE BOOK ATTRIBUTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think using the picture books as means to learn about and practice reading comprehension strategies was a very good idea and I like the connection between the topics in the picture books that we used and the English textbook.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preliminary codes were helpful in explaining the participants’ experiences and perceptions of the problem of study and answering the dissertation research questions. As the analysis progressed, the lists were modified and several new codes were included, some were changed and others were eliminated. Hence, combining these codes with other new discovered codes during and after the analysis helped me determine the following findings:

- Seventh and eighth grade students had not been taught about comprehension strategies and children’s picture books, but once they encountered them, they were able to apply them.
- Seventh and eighth grade teachers had not taught comprehension strategies and had never used children’s picture books to support their teaching practices.
- Once taught, both teachers found the strategies useful and started using picture books actively and more frequently in the English language classes to facilitate the instruction of comprehension strategies.
- Both teachers proposed fundamental elements of explicit comprehension strategy instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms.
- Picture books were considered helpful to initiate the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies.
- Libyan EFL teachers and students expressed some concerns and identified challenges concerning the use of picture books to explicitly teach comprehension strategies.

The following sections provide a detailed report of the findings by means of “thick description” (Ponterotto, 2006, p. 538) to explain and support each finding:

**Seventh and eighth grade students had not been taught about comprehension strategies and children’s picture books, but once they encountered them, they were able to apply them.**

**Seventh and eighth grade students were not properly equipped to know and use reading comprehension strategies.** One of the primary findings that was identified at the beginning of this study was that both groups of the participating students were not familiar with reading comprehension strategies, what they were or even when, how, where, and why they should be learned. This finding was explicitly uncovered in the students’ interviews in which most students acknowledged that they did not know anything about reading comprehension strategies before they were involved in this study. For example, Omar, a seventh grade student, affirmed this
finding by saying, “It was my first time to learn about reading comprehension strategies.”

Additionally, this finding was supported by the general results of the students’ pretests and their responses in the pre-surveys. The total scores of the students’ reading comprehension test results appear in Table 5. The students’ overall gain scores were obtained by determining the difference between the pre- and post-test scores. The mean gain score was 13.22 for both seventh and eighth grade pretests (15.35 for the seventh grade and 11.52 for the eighth grade pretests). On the other hand, the mean score was 27.17 for both groups’ posttests (22.65 for the seventh grade and 30.85 for the eighth grade).

Table 5

The Mean Score Differences in the Participants’ Comprehension Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total number of participants</th>
<th>Pretest Mean score</th>
<th>Posttest Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seventh grade</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>22.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth grade</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.52</td>
<td>30.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh &amp; Eighth grades</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.22</td>
<td>27.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once students started receiving various types of instruction in reading comprehension using picture books, the overall results showed some improvements. Despite the slight differences in the gained scores between seventh and eighth grade students, the overall results indicated that the participating students had higher gain scores after they were involved in the explicit comprehension strategy instruction than ever before.

To sum up, students in the seventh and eighth grades tended to perform better after participating in the explicit comprehension instruction using picture books than when they were not involved in any comprehension improvement programs. One explanation for the general improvements in reading comprehension performance was the presence of picture books for the first time in reading comprehension instruction. These findings went hand-in-hand with the responses of most students in the pre-surveys, which indicated that they were not quite familiar
with comprehension strategies and picture books. In addition, classroom observations indicated that students in both classes were not familiar with comprehension strategies because whenever a new strategy was introduced, students kept asking about its meaning in their native language (Arabic) and asking for more examples about how it is used. This finding was consistent with Baumann, Hooten, and White’s (1999) results that fifth graders took one week to develop reading comprehension strategies as a result of the elaborated explicit instructions of reading comprehension.

**Seventh and eighth grade students were unfamiliar with children’s picture books and they used them for the first time in their classroom learning.** Students’ responses to the pre-attitude survey questions indicated that the seventh and eighth grade students were not familiar with children’s picture books. As explained by most students, this was due to the fact that Western picture books are not accessible in the Libyan schools and the commercial bookstores. Additionally, the English language textbook is the sole means of teaching English in this country. Most Libyan students are not familiar with picture books even in Arabic because they are not used in Libyan education as instructional or supplementary instructional tools. This finding was uncovered in some responses of questions about background experience of picture books were either unanswered or answered as “I don’t know.” Few students expected to see “pictures” in picture books and thought that pictures might be interesting and can help understand the meaning of new words. In responding to some questions in students’ background pre-surveys about whether students used English picture books and which picture books they used, 58% answered, “No” and 42% answered, “Yes.” Most students who answered “Yes” appeared not to understand the question because they gave examples of Arabic short stories and
novels to respond to the question that was explained about the type of picture books that the
students read or had experienced before this study.

Once taught the strategies, students were willing to use them in various ways. Once the
fieldwork of the study took place, the seventh and eighth graders started learning some
comprehension strategies using explicit instruction with children’s picture books and the English
language textbooks. This experience was explicitly reflected in the students’ responses to the
post-comprehension surveys, some of the major notes in the classroom observations, and the
students’ own responses to the interview questions. For example, in responding to the question “I
can use different text comprehension skills when I read any topic in any subject,” nine students
from both groups selected “Always,” eleven “Often,” nineteen “Sometimes,” and only one
selected “Never.” Likewise, the general findings of the classroom observation notes showed that
students in both classes spent 703 minutes of 2,636 minutes (the total time period of
comprehension strategy instruction in both classes) doing some practices, activities, and
working on tasks relevant to the use of comprehension strategies. For example, some students
used some arts to respond to their readings, others used role-play to demonstrate their
understanding to connection strategies, and some others exchanged their summary cards with
their peers to peer-review them. Students created various ways to use and to show that they
started understanding the strategies using both the children’s picture books and the English
language textbook. For example, many students in both classrooms spent some time talking
about the strategy using either a picture book or a textbook section. Specifically, whenever a new
strategy was introduced and explained for the first time, students were given an opportunity to
talk about it and practice it using the assigned picture book followed by a section from the
English textbook in order to scaffold and sustain the learned strategy. By the end of the
fieldwork and as soon as most strategies were explained, students were trained to use and practice multiple strategies using the same assigned readings. These techniques gave the students opportunities to practice and use the strategies repeatedly and understand how to internalize them, subsequently using them in other topics and with other different readings. Hasnah, a seventh grade student, used the comprehension strategies that she learned to understand different types of readings, including readings from other school subjects. In her interview response, she affirmed:

I liked all the reading comprehension strategies because I think they are very beneficial not only in our English class but also in our other Arabic and content area classes…I used summarization and prediction in some Arabic language lessons and in physics and chemistry lessons. Using the same rule of summarization, I could summarize many topics in all these fields. Also, by using some predicting clues in the same of these fields, I felt they helped me understand even better.

Similarly, Retaj, a seventh grade student, indicated that learning comprehension strategies was very helpful to her. She displayed general support for the advantage of comprehension strategies when she said:

I think the comprehension strategies were very useful…I mean the different comprehension strategies helped us understand different texts in different ways, for example, we may use predicting in some texts that include clues for that, we might use visualizing for other texts that deserve the use of this strategy and so forth. So, they give us the opportunity to think about the text in different ways.

Therefore, the thoughts of these two students and some of their classmates reflected not only the usefulness of comprehension strategies but also their valuable usage in various learning
conditions and contexts. Similarly, Ahlam, an eighth grader, expressed relevant ideas when she was asked about her general views of comprehension strategies. She pointed out:

I think these strategies were very important in understanding the reading text. Summarizing required the most effort because we read all the text to understand the general idea of it and then we were able to summarize it. Visualizing was similar to summarizing in a way that if we wanted to get the whole picture of the text we read it and then visualize it. Although it required sometimes some artistic skills but it was easier than summarizing. Predicting for me was the easiest and most important skill because it gave us the opportunity to use everything in the text or the story we read in order to understand it. Sometimes we look at the pictures, sometimes the titles, sometimes the subtitles, and so on.

Moreover, some responses of the participating students in addition to their general engagement and involvement in various classroom activities, tasks, and exercises were reflected in their general interest in learning comprehension strategies and their growing understanding of how and when to use some of these strategies.

**Seventh and eighth grade teachers had not taught comprehension strategies and had never used children’s picture books to support their teaching practices.** In the professional development program and before the beginning of the fieldwork of this study, the two participating teachers were introduced to the study. They were asked about comprehension strategy instruction and whether they have ever used picture books in their English teaching classes. Both teachers acknowledged that they had never taught comprehension strategies explicitly and they had not used picture books in any of their previous classes. The teachers’ responses were evident in their answers to the background survey question in which they were
asked if they have ever taught comprehension skills; they both responded, “No.” In addition, both teachers responded, “Not quite sure” when they were asked about the reading comprehension strategies that could be hard to teach and, “Not sure” when they were asked about the important factors to improve reading comprehension strategies. Teachers indicated that they had not used picture books in their English language teaching practices ever before. As stated earlier, both teachers emphasized that they had never taught English using picture books. These responses were reported in the teachers’ professional development program and in some of their responses to the pre-surveys. For example, in responding to the question “How familiar are you with using picture books in the classroom?” the seventh grade teacher responded, “It will be my first time to use it” while the eighth grade teacher replied, “Not quite familiar, it will be my first time.”

**Once taught, both teachers found the strategies useful and started using picture books actively and more frequently in the English language classes to facilitate the instruction of comprehension strategies.** In the professional development program, picture books were introduced to both teachers for the first time. Both teachers showed great interest in starting their comprehension strategy instruction using picture books because they learned about the picture books’ educational values and overall characteristics. In the actual classroom instruction, both teachers used eight picture books (four in each class) for about four months to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. The rationale of using only four picture books in each classroom was to give students multiple opportunities for the exposure of strategy use and practice. Also, students in both seventh and eighth grades should have other language skills and assignments that include grammar, writing, listening, and speaking.
Instruction using picture books comprised 1,057 of 2,636 available instructional minutes in both classrooms. The overall time of comprehension strategy instruction using picture books was divided into vocabulary instruction, isolated strategy instruction, strategy modeling, strategy practice, multiple strategies instruction, and strategy assessment. Both teachers emphasized the major features that empowered the use of picture books to initiate explicit comprehension strategy instruction. Salima, the seventh grade teacher, referred to some of the most important features that made teaching with picture books worthwhile in her response to the question “What do you think you would like when you teach English using picture books?” in the post-attitude survey. In her answer, she pointed out, “I like how these materials were designed to meet different purposes, their illustrations, their variations, and their simple language.” In her interview responses, Salima affirmed some basic features that characterize children’s picture books and contribute to making them unique to explicit comprehension strategy instruction. These features included comprehensible language, authenticity, and vivid interactive illustrations (Lado, 2012).

Mohmoud, the eighth grade teacher, showed the same perception in his response to the post-attitude survey by saying, “It is more interesting for me and for my students.” Moreover, both teachers realized that there were some similarities between the topics in the selected picture books and the ones they were teaching in the target units of the textbooks and teaching with picture books was considered more beneficial and fun than teaching with using only the textbooks. In the post-comprehension surveys, both teachers indicated that they used picture books to teach all the comprehension strategies they presented before they started teaching them using the sections in the English textbook. The general responses of the teachers’ use of picture
books showed how both teachers valued picture books and how they realized their features and invested these features in their daily teaching routines.

Both teachers proposed fundamental elements of explicit comprehension strategy instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms. As stated earlier, the lack of explicit comprehension strategy instruction was considered the main factor in reducing the comprehension achievement of many learners including English language learners. Since one of the primary purposes of this dissertation was to provide means for further empirical research on EFL reading comprehension instruction, explicit comprehension strategy instruction was strongly emphasized. To facilitate the process of explicit comprehension strategy instruction, both teachers selected picture books to initiate and start motivating the students to learn, practice, and use the strategies. Both teachers implemented various techniques and methods that helped to create safe, interactive, motivational, and supportive environment for learning and improving reading comprehension strategies. These techniques and methods were built on previous research studies (e.g., Almasi, 2003; Grabe, 2009) and were central in the teachers’ professional development program at the beginning of the fieldwork of this study.

Therefore, the overall findings of the data collected in this research study showed that explicit reading comprehension instruction was built on sustaining declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of the participating students’ reading comprehension. More specifically, building these layers of comprehension knowledge implied clarifying the meaning of new words, introducing the strategy in isolation, defining the strategy, modeling the strategy using think aloud, and engaging the students in using and practicing the strategy. Additionally, teachers should gradually release responsibility by inviting the students to work on the strategy;
supporting the students’ efforts by scaffolding their responses (Figure 6 summarizes the basic components of the explicit comprehension strategy instruction).

In Figure 6, the node illustrates the elements of explicit comprehension strategy instruction in the order that both teachers presented them. In both classrooms, teachers started comprehension strategy instruction by introducing the new words of the assigned readings (a picture book/a section in the textbook).

Figure 6. Fundamentals of explicit comprehension strategy instruction

Then, teachers used to preview the general idea of the reading material and reading it aloud. Afterwards, the teachers provided an opportunity for the students to read and discuss the assigned reading. After having a general idea about the reading, teachers introduced a comprehension strategy, defined it, and showed when, how, and why it should be learned. Teachers modeled the strategy using one of the assigned readings (usually a picture book followed by a section from the textbook) by thinking out loud about how the strategy is used.
Once completing strategy explaining and modeling, the teachers tended to create a motivating and engaging environment to all students by providing multiple opportunities for the students to discuss, practice, and use the strategy. In this phase, teachers provided the required feedback and scaffolding to help students understand the assigned reading and the strategy respectively.

Findings from the classroom observations provided evidence that teachers in both classrooms devoted most of their classroom instructional time to explain, model, and train the students of how the strategy should be used. Table 6 shows the timeline of the total classroom English instructions in the seventh and eighth grade classrooms over the course of one semester.

Table 6

*Timeline of the Overall Instruction in Seventh and Eighth Grade Classrooms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Type of instruction</th>
<th>Seventh grade</th>
<th>Eighth grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total time of vocabulary instruction</td>
<td>123 min</td>
<td>128 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of read-aloud</td>
<td>50 min</td>
<td>69 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of comprehension strategies instruction</td>
<td>594 min</td>
<td>673 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of comprehension strategies assessment and evaluation</td>
<td>314 min</td>
<td>389 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of other types of instruction</td>
<td>129 min</td>
<td>167 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1210 min</strong></td>
<td><strong>1426 min</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6, both teachers spent 251 minutes of the total teaching time in vocabulary instruction. The estimate observation timetable shows that both teachers spent 2089 minutes in various reading comprehension instruction practices. They both spent 119 minutes in read aloud, 1267 minutes in comprehension strategy instruction, and 703 minutes in comprehension strategy evaluation and assessment. These findings were considered remarkable
comparing to the time that both teachers allotted for comprehension strategy instruction before this study.

**Picture books were considered helpful to initiate the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies.** Since the beginning of the fieldwork of this study, picture books were continuously used by the seventh and eighth grade teachers to initiate explicit instruction of comprehension strategy. Four picture books were used by each teacher to lead the instruction of some basic comprehension strategies. The picture books were chosen according to several characteristic features and their relevancy to the main themes in the target sections of the English language textbooks. Once teachers started using picture books in their classrooms, they realized their overall teaching values. This was explicitly indicated in the findings of classroom observations where both teachers spent 621 minutes in using eight picture books to explicitly teach some basic reading comprehension strategies. The overall instructional methods were consistent in both classrooms. For example, in her post-comprehension survey response, Salima pointed out:

I used to introduce the picture book first by defining any new words, reading the picture book aloud, giving the students an opportunity to discuss the story in groups, modeling one strategy using the story, showing what the strategy is, how, and when it should be used and then releasing the responsibility to the students to use and practice using the strategy.

Similarly, Mohmoud was using the same instructional techniques when presenting any new reading material and using a new reading comprehension strategy. He used to identify the meaning of the new words, preview the assigned reading, read it aloud, identify the new
strategy, model it, and provide opportunities to the students to use it in teams and then
dependently.

In their responses, both teachers used similar routines to divide the time of using picture
books in comprehension strategy instruction. The routines included defining the new words in
the picture book, introducing the picture book, reading the picture book aloud, asking the
students to read the picture book silently and discuss it in groups, introducing a strategy using the
picture book, and finally, encouraging the students to discuss the picture book using the strategy
in order to understand it. After explaining a picture book, a strategy, and confirming that most
students understand the picture book and how to use the strategy, teachers started teaching a
section from the English textbook using the same learned strategy-ies.

Libyan EFL teachers and students expressed some concerns and identified
challenges concerning the use of picture books to explicitly teach comprehension strategies.

Despite the educational and instructional benefits of using picture books in comprehension
strategy instruction that were reported by the participating teachers, some concerns and
challenges in teaching comprehension strategies and using picture books were detected. Part of
these challenges and concerns were directly related to picture books and others were related to
some factors that influenced the use of picture books in the classroom instructional process. The
major factors that were reported by both teachers were summarized in the following: (a)
difficulties in meanings of some used vocabulary (e.g., *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary; Around the
Year*); (b) difficulties in assessing the students’ use of picture books, and (c) difficulties in
misunderstanding and misinterpreting some illustrations (e.g., *Free Fall; Dear Peter Rabbit*).

Moreover, both teachers reported other challenges that were not directly related to picture books
but they partially influenced the use of picture books in teaching comprehension strategies. For
example, both teachers talked about the “multiple interpretations of stories” and the density of ideas in picture books, which made them significant in extending the students’ arguments and conversation in the classroom. These elements were time consuming and took some time of the overall instructional process.

Finally, both teachers were concerned about the accessibility of picture books in the Libyan context and how that could affect the students’ adjustment to these materials. Salima, the eighth grade teacher, emphasized this issue in her post-attitude response as she wrote, “I think one of the major problems would be how to access these materials, we got these materials because the researcher brought them to us but generally we do not have in our library and bookstores.” These challenges and concerns were not reported in most previous research, particularly on studies that were conducted in English as a first language classrooms (Baumann, Hooten, & White, 1999; Heuvel-Panhuizen, Boogaard, & Doig, 2009; Huck, Helper, Hickman, & Kiefer, 2001). This might be due to the differences in picture books’ accessibility in different learning contexts.

Summary

This chapter presented the major findings revealed by the analysis of the data collected for the current dissertation study. According to general categories collected from different data sources that included students’ tests, surveys, and interviews transcripts, findings were differently categorized. Some other categories were stemmed from data collected from teachers’ surveys, interview transcripts, classroom observations, and the researcher’s memos. After collecting and analyzing these data, all the categories were grouped into the following findings:

- Seventh and eighth grade students had not been taught about comprehension strategies
and children’s picture books, but once they encountered them, they were able to apply them. Findings from the students’ pre- and posttests, classroom observations, surveys responses, and interview transcripts revealed that most of the participating students were not familiar with reading comprehension strategies and picture books. This finding was due to the fact that the participating students did not learn reading comprehension strategies and were not taught by picture books before this study took place.

- Seventh and eighth grade teachers had not taught comprehension strategies and had never used children’s picture books to support their teaching practices. Findings that were obtained from the teachers’ responses in the surveys and the interviews showed that both teachers did not teach comprehension strategies and were not taught by picture books before this study took place.

- Once taught, both teachers found the strategies useful and started using picture books actively and more frequently in the English language classes to facilitate the instruction of comprehension strategies. For example, observation notes findings revealed that many students in the seventh and eighth grades frequently used some reading comprehension strategies including visualizing, summarizing, questioning, and predicting.

- Both teachers started using picture books actively and more frequently in the English language classes to facilitate the instruction of comprehension strategies. This finding was explicitly indicated in the teachers’ survey responses, interview transcripts, and the classroom observations. Specifically, teachers in the seventh and eighth grades spent most of their reading comprehension instruction using picture books. This might be a clear sign that picture books could find rich and valuable pedagogical place in language learning classrooms.

- Both teachers proposed fundamental elements of explicit comprehension strategy
instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms. Teachers in both classrooms highlighted some basic components of explicit comprehension strategy instruction which were generated from data collected from various sources that included classroom observations, teachers’ interviews, and teachers’ surveys. These components included vocabulary instruction, previewing, reading aloud, discussing the assigned reading, introducing, explaining, and showing when, where, and why the strategy should be taught, modeling, thinking aloud, engaging students in strategy discussion, practicing, scaffolding, and using the strategy independently.

- Picture books were considered helpful to initiate the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies. Most data that were collected from the teachers’ interview transcripts, observation notes, and surveys indicated that the use of picture books, particularly as initiative comprehension instruction materials made them very helpful supplementary materials because this contributed to establish interesting and engaging environment for many students to learn and make use of their learning. Finally,

- Libya EFL teachers and students expressed some concerns and identified challenges concerning the use of picture books to explicitly teach comprehension strategies. According to responses from the seventh and eighth grades’ surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, some of these challenges were vocabulary used, time, misunderstanding some illustrations, and picture books inaccessibility. Findings of previous research have indicated that while proficient readers can gradually develop their own strategies through reading experience, students with reading difficulties need explicit instruction to learn reading comprehension strategies (Coyne et al., 2009; Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Flood, Lapp, Squire, & Jensen, 2003; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Pearson, Dole, Duffy, & Roehler, 1992; Pressley, 2000). Nonetheless, the present findings suggested that implementing direct-flexible strategy
instruction and changing the teaching approach situations (by incorporating simplified reading materials) should be an important move toward enhancing reading comprehension development.
Chapter Five

Discussion and Synthesis of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of Libyan EFL students and their teachers in seventh and eighth grades in using children’s picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. The study was based on the assumption that there was a decline in the overall reading comprehension achievements in EFL and ESL classrooms. This assumption was fueled by the paucity of comprehension instruction in these classroom settings (Fotovatian & Shokrpour, 2007; Miller & Perkins, 1990). It was believed that better understanding of the students’ and teachers’ perceptions in using children’s picture books to explicitly initiate comprehension strategy instruction could help in developing good models to improve reading comprehension achievements in these classrooms. In the previous chapter, findings were presented in broad categories in order to provide an overview of the participants’ experiences and perceptions. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to represent thematic insights of these findings according to the main research questions of this dissertation:

- What comprehension strategies did Libyan EFL students use when they were taught English using children’s picture books?
- How did Libyan EFL students experience the use of children’s picture books to learn reading comprehension strategies?
- How did Libyan EFL teachers experience the use of children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies?
- How did using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?
What challenges or difficulties did Libyan EFL students and their teachers encounter in using children’s picture books to learn and teach comprehension strategies?

