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The Employment of Task-Based Activity in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Resolve the Difficulties Encountered by Jordanian Ninth-Grade Students

توظيف النشاط القائم على المهة في تدريس مادة الإستيعاب القرائي لحل الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب الصف التاسع الأردنيين

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of English Language and Literature

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Authorization

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all those without whom it will have never been achieved, the ones who supported me ceaselessly during my journey in writing it.

To My Mother…. To whom I owe everything. She has been the one whose support and help were the great motivation for me to pursue my higher studies

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the effects of employing task-based activities in teaching reading comprehension for EFLs, and provides suggestions to enhance students' reading comprehension skills. Data were collected quantitatively and qualitatively through a sample of **110** ninth-grade female/students from a public school (AL-Yadoudah) in Amman-Jordan **2018-2019**, in addition to three teachers, and two supervisors. The results of the study show that there are differences of statistical significance in terms of reading comprehension between the two groups (experimental and control) during the tests (pre-post-test). The experimental group has scored the highest in the test after the task-based activities has been integrated. Furthermore, students' participation has significantly improved after the integration of activities.

Key Words: **Reading Comprehension, Task-Based Activities, Differences, Experimental Group, Control Group**

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحديد أثر إستخدام الأنشطة المستندة الى المهام في تدريس مادة الإستيعاب لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وتقديم إقتراحات لتعزيز مهارات القراءة والفهم لدى هؤلاء الطلاب. تم جمع البيانات من الناحية الكمية والنوعية من خلال عينة مكونة من (110) طالبات من الصف التاسع المسجلات في مدرسة اليادودة الثانوية عمان–الاردن للعام الدراسي 2018–2019، بالإضافة إلى ثلاث معلمات ومشرفين إثنين. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية من حيث فهم مادة القراءة بين المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة خلال الاختبار. سجلت المجموعة التجريبية أعلى مستوى في الإختبار بعد تطبيق الانشطة المستندة إلى المهام. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت الطالبات المشاركات تحسناً بشكل ملحوظ بعد تطبيق النشاط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستيعاب القرائي، النشاط المستند إلى المهمة، الفروق، التطبيق، المجموعة التجريبية، المجموعة المتحكمة.

Chapter One

1.0. Introduction

Reading is an intellectual work that aims to understand the text. It is an interactive process that arises from the relation between the reader and the text, thus, leads to the understanding of the meaning and the main ideas of that text. Often, the main difficulties with reading comprehension are represented in the students' lack of strategies which help in comprehending the text. Some of these strategies may prove to be difficult for students to maters, due to their lack of knowledge and inability to understand the content of the text through reading.

Comprehension is the main significant aim of reading, through an attempt to group the major ideas in the text and to find the analytical methods that help achieve that goal. In this sense, there are two kinds of concentration on reading: reading for getting new data, ideas, knowledge, details and new vocabulary which might stem from students' culture. Reading for understanding has several kinds: scanning, skimming, reading to learn, reading for general notion, reading for critical evaluation, and reading for combining information (Carrell &Grabe, 2010). These types include scanning which