**What Comprehension Strategies Did Libyan EFL Students Use When They Were Taught English Using Children’s Picture Books?**

In order to provide an in-depth understanding to the general perceptions of using children’s picture books in learning comprehension strategies, several sources were used to collect data that included primary (students’ interviews and classroom observations) and secondary (students’ post-comprehension surveys and students’ post-attitude surveys). In addition, some notes from the researcher’s memos were used. The following themes emerged from these data and were discussed further below: (a) most Libyan EFL students started using some reading comprehension strategies to understand the assigned readings and (b) reading comprehension strategies were used differently by Libyan EFL students.

**Most Libyan EFL students started using some reading comprehension strategies to understand the assigned readings.** As indicated in the previous chapter, Libyan EFL students in seventh and eighth grades were not familiar with reading comprehension strategies, what are they, when, how, and where they should be used. These findings were explicitly presented in the students’ responses of the pre-surveys and their scores in the reading comprehension pretests.

Nevertheless, students’ overall views about their knowledge of reading comprehension strategies changed remarkably after they have experienced learning these strategies explicitly using children’s picture books. This finding was supported by the students’ interview responses, the classroom observation notes, classroom documents, and students’ survey responses. For example, Table 7 summarizes some of the students’ responses in reading comprehension post-surveys.
Table 7

Rates of Using Various Reading Comprehension Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can use different text comprehension strategies when I read any topic in any subject.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I decode the words to comprehend the text I am reading.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I look at any pictures to guess what the text is about.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I read the title to guess the general idea of the text.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I summarize the text by stating its main ideas in a simple form to better understand it.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I paraphrase the main sentences in the text to get its complete idea.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I retell the text to demonstrate that I understand it.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I synthesize the text by combining ideas that are available in the text with my own ideas.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I ask question(s) about the text to help me search for any information I need.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I compare and contrast ideas from the text that I am reading and other text I read to get a complete picture about what I am reading.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I connect the text I am reading to any text that I have read in the past to guide me to comprehend the text appropriately.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I use different clues from the text to predict its main purpose.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I monitor the text that I am reading carefully by questioning the author.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 7, the seventh and eighth grade students in Libyan EFL classrooms started using different types of reading comprehension strategies once they learned them. The findings in the table do indicate inconsistency in using the comprehension strategies. Unexpectedly, word decoding and word guessing were the most frequent used strategies (See Q. 3, 4). Additionally, students’ responses in the reading comprehension post-survey indicated their general understanding of some basic comprehension strategies, especially after they experienced the explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategy using some picture books. Figure 7 demonstrates the differences of the most frequent uses of comprehension strategies among the participating students according to the aforementioned survey questions.
The students’ overall performance in reading comprehension strategies was slightly improved in the reading comprehension posttests compared to their comprehension gain scores in the pretests. The differences between the students’ gain scores of the pre- and posttests showed that the participating students earned some advantage of explicit comprehension strategy instruction using picture books. Furthermore, a considerable number of participants in the seventh and eighth grades affirmed that they learned and started using some reading comprehension strategies once picture books were used in their learning program. For instance, Salim, a seventh grade student, summarized this view in his interview response:

At the beginning, I did not understand why we use many things in our English class.

Later, after we finished the third week in this program, I realized the reason of using
picture books. I understood that these materials were tools to be used to learn and apply reading comprehension strategies.

Salim’s statement explicitly reflected the attitude and the feeling of many seventh grade students who were not quite sure of what they should focus on at the beginning of the fieldwork of this study. Later, after they understood that comprehension strategies could be used at different learning levels to accomplish text understanding, they started to internalize these ideas and use it whenever possible. Despite the fact that this study was the first actual experience for the Libyan EFL students to learn about comprehension strategies using picture books, most students went beyond the actual understanding of the strategies and started internalizing and applying the ideas they learned in different areas and school topics.

**Reading comprehension strategies were used differently by Libyan EFL students.**

Another important finding that was relevant to the students’ experiences of reading comprehension strategies was related to the variations in using comprehension strategies. Specifically, the overall findings of the data that were collected from the participating students showed that most students’ learning and use of strategies varied from one strategy to another different strategy and from one story to another different story.

This might be due to the variations in strategy acceptability and story motivation among the participating students. For example, responses from the students’ interview transcripts indicated that predicting, visualizing, connecting, questioning, summarizing, and retelling were the most commonly used strategies among the seventh and eighth grade students while synthesizing, monitoring, and activating prior knowledge were the least used strategies. Furthermore, seventh and eighth grade students explained differently why they favored some strategies over others. After they experienced learning comprehension strategies using picture
books, Zaroog and Otman, seventh grade students, and Ahlam and Linah, eighth grade students, reflected positively on visualizing when they pointed out, “I liked visualization because it gave me and some of my peers the opportunity to get out of the box and started using our artistic abilities to understand what we read” (Zaroog), “I liked picture books. Also, I liked summarization and visualization” (Otman), “Visualizing… required sometimes some artistic skills but it was easier than summarizing and as important as summarizing” (Ahlam), and:

I liked the visualizing strategies because they were very interesting and they gave me the opportunity to use actual arts to express my understanding of the stories and the textbook.

I also liked the predicting strategies because they were easy and very useful. (Linah)

These ideas were explicitly presented in most visualizing works of seventh and eighth grade students as demonstrated in Figure 8. In these examples, students used visualizing to either confirm important themes in picture books (e.g., Hairy, Scary, Ordinary; The Giving Tree) or to practice and use ideas they learned from some assigned readings (e.g., comparative adjectives from Hairy, Scary, Ordinarily; using an analog clock to tell time from Telling The Time).

On the other hand, a few students did not prefer the use of visualizing strategy for various reasons. Aisha, a seventh grade student, explained part of these reasons when she pointed out, “I did not like some of the VISUALIZATION class… Simply because it focused most of time on drawing and my drawings were always ugly.” Darin, an eighth grade student, went on the same line and said, “visualizing is sometimes misleading….I sometimes did not understand what some of my classmates mean using some drawings that are confusing and vice versa.”
Similarly, the general perceptions and views of most seventh and eighth grade students indicated that monitoring and synthesizing strategies were the least used among other strategies. Um Kaltom, a seventh grade student, summarized some reasons for avoiding the monitoring strategy in her interview response when she said:

*Figure 8. Students’ uses of visualizing*
Monitoring, for example, is a very complicated strategy. I know what the general idea of this strategy is, and I could use it with simple texts, but it is very hard to use it with complicated texts because it requires deep knowledge of the text and that demands good knowledge of vocabulary and other ideas related to the text.

Similarly, Osama, an eighth grade student, explained the source of challenge in understanding and using monitoring strategies by indicating:

The texts that we used to read in the textbook were long and contained many difficult words, so it was hard for us to show our monitoring skills regardless the fact that we could monitor our comprehension when we were using the picture books.

In addition, synthesizing was another strategy that was not used commonly in both classrooms for various reasons as explained by some of the participating students from both classrooms. Amir and Joud, two students representing seventh and eighth grades respectively, explained that the synthesizing strategy was “difficult” and required “longer time,” “effort,” and “good knowledge” of the reading text, which is why it could not be used frequently.

Nevertheless, other strategies including summarizing, retelling, connecting, predicting, questioning, and determining big ideas were regularly used and in similar rates based on the teachers’ needs and the class objectives. The overall findings of classroom observation notes showed that the seventh and eighth grades spent 539 minutes or approximately 23% of the total classroom instruction time using and practicing activities and tasks related to the assigned reading comprehension strategies. Throughout the instruction process, students used many different and interesting ways to reflect their understanding of various strategies. Some students showed interesting examples to demonstrate their understanding of some readings and their use of connecting strategies. Figure 9 shows The Lazy Dondosh; an Arabic story presented by Abrar,
an eighth grade student, to connect it to *The Giving Tree* as a demonstrative example of text-to-text connection strategy. Interestingly, *The Lazy Dondosh* (an Arabic folklore story) and *The Giving Tree* were very similar in their general plot and theme.

*Figure 9.* An eighth grader’s example of connecting *The Lazy Dondosh* to *The Giving Tree* to demonstrate text-to-text connection

*The Lazy Dondosh* is a story about a foal that asked its parents to give him anything he wants. Dondosh, the foal, loves his mom and dad and they love him as well, but Dondosh used to
ask his mom and dad to give him anything he needs. He was always lazy. At the end of the story, Dondosh’s dad and mom told him that life is very short for both of them and advised him to stop asking, depend on himself, and work for better happy life. Similarly, one of the main themes of *The Giving Tree* is the giving that is based on the mutual love between the little boy and the tree. The tree gives the boy everything he requests and keeps on giving until the boy grows old. One day, the boy comes to the tree to ask her for more. The tree tells the boy to work hard because she gave him everything she has, and there is nothing left for her to give. At the end of the story, the boy has become an old man, and he sits on the trunk of the tree, and both the old man and the tree become happy. Similar to some of her colleagues, Abrar went beyond the general scope of the traditional class and identified a story from her own culture with which to use the reading comprehension strategy that she learned.

Likewise, Joud, an eighth grade student, presented an interesting example of connection strategy, specifically a text-to-text connection, when she used an Arabic traditional story *The Sea and the Boy* and connected it to *The Giving Tree*.

*The Sea and the Boy* is a story about a boy who loved the sea and found the same love from the sea. In this story, the boy used to come by the sea, plays with its waves and enjoys talking to it. The sea used to give the boy anything he likes. Whenever the boy felt sad, the sea made him happy by giving him anything he needs. Both the boy and the sea loved each other. The sea usually does everything to make the boy happy until the end of the story. Figure 10 shows Joud’s manuscript of *The Sea and the Boy*. Joud used the meanings of love, giving, receiving, and happiness to connect the whole story of *The Sea and the Boy* to *The Giving Tree* and hence, provided an interesting example of text-to-text connection.
In addition to their multiple uses of connecting strategies, some students in the seventh and eighth grades showed interesting ideas to indicate their understanding of using some comprehension strategies including predicting, visualizing, and summarizing.

Figure 10. The Sea and the Boy

Once the boy stay way beside the sea sadly, the sea ask the boy why are you sad? the boy say no I want to play. The sea said you can play with me the boy said how? the sea said just jump inside to me and swim the boy did and he was happy.

Years ago the boy come again and stay away of the sea he was sad the sea ask the boy why are you sad? the boy said I need money to study the sea said just stand beside me and fishing to get some fish after that boy the fishes go to get money the boy did and he was happy.

After years ago the boy come and stay away of the sea sadly, the sea ask the boy why are you sad? the boy said I need to go away travel the sea said just cut some trunk of the trees and make about fossil.
How Did Libyan EFL Students Experience the Use of Children’s Picture Books to Learn Reading Comprehension Strategies?

The primary data sources that were used to answer this question included students’ interviews and classroom observations. At the same time, the secondary data sources included students’ post attitude, comprehension surveys, and the researcher’s memos. The following themes emerged from these data and were discussed further below: (a) students’ attitudes toward the use of children’s picture books to learn comprehension strategies and (b) students’ views of picture books’ features.

Students’ attitudes toward the use of children’s picture books to learn comprehension strategies. The participating students in both Libyan EFL classrooms reacted differently toward the use of children’s picture books in learning some reading comprehension strategies. However, most of the students’ reactions were in favor of using these materials in their English language learning classes. For example, the findings of the students’ interviews indicated that most students were confused about the use of picture books at the beginning of the fieldwork. After they realized their values, they started praising them and sometimes preferring them over the core English language materials (the English language textbooks). For example, in his interview response, Salim, a seventh grade student, pointed out that reading comprehension strategies and the use of children’s picture books were completely new in his learning life. He verified that he did not encounter the difficulties that he was expecting. On the contrary, he confirmed that he enjoyed this new experience. According to Salim, the content of the materials they were using and the nature of classroom instruction were the major factors of his positive attitude toward this experience.

Similarly, Omar, a seventh grade student, reported:
I like about this experience the picture books, the way they layout, illustrations and style. Also, I like how these materials were very effective in conveying ideas, specifically explaining comprehension strategies…I like the activities and the tasks that were accompanying the use of picture books, I like to share my ideas with others and we have no means to do so, when picture books were used I found very good space to talk, participate, and engage with my peers and teacher in many things.

In the same vein, Abrar, an eighth grade student, provided general features that gave an explicit justification to value picture books. She reported:

I liked the stories because they were interesting and purposeful. I also liked the pictures because they were meaningful and they could easily translate the texts…I think using the picture books as a means to learn about and practice reading comprehension strategies was a very good idea and I liked the connection between the topics in the picture books that we used and the English textbook. This connection helped us understand more the topics in the textbook.

Thus, it was noteworthy that most students’ actual reactions to using picture books changed positively throughout the fieldwork of the study. Students spent some time (around two to three weeks) simply getting to know picture books, their features, and their educational values before they provided any opinions or judgments about them. Also, most of the students’ views about the use of picture books, started with expressing some confusion about these materials when they first started learning from them and then eventually considering these materials as interesting and valuable sources after they knew how to handle and learn from them. This was shown in the students’ responses to the post-attitude survey, particularly the questions (7) “What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?” and (11) “In your opinion, what
is the difference between learning a lesson using picture books and learning a lesson without using picture books?.” At the beginning of the study, specifically before students started learning using picture books, most of their responses to the two questions were “I do not know” and they often wrote, “nothing.” At the end of the study, most students provided different interesting responses that were listed in Table 8. Students’ overall responses were varied but consistent.

Table 8

*Sample of the Students’ Responses of Using Picture Books in Comprehension Learning Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q/R</th>
<th>Salim 7th grade</th>
<th>Omar 7th grade</th>
<th>Mousa 7th grade</th>
<th>Moktar 7th grade</th>
<th>Marwah 8th grade</th>
<th>Salih 8th grade</th>
<th>Joud 8th grader</th>
<th>Abd Al Gadder 8th grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?</td>
<td>I did not face any difficulties.</td>
<td>I did not face any problems when picture books were used.</td>
<td>Pronunciation and meaning of some words.</td>
<td>Sometimes illustrations confused me, particularly when I wanted to get the meaning of some words.</td>
<td>Reading complicated sentences.</td>
<td>Confusion in some themes.</td>
<td>Not difficult</td>
<td>Some difficult words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In your opinion, what is the difference between learning a lesson using picture books and learning a lesson without using picture books?</td>
<td>When picture books were used I felt I understand better.</td>
<td>Using picture books helped me understand better but when I was reading the textbook only it me long time to get the main ideas.</td>
<td>The English language lesson became easier and simpler when picture books were used.</td>
<td>Illustrations helped me understand the texts.</td>
<td>Picture books gave us a feeling to be active and participate more in the class.</td>
<td>By using picture books our English lessons were easier.</td>
<td>The lesson became very interesting and easy. On the other hand, when picture books were not used the lesson looked very boring.</td>
<td>Lessons with picture books increase the chance to indulge in more artistic and illustrative environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, some students were concerned about the meaning of some words, others about how some words were pronounced, and some others about the lack of appropriate clues to predict the meaning of new words. Despite the fact that there were differences in students’
perspectives toward the meaning of words, all these responses stressed “word identification.” Word identification, translating the meaning of new words, and word decoding were all indications that most of the participating students in both grade levels were concerned about vocabulary. Students realized that the identification of the meaning of words was essential to understanding the reading piece. This finding was affirmed by various researchers and theorists including Baumann (2009), Nagy (1988), and Oullette (2006).

As demonstrated in Table 8, most students thought that illustrations in children’s picture books provided valuable cues and clues for their learning and understanding of the reading materials. On the other hand, vocabulary and the inability to understand the meaning of some words were considered fundamental concerns and were repeated themes among the students.

Students’ views of picture books’ features. Many Libyan EFL students acknowledged that the potential power of children’s picture books as educational tools was centered on some important features that might not exist in other conventional materials. Students’ interview responses showed that illustration, interestingness, purposefulness, authenticity, and simplicity of picture books were considered the most frequent features of picture books.

Specifically, most students in the seventh and eighth grades frequently reported these features. For example, “simple,” “interesting,” “illustrations,” “full of colors,” “multicultural,” “vivid pictures,” “short,” and “relevant” were the most frequent attributes that were reported by most students in the seventh and eighth grades. Moreover, “easy wording,” “interesting style,” and “enjoying format” were also other features of children’s picture books that were affirmed by a few participating students. Interestingly, most of these features were listed in the students’ surveys were affirmed in the classroom observation notes and the students’ interview responses.
Figure 11 summarizes the significant features of reading comprehension strategies that were experienced by seventh and eighth grade students. Although not all important features of picture books were explicitly reported by the students, the features that most students affirmed were essential and were considered fundamental by a considerable numbers of researchers (Jalongo, 2004; Lado, 2012; Mitchell, 2002; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003). In Figure 11, ATLAS.ti7 was implemented to filter all the features that were reported by the participating students in the interviews, the surveys, and the classroom observation notes.

**Figure 11.** Significant features of children’s picture books

Hence, these features were not displayed according to their frequency; rather, they were displayed according to their quality and use.

**How Did Libyan EFL Teachers Experience the Use of Children’s Picture Books to Teach Reading Comprehension Strategies?**

Teachers’ views, perceptions, and experiences were considered essential to this study because exploring the pedagogical aspects of explicit reading comprehension instruction using picture
books was one of its major goals. In answering this question, the following themes emerged from the data sources and are discussed further below: (a) teachers’ perceptions of using picture books in EFL classrooms, (b) explicit instruction of comprehension strategies in EFL classrooms, and (c) EFL teaching philosophy shift.

**Teachers’ perceptions of using picture books in EFL classrooms.** During the professional development program, both Libyan EFL teachers received a general overview of picture books, what are they, how, where, and when they could be used to teach reading comprehension strategies. Also, both teachers were trained to use picture books to explicitly teach some reading comprehension strategies. According to both teachers, the training program was helpful to facilitate their instructional operation in the classroom over the whole period of the fieldwork of the study. In sharing their views about how they experienced picture books in comprehension strategy instruction, both teachers started listing some general features of picture books that they thought were powerful in facilitating their teaching and then they showed how the students reacted to these materials. For example, Salima, the seventh grade teacher, listed some features of picture books and showed how these features might be linked to students’ learning:

I mean picture books and because of their design carry intense and complete meaning of knowledge transfer and that meaning implies the vivid illustrations, the comprehensible language, and the authentic purposeful themes. All these pieces make picture books valuable knowledge carriers, and I like this.

Similarly, in his response to the same interview question, Mohmoud, the eighth grade teacher, mentioned the feature “interesting” but generally expressed the value of picture books in initiating explicit comprehension strategy instruction:
I like picture books because they were very interesting. Also, I like the comprehension strategies because they were very beneficial. I learned a lot from the use of picture books to initiate the explicit instruction of comprehension strategies.

Both teachers provided similar responses to a post-attitude survey question concerning the difference between teaching comprehension strategies using picture books and teaching comprehension strategies using only the English language textbook. Salima’s response was, “teaching a lesson with picture books is more interesting, fun, and engaging. I feel my students are very motivated and the participation was increasing among most of them” while Mohmoud’s response was, “When we use picture books the lessons are more interesting than without picture books.” Hence, both teachers affirmed that teaching with picture books was more interesting and inspiring than teaching with only the English language textbook. Salima talked about “motivation” and “engagement” (e.g., students’ participation), which were considered important predictors for the success of any learning process (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004). In addition, the findings of the classroom observations reconfirmed the positive perception of both teachers in using picture books. Specifically, findings from classroom observations showed that both teachers started introducing the new lesson by presenting a new strategy using a picture book and then they taught the same strategy using a section in the textbook and this was over the whole course of the study.

**Explicit instruction of comprehension strategies in EFL classrooms.** Providing explicit comprehension strategy instruction was a fundamental requirement to the teaching of comprehension strategy using picture books. Therefore, the seventh and eighth grade teachers tried to put into practice the ideas of explicit instruction that they learned in the professional development program. This is because both teachers were used to teach in a completely different
style and using a completely different teaching philosophy (e.g., traditional, grammar translation). Explicit instruction was not regularly used, particularly in teaching English. Consequently, both teachers started using a new way of teaching that they spent only one week to practice. Thus, the teachers’ explicit instruction was based on introducing any new words in the assigned materials, reading the assigned text aloud, overviewing the assigned reading, providing students opportunities to read the assigned reading aloud and talk about it, presenting a new strategy using the same reading, defining, modeling using think-aloud, encouraging students to practice the strategy using the assigned reading, and providing feedback to scaffold the students’ understanding of the reading and the strategy. After they finished presenting strategies in isolation, multiple strategies instruction (which was based on teaching more than one relevant strategy) was presented. Figure 12 summarizes the major components of explicit comprehension strategy instruction that were filtered from different teachers’ data using ATLAS.ti7.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 12. Components of explicit comprehension strategy instruction**

As demonstrated in Figure 12, both teachers started regularly introducing the new reading by presenting the new words, introducing the assigned reading, presenting the target strategy, and ending up with assessing and supporting the students’ understanding of the reading. These were
considered important reforms in the teachers’ instructional routines. Both teachers were focusing only on teaching vocabulary and translating the meaning of the reading materials. Nevertheless, once the study began, teachers used various instructional practices and picture books to supplement their teaching materials.

For example, Salima, the seventh grade teacher, confirmed this process in one of her responses to a question in the post-comprehension survey. She often started the lesson by providing an overview of a picture book in order to encourage the students to participate in the class discussion. Then, she identified the new words that might appear in the selected picture book. After she made sure that the students knew most of the new words in the picture book, she read it aloud. Then, she asked the class to talk about the story and read it silently. Finally, she introduced a strategy by showing what it meant, when, and where it should be used with the assigned picture book. Mohmoud, the eighth grade teacher, used a similar response to describe his regular comprehension strategy instruction when he said:

I was providing an overview of the strategy, what is it, how, where, and when it should be used. Then, modeling the strategy slowly using think aloud of the story. I used to introduce the strategy in isolation and then combine the relevant strategies. After I finish model the strategy using think aloud of a story, I use it with a section of the textbook so it can be sustained. Finally, I give the students an opportunity to practice using it.

Despite the consistency in the teachers’ instructional elements, both teachers emphasized that they preferred implementing some steps over others and sometimes not using some steps in their instruction. Hence, all these teaching adjustments and shifting in the teachers’ instructional practices were based on the students’ needs and the class objectives.
**EFL teaching philosophy shifting.** At the beginning of this study, both teachers were concerned about how they could teach new reading tools (comprehension strategies), using new materials (children’s picture books), and following a new teaching instruction (explicit comprehension strategy instruction). Specifically, before the beginning of the fieldwork of this study, both teachers stated that they were teaching using traditionally-based approach and their teaching methods were grammar-translation oriented. In the professional training program, both teachers thought that their students could not cope with the use of the new materials and teaching methods. After they completed the training program and started using their new philosophies of teaching, both teachers realized that many students were confused and some asked for translating some portions from both the textbook sections and picture books. Nevertheless, most students showed great interest and started participating actively in the third week of the fieldwork. This was an important shift in their paradigm of teaching and provided the opportunity for both teachers to realize that teaching should not be boxed or limited to any approach. Rather, teachers should seek to develop and facilitate their teaching process. Salima revealed part of her *aha moment* in the following interview statement:

> Ah, I really liked the model that we used when we involved our students to share their ideas with their peers or with the whole class, I personally, and I think most teachers in this country are not using these ways to involve students in the learning process.

Mohmoud copied the same broad ideas but using different wording to express his inspired feeling of this experience by stating, “I liked teaching practice program that we did before the study, and I think we need these programs to develop teaching and learning English in the country.” These findings indicated how both teachers were enthusiastic to implement different materials and teaching practices in order to develop the teaching routines of their EFL
students. Additionally, findings clearly indicated that both the students and their teachers took some advantage of using picture books in the classroom. The teachers clearly were not completely fluent in English (see their fluency in the interview responses) but were teaching English. Their students were also not fluent, but using this medium (picture books) created a learning situation where all parties benefited. Most students showed increasing interactions, discussion of text, and interest and engagement.

**How Did Using Picture Books Change the Teaching/Learning Experience of Libyan Teachers and Students?**

One of the major challenges in customizing explicit comprehension strategy instruction in various classrooms including EFL classrooms was the lack of appropriate materials. Therefore, some children’s picture books were used to bridge this gap. Picture books were selected because of their educational values and features. The following themes emerged from these data and were discussed further below: (a) the students’ responses to picture book cultures and their use to comprehension strategy development and (b) picture books facilitated English teaching and supported explicit comprehension strategy instruction.

**The students’ responses to the portrayed culture of picture book and their use to comprehension strategy development.** Findings from students’ interviews indicated that most students reacted positively toward learning comprehension strategies using picture books. Salim, a seventh grade student, described his experience:

> It was very amazing and interesting experience. I feel that I learned new reading comprehension strategies; I liked the way that picture books were used to facilitate this complicated task…I mean teaching reading comprehension strategies; it would be very
difficult to use other means to teach them that is why I think using picture books was very helpful and supportive.

In terms of the cultural considerations of using picture books in the students’ overall learning process, Salim did not realize any cultural concerns that might contribute to deficiency in learning. This finding was explicitly stated in Salim’s response to a question about the difference between the culture in the picture books and their own culture. His answer was, “I did not realize any big difference.” This response indicated that Salim and his colleagues did not get into the cultural part of the picture books that they read. They put all emphasis on reading comprehension and the linguistic parts.

On the other hand, Omar, a seventh grade student, provided more details about how this experience helped him learn ideas he did not know ever before. In his interview response, Omar talked about how illustrations in picture books could be rich sources for understanding the content of these stories. Omar shared the reasons that changed him from a reluctant reader at the beginning of the fieldwork of the study into a motivated and active reader at the end of the study. He pointed out that collaboration with other students, showing his voice, listening to his peers’ voices, and receiving frequent feedback from the teacher were the major reasons for his learning development.

Additionally, Omar’s response shed light on the basic description of picture books’ main features and how reading comprehension strategies could be learned using these materials. Omar did not refer to the cultural aspects in picture books. Omar’s response to the question which was about the difference between the culture in picture books and the students’ own culture was, “I do not know.” Unlike Salim, some of the features that he noticed about picture books were “interesting,” “motivating,” “engaging,” and “relevant to life” and then he tried to connect these
features to his learning ideas and abilities by connecting some picture books to other ideas and stories he knew. Another student, Fatima, a seventh grader, used similar techniques. She reported:

To be honest, I used many of these strategies in our native language classes, but I did not realize their importance. Finally, I liked the connection that my teacher made by using picture books to teach and help teaching comprehension...I mean the teacher used different stories to teach different comprehension strategies and I felt the use of these stories was very smart and it helped us figure out what is the real meaning of these strategies and how can we use them in the real context.

In her response, Fatima gave an overview of the main features of picture books, referring to the main purpose of comprehension strategies to “help us understand,” and finally, she linked how picture books can be used to accomplish understanding by teaching some comprehension strategies. In addition to describing her learning experience, Fatima showed how picture books helped her internalize comprehension strategies and use them in other learning contexts. Also, Fatima explicitly stated that “there was no difference” between her culture and the culture embedded in picture books. Likewise, Zinab, an eighth grade student, summarized her experience by saying:

Picture books taught us how we can understand by only looking at the pictures… Well, these strategies were also very helpful and the good thing about these strategies was that they could be used in any text and in any language. I tried to use some of these strategies in the other classes like history, Arabic language, and geography. It works and I feel we used them even before but we were not aware that we use them.
In her interpretation, Zinab linked the use of picture books to vocabulary learning and then to comprehension. This connection was spontaneous and showed the students’ abilities to uncover the major components of understanding the reading materials. Then, Zinab went further and described how the internalization of strategies could be helpful in using these strategies to other school subjects including Arabic language, history, and geography. Zinab’s recognition is an important remark of the universality of comprehension strategies applicability across-languages. Interestingly, this finding corresponded to the main principles of learning transfer approach (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). Proponents of this approach believed that active transferring of knowledge from a context to multiple contexts is crucial to learning development (Leberman, McDonald, & Doyle, 2006).

In the last section of her shared experience, Zinab talked about other important elements in using picture books to lead the explicit instruction of comprehension strategies (the activities, tasks, assessments). These elements were very helpful for both students and teachers because through the use of these elements, teachers confirmed that some students progressed and others need more effort to progress. It gave the teachers an opportunity to select the right activity and task and use it whenever possible. Zinab has also affirmed that there was no difference between her culture and the culture presented in the picture books when she responded that “there was no difference” to the question which was about the picture book culture representation in the attitude surveys. Yosra, an eighth grade student, provided consistent responses in her interview answers. Her overall view of using picture books to explicitly teach some reading comprehension strategies was summarized as:

I liked the children’s picture books that were used in this study because they were interesting, have many different pictures, and have very easy words. Also, I liked the
comprehension strategies including predicting, questioning, determining big ideas, visualizing, (pause), summarizing, and all other comprehension strategies that we had in this semester because they indeed helped us understand many texts.

Yosra started by talking about the main features of picture books, then, she listed the major reading comprehension strategies that she learned and talked about her experience in learning these strategies. Finally, she reaffirmed Zinab’s points regarding other activities, tasks, and assessments in this study. Yosra also responded, “I do not know” to the question about the difference between her own culture and the culture in picture books.

Generally, the students’ responses to the interviews were similar in terms of the main ideas that they discussed and their experiences of using children’s picture books in learning comprehension strategies. Most students did not consider the variation in culture that might be depicted in picture books as a barrier to their comprehension and learning from picture books.

Despite the fact that culture plays a very essential part in any comprehension and learning processes (Bui & Fagan, 2013), the students’ reactions and responses showed compatibility between their own culture and the culture depicted in the assigned picture books. Most of the students’ responses to the question “Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books are probably like yours? In what way(s)?” were “Yes.” Students’ overall rationale for that response was, “we feel that we have the same scenarios in our life,” “all these stories are talking about our real world,” and “they tell stories relevant to our society.” Only five students answered “No” because they all thought that picture books were “imaginative” and “written in English,” therefore, they might not represent a culture similar to theirs. Two students did not answer the question. An important explanation for this interesting finding might be due to the selection of picture books that were used in this study. In the selection of picture books for this study, culture
was highly emphasized and considered. Therefore, picture books that were mostly built on universal themes, multicultural, and not stereotypical were selected.

Furthermore, findings from classroom observations indicated that students in both the seventh and eighth grades spent more time using, practicing, and discussing their comprehension learning ideas using picture books than using the English language textbooks. The students in seventh and eighth grades spent 521 minutes of 2,636 the total time of instruction in both classrooms using picture books to discuss and practice comprehension strategies.

**Picture books facilitated English teaching and supported explicit comprehension strategy instruction.** Once both teachers in the seventh and eighth grades started teaching comprehension strategies using picture books, they realized their educational values. In their interview responses, both teachers explained that they started lessons by listing the major characteristic features of picture books and then presenting a specific comprehension strategy using a picture book. For example, Mohmoud, the eighth grade teacher, explained, “I was providing an overview of the strategy, then, modeling the strategy, and finally, I give the students an opportunity to practice it.” Afterwards, the same strategy was taught using a section from the textbook. Teachers in both classrooms continued using the same routine to the end of the study, which was an indication that they were satisfied with how their students reacted to this method.

Findings from classroom observations indicated that both teachers spent most of the comprehension strategy instruction using picture books through three phases of instruction. In the first phase of instruction, teachers in both classrooms usually started their instruction using a picture book, introducing new words from the selected picture book, reading the picture book aloud, previewing the general idea of the selected picture book, inviting students to read and talk
about the selected picture book. In the second phase of instruction, teachers would introduce a new comprehension strategy, define it, show how, where, when, and why it should be learned, model how the selected strategy could be used to understand the selected picture book using think-aloud, give students an opportunity to use and practice the strategy using the picture book, scaffold students’ understanding by providing any necessary feedback, and finally, assess the students’ understanding of using the strategy to understand the picture book. In the last phase of instruction, teachers followed the same previous steps using a section from the English language textbook. Table 9 summarizes the major phases of comprehension strategy instruction of the eighth grade classroom in the first month of the fieldwork. Specifically, both teachers started using the same steps in the three phases of instruction over and over. This might be because they (both teachers) realized that picture books helped most students internalize some comprehension strategies that were confirmed and used actively when the textbook sections were introduced. In both classrooms, teachers usually introduced their lessons by showing the new words in the assigned reading(s), read it aloud, explained the assigned strategy(ies), modeled it, and finally, gave the students opportunities to use it (for more detailed description of the seventh and eighth grade instructional practices refer to the classroom observation notes in Appendix J).

What Challenges or Difficulties Did Libyan EFL Students and Their Teachers Encounter in Using Children’s Picture Books to Learn and Teach Comprehension Strategies?

Despite the general benefits that were found in most participants’ experiences of the use of picture books in teaching and learning reading comprehension strategies, some pitfalls and challenges were reported. In order to detect the major challenges and problems of using picture books in teaching reading comprehension strategies, different views were collected from Libyan EFL students and their teachers.
Table 9

**Comprehension Strategy Instruction of Eighth Grade Classroom in the First Month of the Fieldwork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Picture book: <em>The Giving Tree</em> (Silverstein, 1964)</td>
<td>1: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>1-16 min</td>
<td>16 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-13 min</td>
<td>13 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>1-69 min</td>
<td>69 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-108 min</td>
<td>108 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>34 min</td>
<td>34 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.2b, 1.4a., and 1.6b</td>
<td>9 min</td>
<td>9 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>105 min</td>
<td>105 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>84 min</td>
<td>84 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Picture books (<em>The Giving Tree</em> (Silverstein, 1964)-Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook)</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>47 min</td>
<td>47 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of time instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>485 min</strong></td>
<td><strong>485 min</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following themes emerged from these data and were discussed further below: (a) challenges encountered by Libyan students in using picture books in learning comprehension strategies and (b) challenges encountered by Libyan EFL teachers encountered in using picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies.
Challenges encountered by Libyan students in using picture books in learning comprehension strategies. Findings from frequent codes and the labeled themes of this category indicated that most students in both seventh and eighth grades considered time deficiency, understanding new words, and using English orally to share learned ideas to be the major challenges that they faced throughout the whole study. Findings from interview transcripts showed that most seventh grade students talked about the shortage in time they had while they discussed their ideas to peers or to the whole class. Seventh graders, Salim, Omar, and Hawa respectively, expressed the issue of time in their interviews:

I think we did not take enough time doing this and that was very frustrating about this experience. Since we are using some picture books and the English language textbook and we are taking other topics in grammar and writing we need more time to get more benefit. (Salim)

Omar worried that “[My] …only concern is about the time. I feel that our class time is short and affected in some way or other the rigor of this experience.” Hawa pointed out, “The time of the whole program was very short although it took one semester. We need to practice and adopt of new programs like this.”

At the eighth grade, time was also considered the essential barrier. The following excerpts from the interview responses of Marwah, Naji, and Koter illustrate this point:

My only concern is the time of the class period was not quite enough. I hoped that we took the strategy, used a picture book to model the strategy, and finally, used the textbook to remodel the strategy in one class period but because the class period is only 45 minutes the teacher used to divide this program into the strategy and a picture book in one class
period and the strategy and a piece in the textbook in another different class period. I think that was happening because the time was not enough. (Marwah)

Naji pointed out:

The study was great but I think the time in general was not enough. We usually do many assignments and activities but because of the time we could not have the opportunity to show what we prepare.

Koter stated:

As you know the English class period is roughly 45 minutes maximum and we usually had a picture book and a strategy in addition to an activity in each class and that makes the time very short. In most classes, I felt I did not take enough time.

Vocabulary deficiency was considered another challenge that was reported by most seventh and eighth grade students. Many students asked for translation of words in picture books and the textbooks into Arabic to make sure that they interpreted the right meaning. Some students asked about the meaning of words before they started discussing or reading the assigned reading despite the fact that teachers encouraged them to try to guess the meaning themselves. For example, Zaroog, a seventh grade student, summarized the two challenges he experienced by saying, “One thing was frustrated about this experience was the time because it was short a bit, and some activities and strategies require more vocabulary which I do not have.”

Abubaker, a seventh grade student, connected understanding and word meaning to translating the meaning into his native language: “I always face difficulties in defining the meaning of new words. Therefore, I did not like introducing the stories without translating the new word.” Likewise, Abd Al Gadder, Abass, Linah, and other seventh graders referred to similar challenges of vocabulary in understanding the assigned readings, particularly at the
beginning of the study. In addition to time and vocabulary, some students showed particular concerns in “classroom management and control” (Fatima from the seventh grade), “misinterpreting of illustrations” (Otman and Moktar from the seventh grade; Salih from the eighth grade), “expressing understanding orally” (Safia from the seventh grade), and “the use of writing activities” (Koter from the eighth grade).

**Challenges that Libyan EFL teachers encountered in using picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies.** Despite the general positive attitude that was expressed by both Libyan EFL teachers of using picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, both teachers experienced some challenges and concerns. Salima, the seventh grade teacher, summarized her concerns in the following interview response:

I think, I mentioned in the surveys that time was very critical factor in the success of any educational program, and I think the time was very short, particularly if we take into account that I was teaching a strategy, some strategies, a story, and sometimes a piece from the textbook in one class. The intensive program was very beneficial, but it minimized the chance of involving big numbers of students in participation and sharing their ideas.

Mohmoud’s interview response was quite similar when he pointed out:

The only thing that I think was challenging is the time. The time of the class period was very short and not sufficient for using the whole package at once. We suppose to introduce the reading piece, the strategy, show how we can model the strategy using the story, then introduce a piece from the textbook, and model the same strategy to understand that piece but because of the time I divided the whole package into two
halves; one half includes the first part with a picture book and a strategy and the second half includes the same strategy but with a piece from the textbook.

Thus, both teachers stressed similar concerns that their students referred to. It is worth noting that in the professional development program prior to beginning the implementation of the picture books, both teachers expected a huge gap in culture when Western picture books would be used. Both teachers assumed that there might be cultural gaps in illustrations, the themes, or some used words. They also expected to find symbols or themes that are irrelevant to the Arab or Muslim culture. The issue of time was not expected by both teachers, particularly when considering that both teachers were trained on how to plan their lesson and how to divide the teaching of the assigned materials. Later, and after both teachers started teaching using the picture book teaching approach, they realized that time restricted some of their instructional routines.

Finally, both teachers expressed particular concerns about the inaccessibility of picture books in Libyan schools and bookstores, which could affect students’ adjustment of learning English using picture books. In Libyan schools, picture books are used neither for teaching English nor for any other educational purposes. This might be due to the fact that textbooks are the sole means of instruction in the Libyan schools and the inaccessibility of Western children’s literature in the Libyan market.

This point referred back to one of the main goals of this study which validated the use of children’s picture books to bridge the gap of the materials used to teach English in this country and across-the-board. Children’s picture books are not used in Libyan EFL context and most Arab EFL contexts. I brought a sample of well selected picture books from the US. and took them to be used to address one of essential needs of language learners (reading comprehension
instruction). Generally, teachers and students in the Libyan EFL context showed positive attitude toward the use of picture books. These important findings could encourage educators and decision-makers to consider the use of these materials in the Libyan school libraries. Figure 13 summarizes the major challenges that were reported by EFL Libyan students and their teachers in this study.

![Diagram of challenges]

Figure 13. Challenges of using picture books in explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms

Across the data that were collected from the participants’ surveys, classroom observation, interviews, and classroom documents, most obtained findings were consistent. For example, most seventh and eighth grade students’ responses in the surveys matched their responses in the interviews and some were reflected in their classroom practices. In both, the seventh and eighth grade classrooms, most students were concerned about time and understanding the meaning of
words. This was explicitly stated in the students’ survey and interview responses and was aligned to their barriers in the classroom observation notes.

In addition to the cross-data finding alignments, findings of this study supported and confirmed findings in previous research studies. For example, emphasizing the role of explicit comprehension strategy instruction in developing reading comprehension and providing the main components of comprehension strategy instruction were among the major findings of this study. This finding was determined and strongly emphasized by previous research studies (Block & Lacina, 2009; Block & Pressley, 2002; Ness, 2011; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Similar to the major components of explicit comprehension strategy instruction that were discussed in this study, Block and Lacina (2009) and Block and Pressley (2002) indicated that modeling using think-alouds, guided practice, scaffolding, and gradual release of responsibility are the main elements of explicit comprehension strategy instruction.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present some major responses to the study’s main questions using data collected from the Libyan EFL students and their teachers in the seventh and eighth grades. Several data sources were used differently to answer the study’s questions. In order to obtain holistic and in-depth representation of the participants’ responses, data from both primary (interviews and observation notes) and secondary (surveys and documents) sources were integrated and explicitly displayed (Saldana, 2011). Each question’s response was divided into two or three major themes and each theme was inductively reported. Findings from the thematic analysis of the questions showed that most of the participating students in the seventh and eighth grades started actively using some reading comprehension strategies to understand what they read. These findings were highlighted in the mean score differences of the students’ pre- and
posttests and their continual progression of using some reading comprehension strategies. Also, findings showed that reading comprehension strategies were not used in the same degree by most participating students. Some reading comprehension strategies such as visualizing, predicting, summarizing, and questioning were used more frequently than other reading comprehension strategies that included synthesizing and monitoring. This was due to the proficiency and cognitive abilities that might be required by some strategies and not required by others. Moreover, findings indicated that Libyan EFL teachers used picture books more frequently than the English language textbooks to initiate reading comprehension strategy instruction. This was likely due to the fact that teachers recognized the positive and the educational values of the use of picture books as key-starters to build students’ knowledge of reading comprehension strategies. Finally, both EFL students and their teachers agreed that time deficiency, accessibility of picture books, some vocabulary difficulties, and misinterpreting some illustrations were the major challenges of using picture books in their classrooms.
Chapter Six

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of seventh and eighth Libyan EFL teachers and students in using children’s picture books to explicitly teach and learn reading comprehension strategies. Data were collected from participants using several sources that included interviews, observation notes, surveys, classroom documents, and the researcher’s memos. All the collected data were analyzed and reported according to the major purposes of the dissertation and the following research questions:

- What comprehension strategies did Libyan EFL students use when they were taught English using children’s picture books?
- How did Libyan EFL students experience the use of children’s picture books to learn reading comprehension strategies?
- How did Libyan EFL teachers experience the use of children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies?
- How did using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?
- What challenges or difficulties did Libyan EFL students and their teachers encounter in using children’s picture books to learn and teach comprehension strategies?

The responses to these questions were based on data obtained from two Libyan EFL teachers and 40 Libyan EFL students who were involved in the fieldwork of this study. Before the beginning of the fieldwork of this study, both participating teachers (a teacher from the seventh grade and a teacher from the eighth grade) were trained in using picture books to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. Afterwards, both teachers started teaching some selected
picture books using comprehension strategies and then teaching sections from the English language textbooks using similar strategies for four months. The teachers’ instructional routines were based on introducing the assigned readings (picture books followed by a section(s) from the English textbooks), introducing reading comprehension strategies, showing how comprehension strategies could help understand both types of readings, inviting students to participate actively in the comprehension learning process, and finally, assessing the students’ knowledge of the readings and the implementation of comprehension strategies. During the reading comprehension instruction phase, surveys, observations, classroom documents, and interviews were used to obtain various types of information from both the students and the teachers. All the collected data were analyzed using the three methods of qualitative data analysis “data condensation,” “data display,” and “drawing and verifying conclusions” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, pp. 12-13). In other words, all the collected data were reduced using preliminary codes, themes, and categories that were built on the major purposes and questions of this study, then represented, classified, and finally, reported.

**Overview of the Findings of the Study and Their Research and Theoretical Relevancy**

The major conclusion of the present study is that despite some minor logistical concerns from both teachers and students, the use of picture books to explicitly teach and learn reading comprehension strategies to EFL students is a viable approach to strengthening student learning and engagement. While the Libyan EFL students had never been taught about picture books and reading comprehension strategies before the fieldwork of this study, they saw benefits from it. Students showed increasing motivation and great interest to learn from picture books and were able to use some reading comprehension strategies in groups and independently and were able to transfer the strategies to other texts. They did prefer certain introductory comprehension
strategies (such as decoding words and inferring from illustrations) to others, but given a menu of choices, used strategies from across the spectrum (as shown in Table 7 on p. 122).

Like their students, Libyan EFL teachers in the seventh and eighth grades had never taught using picture books and had never used explicit instruction to teach reading comprehension strategies. Again, despite a lack of experience, both teachers used children’s picture books for the first time in their teaching experience and both responded positively to comprehension strategy instruction using picture books. Both teachers were responsive and more confident in their classroom teaching practices in spite of the limited time of their training program, which was very short, only one week. Both teachers were still able to customize their explicit comprehension strategy instruction with their classes despite the total number of students in their classes. Classroom size in most EFL settings, especially in the Middle Eastern countries is very large, usually containing around 32 students per class. Although I had selected classes that contained no more than 29 students, perhaps the class size restricted the teachers from having enough instructional or application time for their students to fully participate or show their individual abilities in demonstrating comprehension strategies. Their anticipated concerns regarding cultural differences or disconnects, or the movement away from traditional grammar/translation-based approaches with which students had familiarity, turned out to be baseless. The change in pedagogy caused both Libyan EFL teachers and students to find the use of pictures books to be engaging (of interest), enjoyable, and beneficial to learning. Both teachers were willing to continue to use this approach and saw its benefit, but they also felt the pressure of time and curricular constraints as mandated by the Ministry of Education.

Additionally, Libyan EFL students and teachers reported some concerns and challenges that should be considered whenever picture books are used to teach reading comprehension
strategies in the Libyan EFL context. These challenges were: (a) considering the time frame of instruction, (b) considering vocabulary knowledge, and finally, (c) considering the accessibility of picture books in a national market that does not provide them.

The findings of this study were consistent with the major principles of its theoretical framework that were proposed in Chapter Two (see Figure 14 for more details).

*Figure 14. The theoretical framework constructs of the study*
As shown in Figure 14, reading comprehension outcome is the result of the explicit instruction (the use of flexible systematic instruction) to teach some basic reading comprehension strategies (e.g., summarizing, questioning, visualizing) using picture books (because of their authenticity, readability, interestingness, and motivation).

In this study, providing instructional practices that were built on students’ prior knowledge was a clear sign of the role that could be played by schema theory in any reading and comprehension instructions. The seventh and eighth grade teachers in this study understood that there would not be flexible and durable uses of reading comprehension strategies without the building of their students’ schema. Both teachers stressed that positive and relevant background knowledge that students came with or constructed during the fieldwork of this study were fundamental in their overall understanding of the reading pieces. This belief was strongly emphasized in previous research studies and by proponents of schema theory (Carr & Thompson, 1996; Harris & Hodges, 1995; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013; Keene & Zimmermann, 2013; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977).

Additionally, motivation was considered fundamental to the improvement of the students’ reading comprehension. This finding was explicitly reported in the results of classroom observation notes. The findings of classroom observation notes indicated that many students in the seventh and eighth grades participated in classroom activities, spent good time in tasks, and were engaged actively in working with peers and in groups throughout the comprehension instruction classes. When picture books were used, students spent some time looking at the illustrations, sharing their ideas about the stories with their peers, and discussing various interpretations of the stories. This finding was similar to the major components of reading achievement through motivation discussed by Bandura (1997), Schunk and Zimmerman (1997),
and Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). These components included reading interest, effort, anxiety, curiosity, task involvement, participation, and time spent in reading comprehension activities.

The findings of this study also concurred with the main constructs of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory (1978, 1982, and 1994). According to Rosenblatt (1982), the variations in readers’ response to what they read and the involvement in reading processes are the results of the readers’ literary transaction. Findings from the teachers’ interviews, classroom observations, and the students’ exercises and activities reaffirmed Rosenblatt’s proposition in that many students showed evidence of understanding because they engaged cognitively and transacted actively in their reading process. After using literary transactional materials, particularly picture books, students responded orally, artistically, and sometimes by short pieces of writing to show their understanding of what they read.

Additionally, the pedagogical findings of this study were supported by the fundamentals of reading and comprehension instruction in social constructivist theory (Cambourne, 2002; Duke, 2001; McLaughlin, 2012). According to Cambourne (2002), the following constructivist reading instruction tenets are essential in any effective reading comprehension instruction:

- Providing a classroom environment that fosters effective reading engagement
- Providing opportunities for explicit and flexible use of reading strategies
- Supporting teacher-student and student-student classroom learning opportunities
- Encouraging the use of authentic materials and tasks

Most of the social constructivist principles in reading comprehension instruction were applied and met throughout the course of this study. For example, the seventh and eighth grade teachers highlighted reciprocal instruction and gradual release of responsibility. These two principles created active teacher-student and student-student learning environment. In addition,
the use of children’s picture books and some activities that enhanced the artistic and creative abilities of the students helped to build authentic classroom learning settings in the seventh and eighth grades. These opportunities helped students to engage and involve continuously in some tasks and activities in both classrooms.

To sum up, most of the findings of this study showed that they were consistent with findings of many previous studies and met the main constructs of some language and learning theories. This study, then, continued to validate these theories and research studies and consolidate the contribution of this study to enrich the body of research in teaching reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language with a focus on the Libyan context.

**General Pedagogical and Educational Implications**

There were several teaching and pedagogical implications of this study. First, providing explicit instruction using authentic and easy-reading materials such as children’s picture books may contribute to better improvement of EFL and ESL students’ reading comprehension achievements. The Libyan EFL teachers and students could specifically benefit from the use of children’s picture books to explicitly instruct reading comprehension strategies. Previous problems students had shown in reading comprehension instruction appeared to have been alleviated by the approach used in this study, as seen in student responses regarding use of the strategies and their overall reading comprehension achievement scores. This study showed that many students from the seventh and eighth grades responded positively to the use of picture books, participated actively, and were interested in learning from picture books. Indeed, the findings of this study may have great applicability beyond the Libyan EFL context into other Arab EFL contexts as the Egyptian and the Tunisian. EFL teachers and students could have
similar benefits in this regard because the general system of teaching English as a Foreign Language is very similar across these nations.

Thus, the use of well-selected picture books to initiate explicit reading comprehension instruction could bridge the gap that exists in the English language materials, especially when teaching reading comprehension strategies. Picture books could be used to customize the English learning materials to meet the needs of explicit reading comprehension instruction in these classrooms and give a clearer knowledge for the students in those classrooms.

Secondly, EFL teachers could benefit from using an explicit instructional program that includes using preliminary materials, modeling using think-aloud, reciprocal instruction, scaffolding, providing feedback, and releasing responsibility in consolidating reading comprehension instruction at any grade levels. The findings of this dissertation study emphasized the fact that reading comprehension instruction should be explicit and flexible. Teachers and students should jointly transact with the text in order to make sense of it. In other words, the teachers’ mission is not to mechanically teach comprehension strategy; rather, teachers should understand that reading comprehension is a sophisticated process that entails teacher-student and student-student collaboration. These fundamental principles of explicit and flexible comprehension strategy instruction were consistent with Harris and Pressley’s (1991) approaches which were succinctly elaborated in the following quote:

Good strategy instruction is not rote. Students are not just memorizing steps and mechanically executing them; strategy instructors are not drill sergeants. Rather, good strategy instruction entails making students aware of purposes of strategies, how and why they work, and when and where they can be used. Students are given extensive practice
in the context of ongoing school instruction, practice which produces a personalized mastery of the method. Further, students are actively involved in the evaluation, modification, and construction of strategies. Teachers do not give orders, but rather model, discuss, explain, and reexplain, and in the process of doing so, teachers' understandings of strategies and their students change. Teachers and students are constructing important new knowledge during strategy instruction. (p. 403)

Third, it is likely that all classrooms can benefit from these strategies, but in particular, Libyan classrooms and its educational system can benefit from incorporating the use of children’s picture books and explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction into teaching English. As seen in this study, student comprehension (loosely defined by gain scores on the posttest, but also students’ reflections on their use of the picture books and strategies) clearly shows students to have benefited from this type of instruction. The students’ and teachers’ manifestation of positive attitude (and learning) toward using picture books is a persuasive argument for use. It should encourage Libyan EFL students, teachers, and educationalists to support using these materials to teach other English language skills including vocabulary, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. Bringing children’s picture books into Libyan EFL classrooms can afford multiple opportunities for teachers to bridge some major gaps that might appear in their assigned materials. Findings of this study indicated that both Libyan EFL teachers and their students accepted and appreciated the use of children’s picture books in their classrooms. This is a promising finding for bringing children’s picture books into the Libyan education system. Not only for reading comprehension purposes, the use of picture books could bridge potential gaps that might exist in the English language syllabi and could contribute to increased literacy rates among EFL students.
The findings from this study also supported a shift from more traditional, teacher-centered instruction (lecture) to the use of activities, tasks, and practices that could support the students’ motivation and engagement in the classroom. Libyan students are used to being taught traditionally and the learning process is teacher-centered. Use of some of the major instructions that scaffolded the students’ participation and engagement in the classroom such as modeling and reciprocal teaching could place greater emphasis on student-centered learning and contribute to the students’ overall achievement development. Further, the use of children’s picture books in a Libyan EFL context can afford an authentic environment for classroom instructions. Western picture books contain various language structures and styles that are unique to English-native speakers. Additionally, picture books are short, interesting, and do not consume a lot of time. These features could enable Libyan EFL teachers to establish multiple vivid opportunities for using this authentic language and practice it inside and outside the classroom. Teachers’ can use picture books to enhance role-playing; four-three-two-one minutes activities (students can practice any skill or strategy in four minutes, then, in three, then in two, then in one minute) (Hagler, 2012; McGrath, 2013). These activities and tasks are time consuming and more sophisticated when other conventional materials (e.g., English language textbooks) are used because they do require short and interesting materials.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

One of the major goals of this study was to provide a research foundation through which further studies could successfully be implemented, particularly in EFL contexts. Research on comprehension strategy instruction is very limited in these educational settings. Therefore, a qualitative exploratory investigation was conducted. The findings of this study showed some basic principles of explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction using picture books. Despite these findings, more in-depth and
breadth interventions will be needed for better understanding of reading comprehension strategy
instruction, particularly in EFL contexts. In this study, the use of picture books and explicit instruction
of comprehension strategies were inseparable. While it is clear that this was a successful approach, it is
not yet clear whether one factor or the other was more or less important or whether both must be taught
in conjunction with the other. Thus, the implementation of experimental and mixed method research in
these environments must be emphasized for future research since providing precise experimental
measurements and details were beyond the scope of this study. Understanding the role of each of these
factors (picture books and explicit comprehension strategies) must be resolved in future research.

This dissertation study placed heavy attention on the use of children’s picture books to
initiate explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies and then some sections from the
English language textbooks were used to reaffirm the learned strategies. Picture books are
considered narrative materials while the English language textbooks are categorized as
expository/narrative materials. Similarly, I did not look at the difference between the uses of two
different types of materials in comprehension instruction. Therefore, more research is needed to
investigate the differences in using various genres of materials in reading comprehension
instruction.

Furthermore, differences across the reading comprehension strategies used in terms of the
improvement of the students’ reading comprehension and understanding of the reading pieces
were not examined. In other words, I did not identify which strategies were more powerful and
superior in improving the students’ comprehension abilities. Also, an important pedagogical
aspect that was not precisely investigated throughout the course of this study was the time
instruction allotted for reading comprehension strategy instruction. I have not determined the
exact time needed for explicit reading comprehension instruction and how teachers could
manage their English language classes when they need to integrate reading comprehension instruction into these classes. Moreover, further research might be needed to investigate the impact of children’s picture books in developing other language areas such as speaking, writing, listening, and critical thinking using the same or similar populations. This is because the use of picture books was positively accepted by both Libyan EFL students and teachers.

Finally, a number of specific research questions emerged from the overall findings of this dissertation study that might help to guide any future research (both experimental and qualitative) including the following: (1) What is the actual impact of the implementation of children’s picture books to developing reading comprehension abilities of EFL students? (2) What preferences do students have for using reading comprehension strategies to develop understanding the reading text? (3) Which strategies are more effective in developing students’ understanding of the text? And finally, (4) a question that drives further into relatively unexplored terrain is related to whether the use of children’s picture books will impact learning some strategies and skills over others. Specifically, what, if any, changes in the EFL students’ performance in other language skills are occurring since the instruction emphasized reading comprehension?

A Final Word

Without a doubt, developing explicit and flexible comprehension strategy instruction is essential to the success of any reading and academic program. Comprehension is the backbone of reading and reading is the key to success in any educational program. Therefore, any successful educational program entails explicit comprehension strategy instruction and any successful explicit comprehension instruction entails the use of tools that meet readers’ needs and teachers’ flexible instruction. This is especially important when teaching EFL learners who have limited
access to English and inadequate access to immersion opportunities in English reading programs. The findings of this study suggested that the integration of explicit comprehension strategy instruction using materials that meet the linguistic and cultural needs of learners (e.g., picture books) are fundamental to building a comprehensible input to those learners. The use of this blended instructional formula aims to leave each student with some comprehension strategies that she/he can use in other reading and learning assignments. To sustain this approach is not an easy task. Teachers, particularly in EFL contexts, should know that explicit reading comprehension instruction does not consist of different layers. Rather, explicit comprehension strategy instruction is a whole package that requires teachers who are able to select and use tools strategically. Finally, teachers should know that the use of children’s picture books should not be restricted to specific language strategies or skills; they can be used across an array of subjects. Whenever teachers think that they need to fill any gaps in their instructional materials, picture books may be their most viable tool.
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APPENDIX A
STUDENTS’ PRE-SURVEYS

Students’ Background Survey (1)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Circle your gender.
   - Male  ذكر
   - Female  أنثى

2. Circle your age.
   - 12-14
   - 14-16
   - 16-18

3. How many years did you study English?

4. Have you ever studied English abroad?
   - Yes  نعم
   - No  لا

5. Do you speak English at home?
   - Yes  نعم
   - No  لا

6. Do you take any private courses in English?
   - Yes  نعم
   - No  لا

7. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help you understand better?
   - 3
8. Have you ever read picture books?
   - Yes
   - No

9. If so, what kind of picture books?

10. Explain how you would feel about using picture books to help you understand some lessons from your textbook and improve your English.

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
**Students’ Attitude Surveys (1)**

**Instructions:** Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. What do you think of the current English language textbook?
   ما رأيك بمنهج اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي.

2. What are some challenges in learning from the current English language textbook?
   ماهية التحديات والصعوبات التي قد تواجهك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من منهج اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي.

3. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help you understand better?
   هل تعتقد أن استخدام وسائل أخرى داخل الفصل سيساعدك أكثر في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية?

4. What other resources do you use to understand textbook lessons in the class?
   ما هي الوسائل التي تستعملها في الفصل لفهم دروس اللغة الإنجليزية جيدا.

5. What other materials and resources do you use at home to understand your English language lessons?
   ماهية الوسائل الأخرى التي قد تستخدمها في المنزل لفهم مفردات منهج اللغة الإنجليزية جيدا.

6. What do you think you would like when you learn English using picture books?
   ما تعتقد أنك ستفضّل عندما تتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام القصص المصورة.

7. What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?
   ماهية الصعوبات التي قد تواجهك عندما تستخدم القصص المصورة داخل الفصل.
8. Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books are probably like yours? In what way(s)?

هل تعتقد أن الثقافة الموجودة في القصص المصورة مشابهة لثقافتك؟ كيف.

9. How do you think picture books can be related to the lessons in your English language textbook?

كيف ترتبط مفردات المنهج بمحتويات القصص المصورة.

10. Are there any similarities between topics in your English language textbook and others in picture books? In what way?

هل يوجد أي وجه شبه بين مواضيع منهج اللغة الإنجليزية وتلك الموجودة في القصص المصورة.

11. In your opinion, what is the difference between learning a lesson using picture books and learning a lesson without using picture books?

في وجهة نظرك ما الفرق ما الفرق بين تعلمك اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام القصص المصورة وتعليمك اللغة الإنجليزية بدونها.

12. Are you planning to keep reading picture books at home?

هل ستستمر بقراءة القصص المصورة في البيت.

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
**Students’ Reading Comprehension Surveys (1)**

**Instructions**: Please mark the one answer for each statement that most closely corresponds to your opinion. If you need help, please ask.

1. I can use different text comprehension strategies when I read any topic in any subject.
   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never

2. I use different text comprehension skills to understand the English language text only.
   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never

3. I decode the words to comprehend the text I am reading.
   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never
4. I look at any pictures to guess what the text is about.

أنظر لإي صورة قد ترافق النص لأنتبا عن مايدور حوله النص.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

5. I read the title to guess the general idea of the text.

أقرأ العنوان جيدا حتى أنتبا بالفكرة الرئيسية للنص.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

6. I summarize the text by stating its main ideas in a simple form to better understand it.

ألخص النص بإخراج النقاط الرئيسية بشكل رئيسي لفهمه.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

7. I paraphrase the main sentences in the text to get its complete idea.

أعيد صياغة الجمل الرئيسية في لننص للحصول على المفهوم الكامل له.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

8. I retell the text to demonstrate that I understand it.

أعيد سرد النص شفويًا للتتأكد من استيعابه.
9. I synthesize the text by combining ideas that are available in the text with my own ideas.

أعيد تنقيح النص بدمج الأفكار الموجودة في النص مع أفكاري.
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

10. I ask question-s about the text to help me search for any information I need.

أطرح أسئلة حول النص لمساعدتي في البحث عن المعلومة التي أحتاجها ولفهم النص.
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

11. I compare and contrast ideas from the text that I am reading and other text I read to get a complete picture about what I am reading.

أقارن وأقارن المفاهيم والأفكار من النص الذي قرأته سابقاً للحصول على صورة معمقة لما قرأته.
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

12. I connect the text I am reading to any text that I have read in the past to guide me to comprehend the text appropriately.

أربط النص الذي قرأنه بإي نص قرأته سابقاً لاستعاب النص بشكل ملائم.
13. I draw a mental image of the ideas that I read to better comprehend them.

أرسم صورة في مخيلتي للمعلومات والأفكار التي أقرأها لفهمها أكثر.

- Always (دائما)
- Often (غالبا)
- Sometimes (احيانا)
- Never (لا ابدا)

14. Picture books provide me with more opportunities to communicate with my teacher and other students in the class.

القصص المصورة تعطيني مساحة أكبر للتواصل مع معلمي وزملائي داخل الفصل.

- Always (دائما)
- Often (غالبا)
- Sometimes (احيانا)
- Never (لا ابدا)

15. I use different clues from the text to predict its main purpose.

أستخدم مفاتيح مختلفة من النص للتنبؤ بهدفه الرئيسي.

- Always (دائما)
- Often (غالبا)
- Sometimes (احيانا)
- Never (لا ابدا)

16. I monitor the text that I am reading carefully by questioning the author.

أتمعن النص الذي أقرأه وذلك من خلال سوال الكاتب.

- Always (دائما)
17. All picture books that we used in the class have the same power of motivation and engagement.

18. All teaching instructions that I face can help me to comprehend any text using picture books.

19. When I learn a new text comprehension skill, I feel my English has also improved.

20. I read picture books at home to help me improve and appreciate text comprehension skills.
This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.

إنهى الاستبيان...شكراً للوقت و الجهود الذي بذلته لاستكمال هذا الاستبيان
Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Circle your gender.
   - Male ذكر
   - Female أنثى

2. Circle your age.
   - 12-14
   - 14-16
   - 16-18

3. How many years did you study English?

4. Have you ever studied English abroad?
   - Yes نعم
   - No لا

5. Do you speak English at home?
   - Yes نعم
   - No لا

6. Do you take any private courses in English?
   - Yes نعم
   - No لا

7. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help you understand better?
8. Have you ever read picture books? هل قرأت قصص مصورة في السابق
- Yes نعم
- No لا

9. If so, what kind of picture books? إذا نعم أي نوع من القصص المصورة

10. Explain how did you feel about using picture books to help you understand some lessons from your textbook and improve your English.

وضح ما هو شعورك حول استخدام القصص المصورة لمساعدتك لفهم منهج اللغة الإنجليزية وتطوير لغتك الإنجليزية

إنهي الاستبيان...شكرا للوقت و الجهد الذي بذلته لاستكمال هذا الاستبيان

This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
Students’ Attitude Surveys (2)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. What do you think of the current English language textbook?

2. What are some challenges in learning from the current English language textbook?

3. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help you understand better?

4. What other resources do you use to understand textbook lessons in the class?

5. What other materials and resources do you use at home to understand your English language lessons?

6. What did you think you would like when you learn English using picture books?

7. What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?
8. Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books are probably like yours? In what way-s?

هل تعتقد أن الثقافة الموجودة في القصص المصورة مشابهة لثقافتك؟ كيف

9. How do you think picture books can be related to the lessons in your English language textbook?

كيف ترتبط مفردات المناهج بمحنويات القصص المصورة

10. Were there any similarities between topics in your English language textbook and others in picture books? In what way?

هل يوجد اتفاق بين مواضيع منهج اللغة الإنجليزية وتلك الموجودة في القصص المصورة

11. In your opinion, what was the difference between learning a lesson using picture books and learning a lesson without using picture books?

في وجهة نظرك ما الفرق بين تعلمك اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام القصص المصورة وتعليمك اللغة الإنجليزية بدونها

12. Are you planning to keep reading picture books at home?

هل ستستمر بقراءة القصص المصورة في البيت

إنهي الاستبيان...شكراً لوقت وجهدك الذي بذلته لإكمال هذا الاستبيان
This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
Students’ Reading Comprehension Surveys (2)

إستبيان أستيعاب النص للطالب (2)

Instructions: Please mark the one answer for each statement that most closely corresponds to your opinion. If you need help, please ask.

استطيع استعمال عدة مهارات لاستعاب النص.

1. I can use different text comprehension strategies when I read any topic in any subject.

   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never

2. I use different text comprehension skills to understand the English language text only.

   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never

3. I decode the words to comprehend the text I am reading.

   - Always
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Never

4. I look at any pictures to guess what the text is about.
Always  دائماً
Often  غالباً
Sometimes  احياناً
Never  لا ابداً

5. I read the title to guess the general idea of the text.
أقرأ العنوان جيداً حتى أتنبأ بالفكرة الرئيسية للنص.

Always  دائماً
Often  غالباً
Sometimes  احياناً
Never  لا ابداً

6. I summarize the text by stating its main ideas in a simple form to better understand it.
أ.Reverse the sentences in the text to get its complete idea.

Always  دائماً
Often  غالباً
Sometimes  احياناً
Never  لا ابداً

8. I retell the text to demonstrate that I understand it.
أعيد سرد النص شفياً للتأكد من استيعابه.
• Always
• Often
• Sometimes
• Never

9. I synthesize the text by combining ideas that are available in the text with my own ideas.

أعيد تفكيك النص بدمج الأفكار الموجودة في النص مع افكاري.
• Always
• Often
• Sometimes
• Never

10. I ask questions about the text to help me search for any information I need.

أطرح أسئلة حول النص لمساعدتي في البحث عن المعلومات التي أحتاجها ولفهم النص.
• Always
• Often
• Sometimes
• Never

11. I compare and contrast ideas from the text that I am reading and other text I read to get a complete picture about what I am reading.

أقارن وأقارن المفاهيم والأفكار من النص الذي قرأته سابقا للحصول على صورة معمقة لما قرأته.
• Always
• Often
• Sometimes
• Never

12. I connect the text I am reading to any text that I have read in the past to guide me to comprehend the text appropriately.

أربط النص الذي أقرأه بأي نص قرأته سابقا للإستعاب البصري للمعلومات.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I draw a mental image of the ideas that I read to better comprehend them.</td>
<td>أرسم صورة في مخيلتي للمعلومات والأفكار التي أقرأها لفهمها أكثر.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Picture books provide me with more opportunities to communicate with my teacher and other students in the class.</td>
<td>القصص المصورة تعطيني مساحة أكبر للتواصل مع معلمي وزملائي داخل الفصل.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I use different clues from the text to predict its main purpose.</td>
<td>استعمل مفاتيح مختلفة من النص لتتنبئ بهدفه الرئيسي.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I monitor the text that I am reading carefully by questioning the author.</td>
<td>أتمنى النص الذي أقرأه وذلك من خلال سؤال الكاتب.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. All picture books that we used in the class have the same power of motivation and engagement.

18. All teaching instructions that I face can help me to comprehend any text using picture books.

19. When I learn a new text comprehension skill, I feel my English has also improved.

20. I read picture books at home to help me improve and appreciate text comprehension skills.
• Often
• Sometimes
• Never

This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
APPENDIX C
TEACHERS’ PRE-SURVEYS

Teachers’ Background Survey (1)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Circle your gender.
   • Male
   • Female

2. Circle your age.
   • Under 25
   • 25-29
   • 30–39
   • 40-49
   • 50-59
   • 60+

3. How long have you been teaching?

4. How many and which classes are you teaching?

5. In your teaching do you use any additional materials alongside the textbook?

6. If so, what materials do you usually use?

7. How often do you use these materials in your teaching?

8. How familiar are you with using picture books in the classroom?

9. Have you ever taught text comprehension skills?
   • Yes
   • No
10. Are you familiar with classroom engagement?
   - Yes
   - No

This is the end of the questionnaire
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire
Teachers’ Attitude Surveys (1)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.
1. What do you think of the current English language textbook?

2. What are some challenges in teaching the current English language textbook?

3. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help your teaching?

4. Do you use other resources to supplement teaching English from the textbook?

5. If so, what are these resources?

6. What do you think you would like when you teach English using picture books?

7. What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?

8. Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books may constitute any issues? If so, in what way(s)?

9. How do you think picture books’ topics can be related to the lessons in your English language textbook?

10. Are there any similarities between topics in your English language textbook and others in picture books? In what way?

11. In your opinion, what is the difference between teaching a lesson using picture books and teaching a lesson without using picture books?
12. Would you recommend reading picture books at home?

This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
Teachers’ Reading Comprehension Survey (1)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Do you think the current English language textbook is appropriate to improve text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you teach any text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

3. List the text comprehension skills that you used to teach?

4. Do you use any supplementary materials to teach text comprehension skills? If so, please list?

5. Do you think that picture books help to improve your students’ text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

6. What comprehension skills do you think picture books help to improve?

7. How often do you think picture books should be used to supplement teaching text comprehension skills?
   - Always
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never

8. Are there comprehension skills you could not teach when picture books are used as supplementary materials? If so, please list?

9. Which materials help you better improve your students’ text comprehension skills?
   - The English language text book
   - Picture books
The English language text book and Picture books
None of all

10. What text comprehension skill(s) do you think hard to teach? Why?

11. What are the best classroom instructions that may help you improve your students’ text comprehension skills?

12. How would you use picture books in improving text comprehension skills?

13. What are some difficulties that you encounter when you teach text comprehension skills and how to overcome them?

14. What are the fundamental benefits when picture books are used to teach text comprehension skills?

15. What do you think the important factors to improve the teaching of text comprehension skills?

This is the end of the questionnaire
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire
APPENDIX D
TEACHERS’ POST-SURVEYS

Teachers’ Background Survey (2)

Instructions: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Circle your gender.
   - Male
   - Female

2. Circle your age.
   - Under 25
   - 25-29
   - 30–39
   - 40-49
   - 50-59
   - 60+

3. How long have you been teaching?

4. How many and which classes are you teaching?

5. In your teaching do you use any additional materials alongside the textbook?

6. If so, what materials do you usually use?

7. How often do you use these materials in your teaching?
8. How familiar are you with using picture books in the classroom?

9. Have you ever taught text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

10. Are you familiar with classroom engagement?
    - Yes
    - No

This is the end of the questionnaire
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire
Teachers’ Attitude Surveys (2)

**Instructions**: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. What do you think of the current English language textbook?

2. What are some challenges in teaching the current English language textbook?

3. Do you think using other materials in the classroom would help your teaching?

4. Do you use other resources to supplement teaching English from the textbook?

5. If so, what are these resources?

6. What did you like when you taught English using picture books?

7. What were some problems when you used picture books in class?

8. Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books constituted any issues? If so, in what way-s?

9. How do you think picture books’ topics were related to the lessons in your English language textbook?

10. Were there any similarities between topics in your English language textbook and others in picture books? In what way?

11. In your opinion, what was the difference between teaching a lesson using picture books and teaching a lesson without using picture books?
12. Would you recommend reading picture books at home?

This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire.
Teachers’ Reading Comprehension Survey (2)

**Instructions**: Fill out the survey below. Be sure to put one answer for each question. Please indicate which questions, if any, are unclear by circling the number of the question. If you need help, please ask.

1. Do you think the current English language textbook is appropriate to improve text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you teach any text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

3. List the text comprehension skills that you used to teach?

4. Do you use any supplementary materials to teach text comprehension skills? If so, please list?

5. Do you think that picture books helped to improve your students’ text comprehension skills?
   - Yes
   - No

6. What comprehension skills did you think picture books helped to improve?

7. How often do you think picture books should be used to supplement teaching text comprehension skills?
   - Always
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never

8. Were there comprehension skills you could not teach when picture books were used as supplementary materials? If so, please list?

9. Which materials helped you better improve your students’ text comprehension skills?
   - The English language text book
   - Picture books
   - The English language text book and Picture books
• None of all

10. What text comprehension skill(s) did you think hard to teach? Why?

11. What were the best classroom instructions that helped you improve your students’ text comprehension skills?

12. How did you use picture books in improving text comprehension skills?

13. What were some difficulties that you encountered when you taught text comprehension skills and how to overcome them?

14. What were the fundamental benefits when picture books were used to teach text comprehension skills?

15. What do you think the important factors to improve the teaching of text comprehension skills?

This is the end of the questionnaire
Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this questionnaire
APPENDIX E

STUDENTS’ PRETESTS

Seventh Grades Pretest

Name:...........                      Class:...........

Answer the following questions

Section one

1-Read the following passage, then answer the questions below. Please choose only one answer.

Fatima said “I live in a house in a village. Our house is big and it is near the sea. Downstairs, there is a kitchen, a dining room, and a sitting room. Upstairs, there are three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a toilet. You can see my father, my mother, and my three brothers in this picture” (p. 30).

A. Which title could fit this passage?
   o Fatima’s family.
   o Fatima’s kitchen.
   o Fatima’s house.
   o Fatima’s parents.

B. Which sentence best states the main idea of the passage?
   o This passage describes Fatima’s parents.
   o This passage describes Fatima’s house.
   o This passage describes Fatima’s setting room.
   o This passage describes Fatima’s dining room.

C. Which statement best summarizes the paragraph.
   o Fatima talks about her family and her daily life.
   o Fatima tells a story about her teachers in the school.
   o Fatima talks about what a kitchen, a dining room, and a sitting room are.
   o Fatima describes her house and talks a bit about her family.

D. Which of the following sentences/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the paragraph?
   o Our house is big.
   o It is near the sea.
   o Downstairs, there is a kitchen, a dining room, and a setting room.
   o You can see my father, mother, and my three brothers

(12Pts.)
2. Use one of the following strategies to demonstrate your comprehension of the above paragraph: visualizing, questioning, synthesizing, determining big ideas.

Section Two

3. Read the following conversation between Fatima and her mother, then answer the questions below:

Mother: Do you want that long dress?
Fatima: No, thanks. It is too big.
Mother: What about the short, red one?
Fatima: Yes, please. Can I have it?
Mother: All right.

A. Based on information in the conversation, what will most likely happen at the end?
   - Fatima will buy the long blue dress.
   - Fatima will buy the long red dress.
   - Fatima will buy the short blue dress.
B. Which fact from the paragraph would determine the top big idea?
   o The short red dress.
   o The long blue dress.
   o The dress.
   o The too big dress.

C. What is the author’s purpose for writing this conversation?
   o To talk about Fatima and her mother.
   o To show how to choose clothes.
   o To describe Fatima’s dress.
   o To show the blue and red dresses.

Section Three

4. Read the following description and answer the questions below

There are three camels. Two camels are drinking water. One camel is eating a plant. There are two men. They are standing under a tree. There is a horse. The girl’s brother is riding the horse.

A. We could connect this passage to information in:
   o Farms around us.
   o Our Math lessons.
   o Our Geography lessons.
   o Information found in news.

B. One good question we may ask about this passage is:
   o What is the difference between camels and horses?
   o Why camels drink a lot of water?
   o Do camels live anywhere?
   o What is usually grown in the farm?

C. Which sentence best synthesize the paragraph?
   o The passage provides general information about life in the desert and how camels usually live.
   o The passage shows some animal farm pets and gives in-depth analysis of its features.
   o The passage describes an overview of tribal life in desert areas.
   o The passage narrates a story of a girl lives in the desert and two women.

D. The main clues that may help in predicting the paragraph are:
   o Camels, horses, trees.
   o Two, one, three.
   o Standing, drinking, wearing.
   o The girl, brother, men.
Section Four

5-Read the following statement and answer the question below:
There are twelve months in the year. January is the first month and December is the last.

A.  Visualize your understanding of the months of the year.

(15Pts.)

The Questions Finished…Good Luck…Thank You
Section One

1-Read the following passage, then answer the questions below. Please choose only one answer.

Thousands of years ago, people did not read or write. They talked about things that happened and told stories to each other. Then people wanted to have a record to help them remember important things. At first, they did not write words: they used pictures. This is Egyptian picture writing. The Egyptian made paper from plants. Then, about 2,000 years ago, the Chinese started making paper from trees. About 1,500 years ago, people wrote the first books. They had no machines so they wrote them by hand. Later, about 550 years ago, a German invented the first printing machine. It worked by hand. Modern printing machines work by electricity. Today, there are millions of books, newspapers and magazines in bookshops around the world.

A. Which title could fit this page:
   o The history of reading
   o The history of writing
   o The history of books
   o The history of Egypt

B. Which sentence best summarizes the paragraph:
   o Many years ago people were using simple tool to record ideas and information, after that many way were discovered to invent book.
   o Thousands of years ago, people were using simple tools to communicate.
   o Reading, writing, and picturing were tools to learning since thousands of year ago.
   o German invented the first book in the history since thousands of years ago.

C. Which fact from the paragraph would determine the top big idea:
   o People did not read or write.
   o Egyptians made paper from plants.
   o People wanted to have a record to help them remember important things.
   o Modern printing machines work by electricity.

D. Which of the following statements/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the paragraph:
Egyptian picture writing.
German invented the first printing machine.
The Chinese start making paper from trees.
Today, there is millions of book.

2-Use visualization strategy to demonstrate your comprehension of the paragraph?
3-Complete the following story map using information from the above paragraph?

Thousands Years Ago
Oral stories

2000 Years Ago

1500 Years Ago

550 Years Ago

(10 Pts.)


Section Two

Read the following conversation between Tom and Joe and answer the question below:

Joe: Look, he's falling down the mountain! He's going to get hurt!

Tom: Oh, no—that's the end of the episode. We'll have to wait until next week to see what happens.

Joe: I think he'll fall into some soft now. Then someone will find him.

Tom: But there's a big storm. How will they find him?

Joe: I don't know. Maybe he'll light a fire.

Tom: But there's no wood. I don't think anyone will find him.

Joe: OK, then maybe he'll climb back to the camp.

A. Based on information in the conversation, what will most likely happen at the end:
   - He will climb back to the camp.
   - Someone will find him.
   - He will light fire.
   - He will fall into some soft snow.

B. What is the author's purpose for writing this conversation?
   - To describe Tom and Joe's story.
   - To show how the man is falling from the mountain.
   - To learn how to predict an event in a story.
   - To describe a story.

C. Which statement is the most important conclusion you can draw from this conversation.
   - The man will fall down.
   - The man will start fire and find someone.
   - The man will climb back to the camp and survive.
   - The man will go home.

D. Which of the following statements/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the conversation.
   - He is falling down.
   - There is a big storm.
   - Someone will find him.
   - We will have to wait until next week.

Section Three

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:
Young children have accidents in the home, so always think about their safety. Never leave babies or small children alone in a bath, because they can drown very quickly. Be careful not to leave hot drinks near children. They might spill hot cups of coffee or tea and burn themselves. Also, make sure you lock all cleaning liquids and medicines in cupboards.

A. The best way to connect this page is:
   - To our daily life.
   - To movies we may watch.
   - To sports we watch.
   - To topics in school subjects.

B. Which sentence best summarizes the paragraph:
   - It describes some accidents may happen at home.
   - It describes some accidents and problems in our daily life that children and adults may face.
   - It describes some accidents baby may face and how to protect them.
   - It shows babies at home and what they usually do.

C. Which of the following ideas are less important to the paragraph:
   - Never leave babies alone.
   - Lock the cleaning liquids.
   - Not to leave hot cup of coffee.

D. Yong children often have accidents.

Which of the following information do you think is/are missing from the paragraph?
   - Never leave hot milk.
   - Never leave sharp tools such as knives.
   - Never leave medical components.
   - Never leave electric power cords.

Questions ended… Good luck… Thank you
Seventh Grades Posttest

Answer the following questions

Section one

1-Read the following passage, then answer the questions below. Please choose only one answer.

Fatima said “I live in a house in a village. Our house is big and it is near the sea. Downstairs, there is a kitchen, a dining room, and a sitting room. Upstairs, there are three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a toilet. You can see my father, my mother, and my three brothers in this picture” (p. 30).

E. Which title could fit this passage?
   - Fatima’s family.
   - Fatima’s kitchen.
   - Fatima’s house.
   - Fatima’s parents.

F. Which sentence best states the main idea of the passage?
   - This passage describes Fatima’s parents.
   - This passage describes Fatima’s house.
   - This passage describes Fatima’s setting room.
   - This passage describes Fatima’s dining room.

G. Which statement best summarizes the paragraph.
   - Fatima talks about her family and her daily life.
   - Fatima tells a story about her teachers in the school.
   - Fatima talks about what a kitchen, a dining room, and a sitting room are.
   - Fatima describes her house and talks a bit about her family.

H. Which of the following sentences/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the paragraph?
   - Our house is big.
   - It is near the sea.
   - Downstairs, there is a kitchen, a dining room, and a setting room.
   - You can see my father, mother, and my three brothers

(12Pts.)
2. Use one of the following strategies to demonstrate your comprehension of the above paragraph: visualizing, questioning, synthesizing, determining big ideas.

Section Two

3-Read the following conversation between Fatima and her mother, then answer the questions below:

Mother: Do you want that long dress?
Fatima: No, thanks. It is too big.
Mother: What about the short, red one?
Fatima: Yes, please. Can I have it?
Mother: All right.

D. Based on information in the conversation, what will most likely happen at the end?
   - Fatima will buy the long blue dress.
   - Fatima will buy the long red dress.
   - Fatima will buy the short blue dress.
Fatima will buy the short red dress.

E. Which fact from the paragraph would determine the top big idea?
   - The short red dress.
   - The long blue dress.
   - The dress.
   - The too big dress.

F. What is the author’s purpose for writing this conversation?
   - To talk about Fatima and her mother.
   - To show how to choose clothes.
   - To describe Fatima’s dress.
   - To show the blue and red dresses.

Section Three

4. Read the following description and answer the questions below

There are three camels. Two camels are drinking water. One camel is eating a plant. There are two men. They are standing under a tree. There is a horse. The girl’s brother is riding the horse.

E. We could connect this passage to information in:
   - Farms around us.
   - Our Math lessons.
   - Our Geography lessons.
   - Information found in news.

F. One good question we may ask about this passage is:
   - What is the difference between camels and horses?
   - Why camels drink a lot of water?
   - Do camels live anywhere?
   - What is usually grown in the farm?

G. Which sentence best synthesize the paragraph?
   - The passage provides general information about life in the desert and how camels usually live.
   - The passage shows some animal farm pets and gives in-depth analysis of its features.
   - The passage describes an overview of tribal life in desert areas.
   - The passage narrates a story of a girl lives in the desert and two women.

H. The main clues that may help in predicting the paragraph are:
   - Camels, horses, trees.
   - Two, one, three.
   - Standing, drinking, wearing.
   - The girl, brother, men.
Section Four
5-Read the following statement and answer the question below:
There are twelve months in the year. January is the first month and December is the last.

B. Visualize your understanding of the months of the year.
Section One

1-Read the following passage, then answer the questions below. Please choose only one answer.

Thousands of years ago, people did not read or write. They talked about things that happened and told stories to each other. Then people wanted to have a record to help them remember important things. At first, they did not write words; they used pictures. This is Egyptian picture writing. The Egyptian made paper from plants. Then, about 2,000 years ago, the Chinese started making paper from trees. About 1,500 years ago, people wrote the first books. They had no machines so they wrote them by hand. Later, about 550 years ago, a German invented the first printing machine. It worked by hand. Modern printing machines work by electricity. Today, there are millions of books, newspapers and magazines in bookshops around the world.

E. Which title could fit this page:
   o The history of reading
   o The history of writing
   o The history of books
   o The history of Egypt

F. Which sentence best summarizes the paragraph:
   o Many years ago people were using simple tool to record ideas and information, after that many way were discovered to invent book.
   o Thousands of years ago, people were using simple tools to communicate.
   o Reading, writing, and picturing were tools to learning since thousands of year ago.
   o German invented the first book in the history since thousands of years ago.

G. Which fact from the paragraph would determine the top big idea:
   o People did not read or write.
   o Egyptians made paper from plants.
   o People wanted to have a record to help them remember important things.
   o Modern printing machines work by electricity.

H. Which of the following statements/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the paragraph:
- Egyptian picture writing.
- German invented the first printing machine.
- The Chinese start making paper from trees
- Today, there is millions of book.

2-Use visualization strategy to demonstrate your comprehension of the paragraph?

(12 pts.)

(10 Pts.)
3-Complete the following story map using information from the above paragraph?

---

**Thousands Years Ago**

- Oral stories

**2000 Years Ago**

- [Blank]
- [Blank]
- [Blank]

**1500 Years Ago**

- [Blank]
- [Blank]
- [Blank]

**550 Years Ago**

- [Blank]
- [Blank]
- [Blank]

(10 Pts.)
Section Two

Read the following conversation between Tom and Joe and answer the question below:

Joe: Look, he's falling down the mountain! He's going to get hurt!
Tom: Oh, no-that's the end of the episode. We'll have to wait until next week to see what happens.
Joe: I think he'll fall into some soft snow now. Then someone will find him.
Tom: But there's a big storm. How will they find him?
Joe: I don't know. Maybe he'll light a fire.
Tom: But there's no wood. I don't think anyone will find him.
Joe: OK, then maybe he'll climb back to the camp.

E. Based on information in the conversation, what will most likely happen at the end:
   o He will climb back to the camp.
   o Someone will find him.
   o He will light fire.
   o He will fall into some soft snow.

F. What is the author's purpose for writing this conversation?
   o To describe Tom and Joe's story.
   o To show how the man is falling from the mountain.
   o To learn how to predict an event in a story.
   o To describe a story.

G. Which statement is the most important conclusion you can draw from this conversation.
   o The man will fall down.
   o The man will start fire and find someone.
   o The man will climb back to the camp and survive.
   o The man will go home.

H. Which of the following statements/ideas are unimportant or irrelevant to the conversation.
   o He is falling down.
   o There is a big storm.
   o Someone will find him.
   o We will have to wait until next week.

Section Three
Read the following passage and answer the questions below:
Young children have accident in the home, so always think about their safety. Never leave babies or small children alone in a bath, because they can drown very quickly. Be careful not to leave hot drinks near children. They might spill hot cups of coffee or tea and burn themselves. Also, make sure you lock all cleaning liquids and medicines in cupboards.

E. The best way to connect this page is:
   - To our daily life.
   - To movies we may watch.
   - To Sports we watch.
   - To topics in school subjects.

F. Which sentence best summarizes the paragraph:
   - It describes some accidents may happen at home.
   - It describes some accidents and problems in our daily life that children and adults may face.
   - It describes some accidents baby may face and how to protect them.
   - It shows babies at home and what they usually do.

G. Which of the following ideas are less important to the paragraph:
   - Never leave babies alone.
   - Lock the cleaning liquids.
   - Not to leave hot cup of coffee.

H. Yong children often have accidents.
Which of the following information do you think is/are missing from the paragraph?
   - Never leave hot milk.
   - Never leave sharp tools such as knifes.
   - Never leave medical components.
   - Never leave electric power cords.

Questions ended…Good luck…Thank You
APPENDIX G
THE ALIGNMENT OF SOME OF THE STUDY’S QUESTIONS TO SOME OF THE STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION SURVEY QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question (1): What comprehension strategies do Libyan EFL students use when they are taught English using children’s picture books?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question (2): How do Libyan EFL students experience the use of children’s picture books to learn reading comprehension strategies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey questions that may help answer these two questions are:
* Explain how you would feel about using picture books to help you understand some lessons from your textbook and improve your English.
* I can use different text comprehension skills when I read any topic in any subject.
* I decode the words to comprehend the text I am reading.
* I look at any pictures to guess what the text is about.
* I read the title to guess the general idea of the text.
* I summarize the text by stating its main ideas in a simple form to better understand it.
* I paraphrase the main sentences in the text to get its complete idea.
* I retell the text to demonstrate that I understand it.
* I synthesize the text by combining ideas that are available in the text with my own ideas.
* I ask question(s) about the text to help me search for any information I need.
* I compare and contrast ideas from the text that I am reading and other text I read to get a complete picture about what I am reading.
* I connect the text I am reading to any text that I have read in the past to guide me to comprehend the text appropriately.
* I draw a mental image of the ideas that I read to better comprehend them.
* Picture books provide me with more opportunities to communicate with my teacher and other students in the class.
* I use different clues from the text to predict its main purpose.

* I monitor the text that I am reading carefully by questioning the author.
* All teaching instructions that I face can help me to comprehend any text using picture books.
* When I learn a new text comprehension skill, I feel my English has also improved

Research Question (3): How do Libyan EFL teachers experience the use of children’s picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies?

Surveys’ questions that may help answer this question are:
* How familiar are you with using picture books in the classroom?
* What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?
* Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books may constitute any issues? If so, in what way(s)?
* Do you think that picture books help to improve your students’ text comprehension skills?
* Are there comprehension skills you could not teach when picture books are used as supplementary materials? If so, please list?
* What comprehension skills do you think picture books help to improve?
* How often do you think picture books should be used to supplement teaching text comprehension skills?
* How would you use picture books in improving text comprehension skills?

Research Question (4): How does using picture books change the teaching/learning experience of Libyan teachers and students?

Surveys’ questions that may help answer this question are:
* What are the fundamental benefits when picture books are used to teach text comprehension skills?
* Explain how you would feel about using picture books to help you understand some lessons from your textbook and improve your English.
* Picture books provide me with more opportunities to communicate with my teacher and other students in the class.
* How often do you think picture books should be used to supplement teaching text comprehension skills?

Research Question (5): What challenges or difficulties do EFL students and their teachers encounter in using children’s picture books to learn and teach comprehension strategies?

Surveys’ questions that may help answer this question are:
* What might be some problems when you use picture books in class?
* Do you think that the cultures addressed in picture books are probably like yours? In what way(s)?
* What are some difficulties that you encounter when you teach text comprehension skills and how to overcome them?
APPENDIX H
PICTURE BOOKS FEATURES CODING PATTERN FROM STUDENTS’ INTERVIEWS

Code Family: Picture books features

P 4: Students’ attitude survey 2.docx - 4:116 [Illustrations] (3038:3038) (Super)
Codes: [Illustrations - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

Illustrations

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:11 [interesting] (176:176) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:15 [vivid] (224:224) (Super)
Codes: [vivid - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

vivid

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:52 [illustrations] (259:259) (Super)
Codes: [illustrations - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

illustrations

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:53 [short statements] (259:259) (Super)
Codes: [short statements - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

short statements

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:54 [easy words] (259:259) (Super)
Codes: [easy words - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

easy words

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:69 [interesting] (292:292) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:70 [short] (292:292) (Super)
Codes: [short - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

short

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:71 [helpful] (292:292) (Super)
Codes: [helpful - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

helpful

P 7: All students’ interview transcripts.docx - 7:77 [interesting] (333:333) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos
interesting

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:103 [pictures] (425:425) (Super)
Codes:  [pictures - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

pictures

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:104 [interesting] (425:425) (Super)
Codes:  [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:120 [illustrations] (544:544) (Super)
Codes:  [illustrations - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

illustrations

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:121 [easy wording] (544:544) (Super)
Codes:  [easy wording - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

easy wording

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:122 [interesting style] (544:544) (Super)
Codes:  [interesting style - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting style

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:123 [enjoying format] (544:544) (Super)
Codes:  [enjoying format - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

enjoying format

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:133 [illustrations] (590:590) (Super)
Codes:  [illustrations - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

illustrations

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:177 [hey were very interesting and ..] (751:751) (Super)
Codes:  [easy - Family: Picture books features][interesting - Family: Picture books features][picture book features][Students' positive views of using picture books]
No memos

hey were very interesting and easy

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:179 [pictures] (753:753) (Super)
Codes:  [pictures - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

pictures
short

skillfully designed

realistic

simple

colorful

interesting

interesting

colorful

short

not boring
not boring

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:222 [thematic] (898:898) (Super)
Codes: [thematic - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

thematic

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:236 [interesting] (945:945) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:237 [short] (945:945) (Super)
Codes: [short - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

short

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:265 [simple] (1060:1060) (Super)
Codes: [simple - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

simple

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:266 [understood easily] (1060:1060) (Super)
Codes: [understood easily - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

understood easily

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:270 [pictures you can tell what the...] (1062:1062) (Super)
Codes: [illustrations - Family: Picture books features] [Students' positive views of using picture books]
No memos

pictures you can tell what the story is about and I remember one of the stories was only picture (has no texts) and we could tell what that story was about. This might be clear evidence that what make picture books easy were the pictures

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:286 [interesting] (1160:1160) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:287 [colorful] (1160:1160) (Super)
Codes: [colorful - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

colorful

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:288 [imaginative] (1160:1160) (Super)
Codes: [imaginative - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

imaginative
Purposeful

Picture books were interesting and entertaining. I think all the picture books that we used were great. The Giving Tree was the most unique among all of them. I really enjoyed reading this story and I learned a lot from it.

Entertaining

Interesting

Easy words.

Interesting

A lot of pictures

Have many pictures

Have CDs
words are easy to understand and guess

great stories

interesting

pictures

easy words

purposeful

pictures

interesting

colorful
colorful

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:406 [easy] (1641:1641) (Super)
Codes: [easy - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

easy

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:407 [varied] (1641:1641) (Super)
Codes: [varied - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

varied

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:408 [interesting] (1641:1641) (Super)
Codes: [interesting - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

interesting

P 7: All students' interview transcripts.docx - 7:417 [pictures] (1681:1681) (Super)
Codes: [pictures - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

pictures

P17: teachers' Interview transcripts.docx - 17:13 [vivid illustrations] (17:17) (Super)
Codes: [vivid illustrations - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

vivid illustrations

P17: teachers' Interview transcripts.docx - 17:14 [comprehensible language] (17:17) (Super)
Codes: [comprehensible language - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

comprehensible language

P17: teachers' Interview transcripts.docx - 17:15 [authentic purposeful themes] (17:17) (Super)
Codes: [authentic purposeful themes - Family: Picture books features]
No memos

authentic purposeful themes
a lot of pictures
activating prior knowledge
Also, I like summarizing, synt..
authentic purposeful themes
big ideas
Challenges in learning English
Challenges in using picture books
Classroom environment
Colorful
comprehensible language
Comprehension instruction
Comprehension strategies
Comprehension strategies instructional confirm
Comprehension strategies_1
Connecting
Connecting picture books to English development
Connecting picture books to English improvement
Connecting picture books to textbook learning
Connecting picture books to understanding
Connecting picture books to vocabulary learning
Connecting picture books’ features to comprehension
Consequence of picture books on learners’ feeling of learning
Dear Peter Rabbit
determining big idea
Determining big ideas
determining importance
easy
easy wording
easy words
easy words.
English textbook challenges
enjoying format
entertaining
erview transcript (1) Archival..
Explicit instruction
Explicit instruction_1
Explicit strategies instruction
expressions
Free fall
Giving Tree
Good feeling to understand the..
great stories
had very interesting language
Hairy Scary and Ordinary
hairy scary ordinary what is an adjective
Hairy, scary, ordinary: What i..
have CDs
have many pictures
helpful
I like the instructions that s..
I liked the way that we were t..
illustrations
Illustrative
imaginative
Independent written summarization
Instruction challenges
Insufficient time
interactive visualizing
Interesting
interesting style
language
language of picture books
Limited use of stories
meaningful
memorizing
monitoring
motivating
motivating/engaging
negative views/concerns about the experience
not boring
picture book features
Picture books and learning environment
Picture books and motivation
Picture books benefit in general instruction
Picture books features
Picture books features_1
pictures
Polar Bear
Polar Bear Polar Bear What do ..
Polar Bear, Polar Bear what do..
Predicting
purposeful
Questioning
questions
Read-aloud
Reading comprehension challenges
realistic
relevant to our general Englis..
retelling
short
short statements
simple
skillfully designed
Strategies assessment
strategies review
Students' assessment
Students’ discussion
Students’ engagement
Students’ experiences
Students’ motivation
Students’ negative experiences of comprehension strategies
Students’ negative experiences of comprehension strategies instruction
Students’ negative experiences of comprehension strategies instruction v
Students’ negative views about the experience
Students’ negative views of using picture books
Students’ positive experience about instruction
Students’ positive experiences of comprehension strategies
Students’ positive experiences of comprehension strategies instruction
Students’ positive views about the experience
Students’ positive views of comprehension strategies
Students’ positive views of using picture books
Students’ positive views of using picture books to teach comprehension strategies
students’ suggested solutions
Summarize
summarizing
supportive
synthesizing
talking about our life
Teacher’s modeling
Teachers’ positive experiences of comprehension strategies
Teachers’ negative views about the experience
Teachers’ positive views about the experience
Teachers’ positive views of using picture books
telling time
textbook sections
The gardener
The Giving Tre
The Giving Tree
the survey below. Be sure to p..
thermic
think-aloud
time
Time deficiency
Time insufficiency
Time management
understood easily
Unequal opportunities for participation
varied
VISUALIZATION
Visualizing
vivid illustrations
Vocabulary instruction
Why comprehension strategies were used
words
words are easy to understand a..
APPENDIX J
INSTRUCTIONAL OBSERVATION NOTES

Expanded observation notes
Archival # ALT2013
Site: Al Hurria School (1)
Classroom: seventh grade (7/1)
Data collector: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Typist: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Date: 01/14/2012 – 01/29/2012

Description of Type of Observation

Participant observation was conducted in order to elicit unstructured meanings of the participants’ experiences and actions when they were using children’s picture books to teach and learn reading comprehension strategies. The rationale of participant observation implementation in this study was that it helped provide in-depth and holistic understanding of exploratory qualitative inquires.

General description of classroom setting

Generally, all the classrooms in Libya are structured to meet traditional-based learning objectives. Therefore, the seventh grade classroom students were setting in rows. Each two students usually set in double desk and chair. The classroom usually has one main entrance, two large windows on the right side, and several small windows (usually six) on the upper left side. In addition, most classrooms including the seventh grade classroom are equipped with whiteboard. Some are still using the blackboard. The general building structure of all Libyan schools including the schools that were involved in this study is concrete with three floors. Most three floor-schools have twenty four classrooms with capacity of about thirty students per classroom, see Figure (1).
Teachers’ instruction
The seventh grade teacher’s instruction was based on grammar translation method, basal-reading oriented, and teacher-centered. From the beginning of the study to the end of the first month of the study the teacher started modifying her method of teaching and tried to implement new techniques to make her teaching and the general teaching purposes meet the needs of explicit comprehension strategy instruction. The teacher had an opportunity to have a training program of comprehension strategy instruction before the beginning of the study and was welcomed at any time to ask any questions or share any ideas or concerns during the study.

Classroom instruction
The seventh grade teacher usually started the new lesson by introducing the new words. New words were introduced using the following steps; 1. Listing the new words on the whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook) to check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words (each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to confirm that the
meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words, teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook). Then, the teacher read the reading aloud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned reading. In the first month of this study the teacher introduced two picture books namely Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear? (Martin & Carle, 1997) and Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks! (Older, 2000). In addition, the seventh grade teacher completed the sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 from Unit One in the English language textbook. All these readings were finished using various instruction of the connecting and predicting strategies. In teaching connecting and predicting, the teacher used almost similar techniques and methods. First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general introduction about comprehension strategies and why this strategy is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by-step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the picture book. Seventh, the teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question-s about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share
their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher introduced the new words in the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-introduced the same comprehension strategy that was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that she used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. She defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the section from the textbook. Then, she released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the section in the textbook. After one week from teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the section in the textbook, the teacher used the two strategies to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the two strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher provided multiple means to promote the students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation. Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Finally, the students had a quiz at the end of the first
month to assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge. Table (1) summarizes the time distribution of strategies and text instructions in the first month of the study:

Table (1) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and Text Instructions in the First Month of the Field-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Picture book: <em>Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear?</em> (Martin &amp; Carle, 1997)</td>
<td>1&amp;2: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>1-19 minutes</td>
<td>35m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Picture book: <em>Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks!</em> (Older, 2000)</td>
<td>1&amp;2: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-5 minutes</td>
<td>9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1&amp;2: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>1-16 minutes</td>
<td>37m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1&amp;2: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-33 minutes</td>
<td>59m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>37 minutes</td>
<td>37m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.1 and 1.6.</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
<td>7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>42 minutes</td>
<td>42m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>53 minutes</td>
<td>53m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Picture books (Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear?! <em>Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks</em>)- Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>37 minutes</td>
<td>37m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of time instruction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>316m</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom instruction

Similar to the beginning of the first phase of this study, in the second phase the seventh grade teacher started the new lessons when picture books or the textbook section were used by introducing the new words. New words were introduced using the following steps; 1. Listing the new words on the whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook) to check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words (each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to confirm that the meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words, teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook). Then, the teacher read the reading aloud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned reading. In the second month of this study the teacher introduced two picture books namely Free fall (Wiesner, 2008) and The gardener (Stewart, 2007). In addition, the seventh grade teacher completed the
sections 1.7, and 1.8, thereby finished the Unit One in the English language textbook. Also, the teacher completed sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 in Unit two in the English language textbook. All these readings were finished using various instruction of the questioning, visualizing, monitoring, activating prior knowledge, retelling, summarizing, and synthesizing strategies in addition to reviewing the previous strategies (connection and predicting). In teaching these strategies, the teacher used almost various techniques and followed similar methods. The teacher started teaching the strategy in isolation and compared and contrasted the strategies as the class progressed. The overall instructions underscored the following steps: First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general introduction about comprehension strategies in general and why this strategy in particular is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by-step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the assigned reading (first the picture book and then the textbook sections). Seventh, the teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question-s about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher introduced the new words in the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-
introduced the same comprehension strategy that was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that she used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. She defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the section-s from the textbook. Then, she released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the section-s in the textbook. After one week from teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the section-s in the textbook, the teacher used the two strategies to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the two strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher utilized multiple means to promote the students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation. Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Finally, and as she did in the first phase the students had a quiz at the end of the first month to assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge. Table (2) summarizes the time distribution of strategies and text instructions in the second month of the study:
Table (2) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and Text Instructions in the Second Month of the Field-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Picture book: <em>Free Fall</em> (Wiesner, 2008)</td>
<td>1: no new vocabulary was provided, the picture book is wordless. 2: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>1-0 minute</td>
<td>8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-8 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Picture book: <em>The gardener</em> (Stewart, 2007)</td>
<td>1: No read-aloud was offered 2: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-0 minute</td>
<td>6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-6 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1&amp;2: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (questioning, visualizing, monitoring, activating prior knowledge, retelling, summarizing, and synthesizing), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy learning. Reviewing previous strategies (connecting, predicting) and providing multiple strategies instruction by combining relevant strategies.</td>
<td>1-51 minutes</td>
<td>80m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-29 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1&amp;2: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-17 minutes</td>
<td>38m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-21 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Sction 1.7 &amp; 1.8, Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>21 minutes</td>
<td>21m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.1 and 1.6.</td>
<td>12 minutes</td>
<td>12m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Sction 2.1, 2.2, &amp; 2.3, Unit Two in the textbook</td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy learning.</td>
<td>112 minutes</td>
<td>112m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>93 minutes</td>
<td>93m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Picture books (Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear?! <em>Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks</em> - Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook)</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>74 minutes</td>
<td>74m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of time instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>444m</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom instruction

This was the last phase in the teacher’s instruction before the final exams and the end of the semester. Unlike the previous two phases, in this phase, the seventh grade teacher started the new lessons by reviewing a picture book or sometimes two picture books using a new strategy since there were only four picture books used. After finishing explaining and demonstrating the use of a new strategy by a picture book or picture books new section-s from textbook were used by introducing the new words. New words were introduced in similar ways that were stated earlier, specifically, by 1. Listing the new words on the whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a section in the textbook in this phase) to check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words (each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to confirm that the meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words, teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a section in the textbook in this phase). Then, the teacher read the section aloud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned reading. As mentioned earlier, in the third month of this study no new picture books were
introduced, but one or more picture books were reviewed and used to teach new strategy-ies. After finishing explaining the new strategy-ies, the teacher used new section-s to sustain the teaching of the strategy-ies. The sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 from the Unit two in the English language textbook were completed I this phase. All these readings were finished using various instruction of the last two strategies that were assigned for this study (i.e., determining big ideas and inferring) in addition to reviewing the all the previous strategies (i.e., connecting, predicting, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, activating prior knowledge, retelling, summarizing, and synthesizing). In teaching these strategies, the teacher used almost various techniques and followed similar methods with the focus on reviewing and involving the student in most of the instruction process. The teacher started teaching the new strategy in isolation and tried to compare it and contrast it with previous the strategies as the class progressed. The overall instructions underscored the following steps: First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general introduction about comprehension strategies in general and why this strategy in particular is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by –step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the assigned reading (first the picture book and then the textbook sections). Seventh, the teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question-s about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever
needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher introduced the new words in the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-introduced the same comprehension strategy that was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that she used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. She defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the section(s) from the textbook. Then, she released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the section(s) in the textbook. After one week from teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the section(s) in the textbook, the teacher used the two strategies to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the two strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher utilized multiple means to promote the students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation. Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Table (3) summarizes the time distribution of strategies and text instructions in the third month of the study:
Table (3) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and Text Instructions in the Second Month of the Field-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Picture book: <em>Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear?</em> (Martin &amp; Carle, 1997), <em>Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks!</em> (Older, 2000), <em>Free Fall</em> (Wiesner, 2008), <em>The gardener</em> (Stewart, 2007) …review.</td>
<td>1: no new vocabulary was provided, picture books were reviewed.</td>
<td>1-0 minutes-</td>
<td>0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: No read-aloud was provided.</td>
<td>1-0 minutes-</td>
<td>0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (determining big ideas and inferring), overvewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning. Reviewing previous strategies (connecting, predicting, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, activating prior knowledge, retelling, summarizing, and synthesizing) and providing multiple strategies instruction by combining relevant strategies.</td>
<td>1:59 minutes</td>
<td>59m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1:37 minutes</td>
<td>37m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Section 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 Unit Two in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>22 minutes</td>
<td>22m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Section 1.1, 1.2, &amp; 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 Unit One in the textbook (review)</td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 2.4, 2.7 and 2.8.</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
<td>16m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overvewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
<td>41m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>34 minutes</td>
<td>34m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Picture books (<em>Polar bear, polar bear, what do you hear?</em> (Martin &amp; Carle, 1997), <em>Telling time: How to tell time on digital analog clocks!</em> (Older, 2000), <em>Free Fall</em> (Wiesner, 2008), <em>The gardener</em> (Stewart, 2007 Section: All Unit One, All Unit Two</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>112 minutes</td>
<td>112m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total of time instruction**

321m
Finally, and as she did in the first and second phases, the teacher gave the students a quiz to assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge and started preparing for the final exams and then all the students were having the mid-terms before the Spring break.

Expanded observation notes
Archival # ALT2013
Site: Kaddega Al Kobra (2)
Classroom: Eighth grade (8/3)
Data collector: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Typist: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Date: 01/14/2012 – 01/30/2012

**Description of Type of Observation**

Participant observation was conducted in order to elicit unstructured meanings of the participants’ experiences and actions when they were using children’s picture books to teach and learn reading comprehension strategies. The rationale of participant observation implementation in this study was that it helped provide in-depth and holistic understanding of exploratory qualitative inquiries.

**General description of classroom setting**

Generally, all the classrooms in Libya are structured to meet traditional-based learning objectives. Therefore, the eighth grade classroom students typically set in rows. Each two students usually set in double desk chair. The eighth grade classroom structure in this school was similar to the seventh grade classroom structure in Al Hurria School where classrooms usually have one main entrance, two large windows on the right side, and several small windows (usually six) on the upper left side. In addition, most classrooms including the eighth grade classroom are equipped with whiteboard. Some are still using the blackboard. The general building structure of all Libyan schools including Kaddega Al Kobra School is concrete with
three floors. Most three floor-schools have twenty four classrooms with capacity of about thirty students per classroom, see Figure (2).

![Diagram of a Libyan classroom structure](image)

*Figure. 2 Libyan classroom structure*

**Teachers’ instruction**

Similar to the seventh grade teaching instruction, the eighth grade teacher’s instruction was based on grammar translation method, basal-reading oriented, and teacher-centered. From the beginning of the study to the end of the first month of the study the teacher started modifying his method of teaching and tried to implement new techniques to make her teaching and the general teaching purposes meet the needs of explicit comprehension strategy instruction. The teacher had an opportunity to have a training program of comprehension strategy instruction before the beginning of the study and was welcomed at any time to ask any questions or share any ideas or concerns during the study.

**Classroom instruction**

The eighth grade teacher usually started the new lesson by introducing the new words. New words were introduced using the following steps; 1. Listing the new words on the whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook) to
check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words (each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to confirm that the meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words, teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook). Then, the teacher read the reading aloud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned reading. In the first month of this study the teacher introduced only one picture book namely *The giving tree* (Silverstein, 1964). In addition, the eighth grade teacher completed the sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 from Unit One in the English language textbook. All these readings were finished using various instructions of the summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies. In teaching the comprehension strategies, the teacher used almost similar techniques and methods. First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general overview about comprehension strategies and went more specifically and discussed why this strategy is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by-step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the picture book. Seventh, the
teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question-s about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher introduced the new words n the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-introduced the same comprehension strategy that was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that he used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. The teacher defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the section-s from the textbook. Then, the teacher released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the section-s in the textbook. After one week from teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the section-s in the textbook, the teacher used the two strategies to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the proposed strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher provided multiple means to promote the
students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation.

Table (4) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and Text Instructions in the First Month of the Field-Study in the Eighth Grade Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Picture book: <em>The Giving Tree</em> (Silverstein, 1964)</td>
<td>1: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words,</td>
<td>1-16 minutes</td>
<td>16m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-13 minutes</td>
<td>13m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (summarizing, synthesizing,</td>
<td>1-69 minutes</td>
<td>69m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies), overviewing the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-108 minutes</td>
<td>108m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words,</td>
<td>34 minutes</td>
<td>34m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.2b, 1.4a., and 1.6b.</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
<td>9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105 minutes</td>
<td>105m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>84 minutes</td>
<td>84m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Picture books (The Giving Tree (Silverstein, 1964)-</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading.</td>
<td>47 minutes</td>
<td>47m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, Unit One in the</td>
<td>Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textbook</td>
<td>to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of time instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>485m</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Finally, the students had a quiz at the end of the first month to
assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge. Table (4) summarizes the time
distribution of strategies and text instructions in the first month of the study:

Expanded observation notes
Archival # ALT2013
Site: Kaddega Al Kobra (2)
Classroom: Eighth grade (8/3)
Data collector: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Typist: Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali
Date: 02/02/2012 – 02/27/2012

Classroom instruction

As stated earlier, the eighth grade teacher usually started the new lesson by introducing the new
words. New words were introduced using the following steps; 1. Listing the new words on the
whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the
textbook) to check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the
listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words
(each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to
confirm that the meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words,
teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the
textbook). Then, the teacher read the reading aloud. Afterwards, the teacher divided the students
into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk
about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two
students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general
overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in
order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned reading. In the second month of this study
the teacher introduced two picture books namely Around the year (Beskow, 2008), Hairy, scary,
ordinary: What is an adjective? (Cleary, 2001). In addition, the eighth grade teacher completed the sections 1.7, and 1.8 and thereby finished Unit One and also completed the sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 from Unit Two in the English language textbook. All these readings were finished using various instructions of the questioning, visualizing, activating prior knowledge, and monitoring in addition to reviewing the previous strategies that included summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies. In teaching the comprehension strategies, the teacher used almost similar techniques and methods that were used in the first phase of this study with slight modifications. First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general overview about comprehension strategies and went more specifically and discussed why this strategy is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by-step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the picture book. Seventh, the teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question(s) about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher introduced the new words in the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-introduced the same comprehension strategy that
was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that he used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. The teacher defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the section-s from the textbook. Then, the teacher released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the section-s in the textbook. After one week from teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the section-s in the textbook, the teacher used the two strategies to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the proposed strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher provided multiple means to promote the students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation. Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Finally, the students had a quiz at the end of the first month to assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge. Table (5) summarizes the time distribution of strategies and text instructions in the second month of the study:
Table (5) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and Text Instructions in the Second Month of the Field-Study in the Eighth Grade Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Picture book: <em>Around the year</em> (Beskow, 2008),</td>
<td>1: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>1-11 minutes</td>
<td>23m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-12 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-6 minutes</td>
<td>13m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-7 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- <em>Hairy, scary, ordinary: What is an adjective?</em> (Cleary, 2001)</td>
<td>1: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>1-37 minutes</td>
<td>72m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-35 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-19 minutes</td>
<td>53m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-34 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Section 1.7, and 1.8 Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>21 minutes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.2b, 1.4a., and 1.6b</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
<td>9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 Unit Two in the textbook</td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>89 minutes</td>
<td>89m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>61 minutes</td>
<td>61m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Picture books (<em>Around the year</em> (Beskow, 2008)/ <em>Hairy, scary, ordinary: What is an adjective?</em> (Cleary, 2001) Section 1.7, and 1.8 Unit One in the textbook/ Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 Unit Two in the textbook.</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>32 minutes</td>
<td>32m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total of time instruction 373m
Classroom instruction

In the last phase of this semester, the eighth grade teacher started also the new lesson by introducing the new words for the readings that were introduced for the first time. New words were introduced using the following steps; 1. Listing the new words on the whiteboard, 2. Asking students to go over the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook) to check for any new words were not listed in the whiteboard, 3. Teacher read all the listed new words alouds to the whole class, 4. Teacher explained the meaning of the new words (each word in isolation) and then translated it into the students’ native language (Arabic) to confirm that the meaning was clear to all the students. After the explanation of the new words, teacher provided an overview of the assigned reading (a picture book or a section in the textbook). Then, the teacher read the reading aloud. On the other hand, the teacher could start the list by identifying the strategy first and the reading to model the strategy and that was happening when the reading was previously introduced. After completing identifying the new words and having the piece read aloud, the teacher divided the students into groups or pairs depending on the nature of the required discussion and asked them to talk about the assigned reading. After the students’ initial discussion, the teacher chose one or two students to have the assigned reading read aloud to the whole class. After providing a general overview of the assigned reading, the teacher started introducing one comprehension strategy in order to facilitate the understanding of the assigned
reading. In the third month of this study the teacher introduced only one picture book namely *Dear Peter Rabbit* (Ada, 1997) with of the last previous picture books. In addition, the eighth grade teacher completed the sections 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8, thereby finished Unit Two in addition to reviewing the previous sections in the English language textbook. All these readings were finished using various instructions of determining big ideas, connecting, and inferring in addition to reviewing the previous strategies that included summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing/contrasting, questioning, visualizing, activating prior knowledge, and monitoring. In teaching the comprehension strategies, the teacher used almost similar techniques and methods that were used in the last two phases of this study with some modifications. The following were the general basic steps that characterized most of the instructional processes: First, the teacher wrote the strategy on the whiteboard, then provided general overview about comprehension strategies and went more specifically and discussed why this strategy is considered an important comprehension strategy. Second, the teacher defined the strategy and provided general explanation of what did the strategy mean. Third, the teacher explained how, where, and when the strategy should be used. Fourth, the teacher used the students’ native language (Arabic) to redefine and re-explain the strategy. Sixth, the teacher modeled step-by–step and using think-aloud how the strategy is used to understand the picture book. Seventh, the teacher gave the students an opportunity to ask any question-s about the strategy. Eighth, the teacher released responsibility to the students by providing them an opportunity to talk about and discuss the picture book using the assigned strategy. Finally, the teacher selected some students to share their ideas to the whole class and provided scaffolding and feedback to the students whenever needed. In the second part of teaching the strategy, the teacher introduced one or two sections from the English language textbook. Using similar steps and techniques, the teacher
introduced the new words in the section, provided an overview of the section, and read it aloud. After providing an opportunity to the students to talk about the section, the teacher re-introduced the same comprehension strategy that was introduced using the picture book in order to show that the strategy could be used to understand any reading material and to confirm that the students understand the strategy. Similarly, the teacher used the same steps that he used when introducing the strategy using the picture books. The teacher defined the strategy, showed how, where, and when it should be used, and modeled it by think-aloud using the sections from the textbook. Then, the teacher released responsibility by giving the students an opportunity to practice the strategy using the sections in the textbook. After one week or so of teaching each strategy using different materials starting with the picture book ending with the sections in the textbook, the teacher used the more than one strategy to show how multiple use of strategy could also help to sustain the understanding from the picture book, the textbook’s sections, and any other reading materials. In the last week of the first month of the study, the teacher emphasized the real understanding of the proposed strategies and how they should be used by providing guided practice to all the students as individuals and as groups. Through guided practice, the teacher was able to provide feedback to the students and scaffold their knowledge of the strategies and the materials they were reading. Moreover, the teacher provided multiple means to promote the students’ engagement and motivation by providing reasonable time tasks and positively responded to the students’ participation. Also, the teacher tracked the students’ progression by examining their abilities in strategy use every two weeks of instruction. Finally, the students had a quiz at the end of the second month to assess their general performance in strategies and text knowledge and then all the students were having the mid-terms before the
Spring break. Table (6) summarizes the time distribution of strategies and text instructions in the third month of the study:

**Table (6) Summarizes the Time Distribution of Strategies and text Instructions in the Third Month of the Field-Study in the Eighth Grade Classroom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material used</th>
<th>Type of instruction</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Picture book: <em>Dear Peter Rabbit</em> (Ada, 1997)</td>
<td>1: Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>1-15 minutes</td>
<td>15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Read-aloud; reading the picture books out loud.</td>
<td>1-6 minutes</td>
<td>6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (summarizing, synthesizing, retelling, predicting, comparing, and contrasting strategies), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>1-32 minutes</td>
<td>32m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Assessment, evaluation; tasks, exercises, quizzes, tests.</td>
<td>1-18 minutes</td>
<td>18m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Section 1.7, and 1.8 Unit One in the textbook</td>
<td>Vocabulary instruction: identifying new words, defining new words, translating new words.</td>
<td>23 minutes</td>
<td>23m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read-aloud; reading sections 1.2b, 1.4a., and 1.6b</td>
<td>19 minutes</td>
<td>19m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 Unit Two in the textbook</td>
<td>Strategies instruction: identifying new strategies (connecting, predicting), overviewing the strategy in isolation, defining it, showing how, when, and where it should be used, modeling it using think aloud, practicing it. Providing feedback and scaffolding to sustain strategy-ies learning.</td>
<td>39 minutes</td>
<td>39m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Picture books <em>(Dear Peter Rabbit</em> (Ada, 1997)/ <em>Around the year</em> (Beskow, 2008)/ <em>Hairy, scary, ordinary: What is an adjective?</em> (Cleary, 2001)/ <em>The giving tree</em> (Silverstein, 1964) Section 1.7, and 1.8 Unit One in the textbook/ Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 Unit Two in the textbook.</td>
<td>Multiple strategies instruction: reviewing the strategies using various reading. Comparing and contrasting the use of strategies. Providing more space for students to model, practice, and use the strategies with various texts.</td>
<td>82 minutes</td>
<td>82m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total of time instruction 299m**
Selected picture books for seventh grade classes

This story takes the readers into a journey about the time. It illustrates how a reader can tell time from both analog and digital clocks, starting from a second and ending with millennia on the calendar. Readers can learn about telling time on clocks and on calendars.

This story rhythmically illustrates the sounds of some zoo animals. The readers can learn about the sounds of animals usually kept in zoos such as bears, snakes, lions, hippopotamuses...etc. A DVD comes with this story to demonstrate these sounds.

*Free Fall* (Wiesner, 1991)
This Caldecott wordless Honor Book describes an adventure of dreaming boy who was dreaming of conquering dragons, roaming castles, and finally soaring over the fields.

In this story, the gardener ‘a young girl’ tells her story through letters she wrote to her family when she left them and lived with her uncle. Throughout this story, the young girl realized that her uncle was always nervous and sad. She prepared a surprise to him in order to draw a smile in his face. At the end of this story, she called her uncle upstairs and surprised him with a colorful garden of flowers.

Selected picture books for eighth grade classes

This story is about some cat friends communicate using rhythmic adjectives. These cats play with adjectives to provide a straightforward explanation of how readers can use adjectives. The story
starts with a definition of the adjective, and then it provides a list of examples of how adjectives are used.

**Around the Year** (Beskow, 2008)
This story is about the months of the year. It is narrated in delightful verses in order to demonstrate clearly each month in the year and what might characterize it.

**Dear Peter Rabbit** (Ada ‘Author’ & Tryon ‘Illustrator’, 1997)
The story is about a group of friends communicated using personal letters. Peter Rabbit love the three little pigs and he used to mail them and tell them different stories. The three pigs usually invite Peter and they also used to share Peter their stories.

**The Giving Tree** (Silverstein, 1964)
This story is about a tree and a boy. At the beginning of the story, both the tree and the boy loved each other and that made them very happy. The tree grew up and the boy was getting older, but the tree was still giving the boy what he needs in order to make him happy and maintain their happiness. At the end of the story, the boy ‘now an old man’ asked the tree to set on its trunk and the tree still happy.
# APPENDIX L

THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS' CONTENTS

## 1. THE SEVENTH GRADE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Vocabulary Areas</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Example Skills Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and routines</td>
<td>Times of day, Days of the week, Hobbies and activities</td>
<td>Wh questions, e.g., where, when, Present simple verb forms, <em>Can / can’t</em> for ability</td>
<td>Introductions, Tell the time, Talk about daily and weekly routines, Talk about abilities</td>
<td>Listen to someone talking about ability, Read an autobiography, Talk about routines, Write sentences about weekly routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and jobs</td>
<td>Family members, Jobs, Classroom objects, Illnesses</td>
<td>Questions and sentences with <em>have got</em>, Descriptive reference: <em>this, that, these, those</em>, Possessive adjectives: <em>my, your, his, etc.</em>, Possessive ’s and possessive pronouns: <em>mine, yours, his, etc.</em></td>
<td>Ask / answer questions about family and jobs, Ask questions / talk about possessions, Continue to talk about routine, Ask and answer questions about health problems</td>
<td>Listen to a teacher talking about a teacher’s day, Relate events in a doctor’s day, Read short texts about people’s daily lives, Write a paragraph about daily activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes and dislikes</td>
<td>Numbers and prices, Possessions, Leisure activities, Places, e.g., beach, mountains</td>
<td><em>Can</em> for requests, Sentences with <em>like</em> + <em>-ing</em> + verb, Sentences with <em>want to</em> + verb, Noun / verb collocations, e.g., <em>play + football, go + swimming</em></td>
<td>Ask and answer questions about prices, Ask to borrow things, Talk about likes and dislikes, Make and agree / disagree with suggestions</td>
<td>Listen and pick out information about prices, Discuss leisure preferences, Read descriptions of weekend activity trips, Write sentences about preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home and around town</td>
<td>Rooms and furniture, Forms of transport, e.g., bus, taxi, Places in town, e.g., bank, supermarket</td>
<td><em>There is / there are</em> Prepositions of place, Prepositions of movement, Imperative structures</td>
<td>Say where things are in a house and town, Talk about modes of travel, Ask for and give directions</td>
<td>Listen to and follow directions, Describe where things are, Read simple directions, Write simple directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes and shopping</td>
<td>Colours, Clothes, Adjectives, e.g., big, expensive, Shops</td>
<td>Adjective position, Present continuous tense for actions in progress, <em>to</em> + adjective, Past tense of <em>to be</em>: <em>was / were</em></td>
<td>Describe people’s appearance, Describe events in a picture, Ask for things in shops</td>
<td>Listen and colour; descriptions of clothes, Describe pictures, Read a picture story about shopping, Write sentences comparing two pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Vocabulary Areas</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Example Skills Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals and nature</td>
<td>Animals Body parts Months and seasons The weather</td>
<td>Can for ability Frequency adverbs Present continuous for temporary events Word building: nouns and adjectives, e.g., cloud / cloudy</td>
<td>Describe animals' appearance and abilities Describe the weather and seasons Ask and answer factual questions about animals and nature</td>
<td>Listen to descriptions of animals and places Ask about and describe animals Read a nature quiz Complete a chart and write a description of weather and seasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past and present</td>
<td>Times of day Leisure activities Places of interest, e.g., historical places</td>
<td>Past simple verb forms Past tense question forms Adjectives with very and too Sequencers: first, next, then, finally</td>
<td>Ask and answer questions about recent past events Describe and sequence past events, e.g., a day out Ask for and give opinions</td>
<td>Listen to a story and speculate about what happened next Make conversations about recent past events Read a diary entry / descriptions of recent past events Write a paragraph about what someone did yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and health</td>
<td>Food and drink Food containers, e.g., glass, packet, bottle Household chores</td>
<td>Countable and uncountable nouns Quantifiers: some, any, much, many, lots Will for spontaneous decisions</td>
<td>Order food in a café Talk about food quantities Ask and answer questions about quantities needed Request / offer help with household chores</td>
<td>Listen to identify items on a menu Practise conversations: ask for quantities of food in different contexts Read a health questionnaire Complete a health questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates and birthdays</td>
<td>Dates Birthdays and presents Outdoors / holidays</td>
<td>Ordinal numbers Would you like + verb Let's / Shall we + verb Present continuous for future arrangements</td>
<td>Ask for and give information about dates Make and respond to offers and suggestions Discuss suitability of presents for different people Order events in a story</td>
<td>Listen to an adventure story to confirm predictions Discuss suitable presents for friends and family Read and identify key information in an e-mail Write party invitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A long time ago Revision</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Listen to conversations and identify the situations Practise a range of conversations using functions from earlier units Read notices about exhibitions and events Write short autobiographies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **THE EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT 1</th>
<th>UNIT 2</th>
<th>UNIT 3</th>
<th>UNIT 4</th>
<th>UNIT 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOPIC</strong></td>
<td><strong>VOCABULARY AREAS</strong></td>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>FUNCTIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE SKILLS ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My country</td>
<td>Revision of numbers Places and directions, e.g., country, continent, north, south, etc. Adjectives for people and places Animals</td>
<td>Past simple questions <em>Wh-</em> questions <em>That looks / That sounds ...</em> Comparative and superlative adjectives (1) Revision of present continuous</td>
<td>Describe geographical location Describe people’s appearance Compare places and people Ask and answer questions about geographical features</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about geography Talk about holiday experiences Read texts comparing people / places / countries Write an e-mail about where you live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>Adjectives for places, e.g., famous, expensive Buildings, e.g., castle, palace Holiday activities, e.g., sightseeing, hiking</td>
<td>Comparative and superlative adjectives (2) Past continuous Past simple / past continuous contrast some series, e.g., somebody, somewhere</td>
<td>Describe holiday experiences Give opinions Compare holidays / places Describe past events</td>
<td>Listen to and sequence a narrative Respond to questions about past events Read about different holidays and places Write postcards and addresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and nature</td>
<td>Cooking: food and utensils Verbs for processes, e.g., peel, wash, cook, fry Plants, animals and nature, e.g., seeds, frog, pond Revision of animal body parts, e.g., legs, tail</td>
<td>Imperatives for instructions Adverbs of manner, e.g., quickly, lightly Zero conditional Sequencers: first, second, next, etc.</td>
<td>Give instructions Describe processes / recipes Ask and answer questions about natural processes</td>
<td>Listen and sequence events in the life cycle of frogs and birds Discuss ingredients and how to make a dish Read and follow instructions for growing tomatoes Write instructions for growing lettuce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy endings</td>
<td>Countries, nationalities and languages Genres of books and films, e.g., science fiction, cartoon Opinion adjectives, e.g., lovely, exciting Opinion phrases, e.g., I quite like / I don’t really like / I love</td>
<td>Past tense + time expressions, e.g., thousands of years ago some / every series, e.g., somewhere / everywhere Future forms will, going to Linking words, e.g., because, and, but</td>
<td>Express preferences for books and films Describe books and films Predict future events</td>
<td>Listen to a story and predict how it will end Discuss what type of film (e.g., action, cartoon, science fiction) might be suitable for what type of person Read about the history of books and put stages in chronological order Write about a favourite book or film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around the house</td>
<td>Rooms, furniture and household objects Verbs for routines and chores, e.g., get dressed, tidy up Verb / noun collocations, e.g., go shopping, watch TV Verbs for accidents, e.g., trip over, burn yourself</td>
<td>Prepositions of place, e.g., above, next to Revision of present simple Obligation: have to Frequency adverbs, e.g., usually, sometimes shall, e.g., What shall I do? might for warnings Reflexive pronouns Imperatives</td>
<td>Describe daily routines and habits Give instructions Ask for help Make suggestions and give advice Give warnings</td>
<td>Listen to a telephone conversation and identify requests / advice Talk about daily routines Read an information leaflet about safety in the home Write a description of a room in a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT</td>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>VOCABULARY AREAS</td>
<td>LANGUAGE</td>
<td>FUNCTIONS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Around the world</td>
<td>Town and country, Clothes and possessions, Types of home, e.g., flat, house, Building materials, e.g., stone, concrete, Climate</td>
<td>Opinion language, e.g., You're right / I don't agree, Quantifiers: a lot, not much / many, Relative pronouns and clauses</td>
<td>Ask about likes, dislikes and preferences, Contrast different lifestyles, Talk about location, Define people and things, Give opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Making plans</td>
<td>Work and leisure activities, e.g., four twenty / twenty past four, Time adverbs, e.g., the next day, at the weekend, Jobs, School subjects</td>
<td>Present continuous for future arrangements like / enjoy / prefer + verb + -ing going to for future plans, Modals of possibility could, might, may</td>
<td>Make arrangements, Talk about time, Talk about likes and dislikes (jobs and school activities), Speculate about the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Getting ready</td>
<td>Food and entertaining, Verbs for chores and food preparation, e.g., peel, chop, Family members, Festivals</td>
<td>Present continuous / going to / will for future, will for offers and spontaneous decisions should for suggestions when to link two past events, e.g., He cut himself when he was chopping the potatoes, I like / I'd like so + adj. + that, e.g., The oven was so hot that ...</td>
<td>Make offers, Make suggestions, Give advice, Talk about preferences and choices, Explain different dishes from home / around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Explorers</td>
<td>Dates: ordinal numbers, months, years, Sport and music, History of flight, Travel and exploration</td>
<td>Past time expressions, e.g., last, next, ago, Prepositions at, on, in for times and dates, can for ability, Adjectives and adverbs, Prepositions of movement, e.g., along, around, through, Linking words</td>
<td>Talk about dates, Talk about abilities and achievements, Discuss important events, people and inventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Journeys</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX M
CONSENT FORMS AND APPROVALS

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Teaching & Learning/college of education
Research Study Assent Form
(For 11-14 year age range in social/behavioral studies)

Study Title: Exploring the use of children's picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL classrooms

Researchers:
1. Investigator-s
Barbara Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509)335-6390
Tariq Akmal, Associate Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509) 335-4703
2. Co-investigator
Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali, PhD Student, department of Teaching and Learning, (509)339-4400

My name is Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali. I am from Washington State University. I and the other people listed at the top of this form are inviting you to take part in a research study. Your parent(s) know we are talking with you about the study. This form will tell you about the study to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in it.

What is this study about?
In this study, we want to learn about incorporating children’s picture books in the English language classes to develop your English reading comprehension strategies.

What am I being asked to do?
If you decide to be in the study, we will ask you to practice some reading comprehension strategies and involve in some tasks and activities. Also, you will be asked to fill out some surveys and answer some interview questions. You will be observed during the classes’ instructions and activities and part of the observation will be video-recorded.

What are the benefits to me for taking part in the study? Taking part in this study might help you learn about children's picture books and learn how to comprehend the reading texts using some strategies. Also, having good knowledge of reading comprehension strategies might help you understand other materials in other areas of your study.

Can anything bad happen if I am in this study?
Yes, there might be psychological, physical, political, and religious risks. The psychological and physical risks can be caused by the physical effort that you may spend such as overstress or because it might be caused by mental efforts such as anxiety, low self-esteem…etc. On the other hand, the political and religious risks might be caused because of the lack of monitoring the new proposed materials (picture books) that will be in teaching reading comprehension strategies. Essentially, I will try to reduce the risk of harm as much as possible though some risk may always be present. However, in order to eliminate some of these risks I will provide an approval from the ministry of education to use these materials. Typically, the Ministry of Education will monitor and assess the possibility of using these materials in the Libyan classrooms before making any approval of using them. The approval has been already obtained from the Ministry of Education in Libya. In addition, reducing other psychological and physical risks can be by speaking to you individually that if you feel you are not well you will be excluded from the study.
Also, your teacher and your school counselor will be informed to provide you any further help you may need throughout the study.

**Who will know that I am in the study?**

We won’t tell anybody that you are in this study and everything you tell us and do will be private and confidential. Your parent may know that you took part in the study, but we won’t tell them anything you said or did, either. When we tell other people or write articles about what we learned in the study, we won’t include your name or that of anyone else who took part in the study.

**Do I have to be in the study?**

No, you don’t. The choice is up to you. No one will get angry or upset if you don’t want to do this. And you can change your mind anytime if you decide you don’t want to be in the study anymore.

**What if I have questions?**

If you have questions at any time, you can ask us and you can talk to your parent about the study. We will give you a copy of this form to keep. If you want to ask us questions about the study, call or email.

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researcher **Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali** on the following address and contact details;

Address in Libya:
Sebha Main St, Sebha, Libya, phone 00218925140171

Address in the United States:
1630 NE Valley Rd Apt V 302 Pullman, WA, 99163
Phone number: 5093394400.

The Washington State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed this study to make sure that the rights and safety of people who take part in the study are protected. If you have questions about your rights in the study, or you are unhappy about something that happens to you in the study, you can contact them at (509) 335-3668 or irb@wsu.edu.

Do you have any questions about the study now?

**********************************************************************************

***IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THE STUDY, SIGN AND PRINT YOUR NAME ON THE LINE BELOW:***

(If relevant: Put an X on this line if it is okay for us to record you __________

_________________________ __________________
Sign your name Date

_________________________
Print your name

**Statement of Person Obtaining Assent**

I have carefully explained to the child taking part in the study what he or she can expect.
I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the child understands the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study and his or her rights as a participant.
I also certify that he or she:
• Speaks the language used to explain the research
• Reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this child is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her
• Does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

_______________________________________  __________________
Signature of person obtaining assent        Date
نموذج موافقة الطالب على المشاركة في دراسة علمية لغرض جمع بيانات بحثية

أقر أنا الطالب... .......................................................... بالمشاركة الطوعية في الدراسة البحثية الاستدلالية تحت عنوان دراسة استعمال قصص

الاطفال المصورة "أحد أنواع الأدب" كوسائل مساعدة لمنهج اللغة الإنجليزية لتفعيل التعلم وتسهيل مهارات استيعاب النص

لطبية اللغة الإنجليزية كليفة اجنبية للمراحل السابعة والثامنة من التعليم الأساسي. وسيجري الدراسة الطب الخلاقي: طالب

اجازة دقيقة بكلية التربية بجامعة ولاية واشنطن بقسم التدريس والتعلم. لذلك وانا بكامل الوعي ادرك بأن المعلومات ستجمع

لاستكمال اجازة الدكتور للطالب المذكور. ويتواجد الطبيب الخلاقي في ليبيا لجمع أي معلومات تتعلق بموضوع دراسته. لذلك

يمكن الاتصال بالطالب بهاتفا على الرقم (2371230923) أو التواصل معه عن طريق بريد الالكتروني

altaibk@yahoo.com او aalkhaiyali@wsu.edu

اثناء ساعات الدوام الرسمية. بعد الانتهاء من جمع البيانات المطلوبة سيغادر الطالب المذكور إلى الولايات المتحدة لاستكمال

برنامج الدراسى حيث يمكن التواصل معه عن طريق البريد الالكتروني السابق الإشارة إليه أو هاتفا على الرقم

(0015093944400). بريرا وورد أو طارق اکمال الأستاذة المشرفين على برنامج دراسة الطالب المذكور وهما أعضاء

هيئة تدريس بنفس الجامعة ويمكن الوصول اليداهاتك على الرقم (701) 0013356390 أو عن طريق البريد الالكتروني

Barbara Ward/// Barbara_ward@wsu.edu

Tariq Akmal/// takmal@wsu.edu

وبشكل عام تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحليل انطباعات وإثراء طلبة السنوات السابعة والثامنة عند استعمال بعض القصص المصورة

كوسائل مساعدة لتدعم تفاعل الطلاب أثناء تعليمهم بعض مهارات الاستعاب الأساسية. وتعتبر القصص المصورة ممتعة

وسائط مستدامة لتطوير وتدعم تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جميع أنحاء العالم. لذلك ستستخدم هذه القصص لدعم منهج
اللغة الإنجليزية للمساعدة في تفاعل الطلاب وسرعة وسهولة تعليمهم لمهارات الاستعاب. ومن أجل الحصول على معلومات دقيقة تساعد الباحث قياس درجة فاعلية هذه الأدوات ستجمع كل المعلومات المتحصل عليها وتفارن بعد تحليلها. وللحصول على كم من الثقة ووفر من المعلومات ستعتمد الاختبارات والاستبيانات والملاحظات المباشرة والمقابلات لجمع تلك المعلومات.

لذلك فإن العملية البحثية التي انتهت طوعا الانخراط بها ستتطلب مني اجابة الاختبارات وتعبئة الاستبيانات واجراء أي مقابلة حسب رغبتي مع الباحث.

ومن أجل أن يعاني ثلاثة من أنه لا يوجد أي مخاطر صحية أو بنية جراء هذه الدراسة. وفي حالة الشعور بشيء ما في هذا الانخراط أو اخبار الباحث أو الانسحاب من المشاركة.

وإننا على يقين من أن هذه الدراسة ستتوفر للمهتمين بالتعليم والمكتبين وأولياء الأموال واستثناء اهمية قصص الأطفال لهذا التكوين العلمي الاجتماعي.

لقد تم مناقشة أهداف وحيثيات الدراسة معنا وننا على استعداد لمخاطبة الباحث لتوضيح أي غموض وفي اي وقت.

.................................................. ..................................................
التاريخ  الاسم  توقيع الطالب
Study Title: Exploring the use of children's picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL classrooms

Researchers:

3. Investigator
Barbara Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509) 335-6390
Tariq Akmal, Associate Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509) 335-4703

4. Co-investigator
Al Tiyb Al Khayali, PhD Student, department of Teaching and Learning, (509) 339-4400
My name is Al Tiyb Al Khayali. I am from Washington State University. I and the other people listed at the top of this form are inviting you to take part in a research study. Your parent(s) know we are talking with you about the study. This form will tell you about the study to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in it.

What is this study about?
In this study, we want to learn about incorporating children’s picture books in the English language classes to develop your English reading comprehension strategies.

What am I being asked to do?
If you decide to be in the study, we will ask you to practice some reading comprehension strategies and involve in some tasks and activities. Also, you will be asked to fill out some surveys and answer some interview questions. You will be observed during the classes’ instructions and activities and part of the observation will be video-recorded.

What are the benefits to me for taking part in the study?
Taking part in this study might help you learn about children’s picture books and learn how to comprehend the reading texts using some strategies. Also, having good knowledge of reading comprehension strategies might help you understand other materials in other areas of your study.

Can anything bad happen if I am in this study?
Yes, there might be psychological, physical, political, and religious risks. The psychological and physical risks can be caused by the physical effort that you may spend such as over-stress or because it might be caused by mental efforts such as anxiety, low self-esteem…etc. On the other hand, the political and religious risks might be caused because of the lack of monitoring the new proposed materials (picture books) that will be in teaching reading comprehension strategies. Essentially, I will try to reduce the risk of harm as much as possible though some risk may always be present. However, in order to eliminate some of these risks I will provide an approval from the ministry of education to use these materials. Typically, the Ministry of Education will monitor and assess the possibility of using these materials in the Libyan classrooms before making any approval of using them. The approval has been already obtained from the Ministry of Education in Libya. In addition, reducing other psychological and physical risks can be by speaking to you individually that if you feel you are not well you will be excluded from the study. Also, your teacher and your school counselor will be informed to provide you any further help you may need throughout the study.

Who will know that I am in the study?
We won’t tell anybody that you are in this study and everything you tell us and do will be private and confidential. Your parent may know that you took part in the study, but we won’t tell them anything you said or did, either. When we tell other people or write articles about what we learned in the study, we won’t include your name or that of anyone else who took part in the study.

Do I have to be in the study?
No, you don’t. The choice is up to you. No one will get angry or upset if you don’t want to do this. And you can change your mind anytime if you decide you don’t want to be in the study anymore.

What if I have questions?
If you have questions at any time, you can ask us and you can talk to your parent about the study. We will give you a copy of this form to keep. If you want to ask us questions about the study, call or email

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researcher Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali on the following address and contact details;
Address in Libya:
Sebha Main St, Sebha, Libya, phone 00218925140171
Address in the United States:
1630 NE Valley Rd Apt V 302 Pullman, WA, 99163
Phone number: 5093394400.
The Washington State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed this study to make sure that the rights and safety of people who take part in the study are protected. If you have questions about your rights in the study, or you are unhappy about something that happens to you in the study, you can contact them at (509) 335-3668 or irb@wsu.edu.

Do you have any questions about the study now?

**********************************************************************************************************************************************
***************
IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THE STUDY, SIGN AND PRINT YOUR NAME ON THE LINE BELOW:

(If relevant: Put an X on this line if it is okay for us to record you

_______________________________________ ______________________
Sign your name Date

_______________________________________
Print your name
Statement of Person Obtaining Assent

I have carefully explained to the child taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the child understands the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study and his or her rights as a participant.

I also certify that he or she:

- Speaks the language used to explain the research
- Reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this child is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her
- Does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of person obtaining assent  Date
طلب موافقة المعلم على المشاركة في دراسة علمية لغرض جمع بيانات بحثية

أقر أنا المعلم........................................ بالمشاركة الطوعية في الدراسة البحثية الاستدلالية تحت عنوان دراسة استعمال قصص الأطفال المصورة "أحد أنواع الادب" كوسائل مساعدة لتدريس منهج اللغة الإنجليزية لتسهيل مهام التعلم وإستغلال طرق استعمال النص لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية. يستناد محتوى الدراسة إلى كتب المعلم، ويشارك طالب الدكتوراة طالب الإجازة في فصل الدراسة. ويتحدث المعلم عن قصص الأطفال: طالب إجازة معينة يشارك في الدراسة. يتوفر المعلم على الاتصال به فعلياً عن طريق الهاتف رقم (0923710123) أو التواصل معه عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني altaibk@yahoo.com أو aalkhaiyali@wsu.edu

أتمنى أن يكون الاتصال به هادئاً على الطلب والتسهيل على الطالب المذكور. الرجاء اكتب التعرية التي تتعلق بوضوع دراسته. وربما يمكن التواصل به عن طريق الاتصال هاتفياً على رقم (3223123223) أو التواصل معه عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني altaibk@yahoo.com أو aalkhaiyali@wsu.edu.

بعد الانتهاء من جمع البيانات المطلوبة، سيتوجز الطالب المذكور إلى الولايات المتحدة لإكمال برنامجه الدراسي حيث يمكن التواصل معه عن طريق البريد الإلكترونياعداء الإشارة إليه أو هاتفياً على الرقم (0015093394400). بريرا وورد قادران على التواصل مع ещё عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني باللغة الإنجليزية وهم عضوين في هيئة تدريس بنفس الجامعة وهم مرسلان إلى طالب من جمع البيانات المطلوبة على الرقم (0015093354703) أو عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني بربرا وورد // Barbada_ward@wsu.edu و طارق اكمل // takmal@wsu.edu

بشكل عام تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحليل إطعاعاته وأعراض طلبة وعمليات السنوات السابعة والثامنة عند استعمال بعض القصص المصورة كوسائل مساعدة لتدعم تفاعلات الطلاب أثناء تعلثم بعض مهارات الاستعاب الأساسية. وتعتبر القصص المصورة

المراجع: التأليف المقدم في الدراسة البحثية الاستدلالية تحت عنوان دراسة استعمال قصص الأطفال.
ممتعة ووسائل مستحدثة لتطوير وتدعيم تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جميع أنحاء العالم. لذلك سنستخدم هذه القصص لدعم
منهج اللغة الإنجليزية للمساعدة في تفاعل الطلاب وسرعة وسهولة تعليمهم لمهارات الاستعاب. ومن أجل الحصول على
معلومات دقيقة تساعدها فاعلية هذه الادوات ستجمع كل المعلومات المتحصل عليها وتقارن بعد تحليلها.
وتحصول على كم منقح ووفر من المعلومات مستخدم الاستبيانات والملاحظات المباشرة والمقابلات لجمع تلك المعلومات.
لذلك فإن العملية البحثية التي واقف طعا الانخراط بها ستتطلب مني تعبئة الاستبيانات واأجراء اي مقاية حسب رغبتي مع
الباحث.

بما أنني أعي تماما من أنه لا يوجد أي مخاطر صحية أو بدائية جراء هذه الدراسة. وفي حالة الشعور بإي شيء فإني يمكنني
الاتصال أو أخبار الباحث والانسحاب من المشاركة.

وأنا على يقين من أن هذه الدراسة ستفيد المهتمين بالتعليم والمعلمين والمكتبيين وولياء الأمر وستكون اهمية قصص الأطفال
ل لهذا التكوين العلمي الاجتماعي.

لقد تم مناقشة أهداف وحيثيات الدراسة معًا وانا على استعداد لمخاطبة الباحث لتوضيح أو استجابة أي عوض وفي أي
وقت.

........................................... ...........................................
التاريخ اسم المعلم توقيع المعلم
Research Study Parent Permission Form

Study Title: Exploring the use of children's picture books to teach reading comprehension strategies in Libyan EFL classrooms

Researchers:

5. Investigator-s
Barbara Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509)335-6390
Tariq Akmal, Associate Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509) 335-4703

6. Co-investigator
Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali, PhD Student, Department of Teaching and Learning, (509)339-4400

You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study carried out by Barbara Ward, Tariq Akmal and Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali. Please read this form carefully, taking as much time as you need. Ask the researcher to explain anything you don’t understand. This study has been approved for human subjects to take part by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board. You may refuse to give permission, or you may withdraw your permission for your child to be in the study, for any reason. Your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part in this study. Even if you give your permission, your child can decide not to be in the study or to leave the study at any time.

What is this research study about?

This research study is being done to explore the experiences of English as a foreign language Libyan teachers and students at seventh and eighth grades using picture books as supplementary material to teach reading comprehension strategies. You are being asked to permit your child to take part in this study because this study targets Libyan students and their teachers in the English as a foreign language context. Students and teachers in the Arabic Libyan context complain about some difficulties in text comprehension instruction. Your child cannot take part in this study if he/she is involved in any other research study or at this time. We are asking your permission for your child to be involved in the study. In this study, he/she will learn some basic reading comprehension strategies using picture books. Your child will be observed during the lesson period and the class will be video-recorded during the observation. Also, he/she will be asked to answer some questions that are based on his/her experience of learning using picture books. Finally, he/she will be interviewed. In the interview, your child will be asked questions related to the interaction process when he/she is taught using picture books. The study will take about three to five months (i.e., four classes per week, 45 minutes per class).

What will my child be asked to do if he or she is in this research study?

If your child takes part in the study, he/she will talk about picture books that will be used to teach reading comprehension strategies. Your child will be observed during the lesson period. Also, he/she will be asked to answer some questions that are based on his/her experience of learning using picture books. Finally, he/she will be interviewed. In the interview, your child will be asked questions related to his/her answers of the questions or the interaction process in the class when he/she was taught using picture books.

Are there any benefits to my child if he or she is in this research study?

The main purpose of this study is to develop the process teaching and learning English in Libya. Specifically, the potential benefits to your child for taking part in this study are he/she will experience how to use picture books as supplementary materials to learn reading comprehension strategies to understand any readings in the English language textbook. Learning the basic reading comprehension strategies might help your child understand any English materials in any other areas of his study. Also,
he/she will experience how teachers can use children’s picture books in teaching English in the classroom.

**Are there any risks to my child if he or she is in this research study?**

The potential risks to your child from taking part in this study are physical, psychological, political and religious. The political and religious risks might stem from the nature of picture books that will be to sustain teaching reading comprehension strategies. However, providing an approval from the ministry of education who will evaluate and monitor these materials will eliminate these risks. On the other hand, your child might do a lot of effort when he/she is taught using supplementary materials alongside lessons from their English language textbook. The psychological risks can be caused by your child’s physical effort such as overstress or because they might be caused by mental efforts such as anxiety, low self-esteem…etc. I will try to reduce the risk of harm as much as possible though some risk may always be present. Reducing such risks can be by speaking to your child if I feel that he/she is not well and exclude him/her from the study. Your child’s teacher and the school’s counselor will be advised to help eliminate these issues and provide any further assistance.

**Will information about my child be kept private?**

The data for this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law in the United States and Libya. No published results will identify your child, and his/her name will not be associated with the findings. Under certain circumstances, information that identifies your child may be released for internal and external reviews of this project. Data will be filed and saved in the researchers’ private stores. The researchers will use the data whenever they need any piece of information during the analysis and discussion sections. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. The data for this study will be kept for three years after the completion of the study is required by WSU.

**Are there any costs or payments for your child being in this research study?**

There will be no costs to your child for taking part in this study. In other words your child will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

**What are my child’s rights as a research study volunteer?**

Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may choose not to take part in this study, choose not to answer specific questions, or leave the study at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are entitled if you choose not to give your permission for your child to take part or your child withdraws from the study.

**Who can I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researcher **Al Tiyb Al Khaiyali** on the following address and contact details;

Address in Libya:
Sebha Main St, Sebha, Libya, phone 00218925140171

Address in the United States:
1630 NE Valley Rd Apt V 302 Pullman, WA, 99163
Phone number: 5093394400… If you have questions about your rights or your child’s rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Washington State University Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668, or e-mail irb@wsu.edu, or regular mail at: Albrook 205, PO Box 643005, Pullman, WA 99164-3005.

**What does my signature on this consent form mean?**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You understand the information given to you in this form
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
• You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved for your child.
• You understand that even if you give your permission, your child may choose not to take part in the study.

Statement of Consent
I give my voluntary permission for my child to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

__________________________________  _______________________
Signature of Parent                        Date

__________________________________  _______________________
Printed Name of Parent

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have carefully explained to the parent of the child being asked to take part in the study what will happen to their child.

I certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and potential risks of his or her child’s participation.

I also certify that he or she:
• Speaks the language used to explain this research
• Reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her
• Does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means for his or her child to take part in this research.

__________________________________  _______________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent                        Date

__________________________________  _______________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent    Person’s Role in Research stu
طلب موافقة ولي الأمر على المشاركة الابن-الابنة في دراسة علمية لغرض جمع بيانات بحثية

أقر أنا ولي الأمر .................... بمشاركة ابني-ابنتي الطوعية في الدراسة البحثية الاستدلالية تحت عنوان دراسة

إستعمال قصص الأطفال المصورة "أحد انواع اللعب" كوسائلا مساعدة لتدريس منهج اللغة الإنجليزية لتفعيل مهارات التعلم

وتسهيل طرق استغلال النص لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للمراحل السابعة والثامنة من التعليم الأساسي. وسيجري

الدراسة الطيف الخيالي: طالب إجازة دفعة بكلية التربية بجامعة ولاية واشنطن بقسم التدريس والتعليم. لذلك، وأنا بكامل الوعي

ادرك بأن المعلومات ستجمع لاستكمال إجازة الدكتوراه للطالب المذكور. ويتواجد الطيف الخيالي في ليبيا لجمع أي معلومات

تتعلق بموضوع دراسته. لذلك يمكن الاتصال به هاتفيا على الرقم (31237923092) أو التواصل معه عن طريق البريد

الالكتروني

altaibk@yahoo.com أو aalkhaiyali@wsu.edu

أثناء ساعات الدوام الرسمية. بعد الانتهاء من جمع البيانات المطلوبة سيعود الطالب المذكور إلى الولايات المتحدة للاستكمال

برنامجه الدراسي حيث يمكن التواصل معه عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني السابق الإشارة إليه أو هاتفيا على الرقم

(30015093934400). بربعاً وورد وطرق اكمل هما الاستاذة المشترية على برنامج دراسة الطالب المذكور وهي

عضو هيئة تدريس بنفس الجامعة ويمكن الوصول إليها هاتفيا على الرقم (390930159334703) أو عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني

Barbara Ward///Barbara_ward@wsu.edu

Tariq Akmal///takmal@wsu.edu

بشكل عام تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحليل انطباعات وراء طلبة ومعلمي السنوات السابعة والثامنة عند استعمال بعض القصص

المصورة كوسائلا مساعدة لتدعم تفاعل الطلاب أثناء تعليمهم بعض مهارات الاستعاب الأساسية. وتعتبر القصص المصورة
ممتعة ووسائل مستحدثة لتطوير ودعم تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جميع أنحاء العالم. لذلك ستستخدم هذه القصص لدعم منهج اللغة الإنجليزية للمساعدة في تفاعل الطلاب وسرعة وسهولة تعليمهم لمهارات الاستعاب. ومن أجل الحصول على معلومات دقيقة لمساعدة الباحث قياس درجة فاعلية هذه الأدوات ستجمع كل المعلومات المتحصل عليها وتقارن بعد تحليلها.

والحصول على كم منفج ووافر من المعلومات مستخدم الاستبيانات والملاحظات المباشرة والمقابلات لجمع تلك المعلومات. لذلك فان العملية البحثية التي سيوافق ابنك-ابنتك طوعا الانخراط بها ستعتبر من ابتكار اختبارها تستند على الاستبيانات وأجراه أي مقاومة حسب رغبة الباحث.

ابنها-ابنتها يتعين عليها تماما من أنه لن يوجد أي خطر صحي أو بدني جراء هذه الدراسة. وفي حالة الشعور بإي شئ فانه-فانها يمكنه-يمكنها الاتصال أو اتخاذ الاجراءات و الانسحاب من المشاركة.

وكان على يقين من أن هذه الدراسة ستقدم المهتمين بالتعليم والمعلمين والمكتبين وأولياء الأمور وستبين أهمية قصة الأطفال لهذا التكوين العلمي الاجتماعي.

لقد تم مناقشة أهداف وتحليلات الدراسة معي وانا على استعداد لمغادرة البحث لتوضيح أو استجواب أي غموض وفي أي وقت.

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توقيع ولي الامر

التاريخ
السادة مديري المدارس

* الحريتة للتعليم الأساسي
* خولة بنت الأزرى للتعليم الأساسي

تشجيعكم لدور العلم الذي هو أساس التقدم.

عليه يطلب منكم تمكين الأستاذة/ الطيب سليمان أبو بكر من استكمال دراسته الميدانية الخاصة برسالة الدكتوراه في المقارنة المنهجية في اللغة الإنجليزية والسلام عليه ورحمة الله وبركاته

أ. عبد الرحمن الظاهر محمد الأبهش
المكلف بشؤون التربية والتعليم. سبها

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إدارة المدرسة

ال시스템 الداخلي للتعليم الأساسي بان الباحث الطيب سليمازاحلي قد اجري دراسة ميدانية بها
وتضمنت دراسته توزيع استبيانات على طلبة ومدرسي فصلين لكل من السنوات مراحل
السابع والثامن ومحاولة هذه الفصول وتسجيل بعض هذه الملاحظات كما تضمنت دراسته
اختبارات قبل وبعد الدراسة لجميع الطلبة وإجراء لقاءات عامة لكل الفصول وخاصة لكل
مدرس.

أعطت هذه الافادة بناء على طلبها للاستعمالها فيما لا يتعارض مع القانون

و السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إدارة المدرسة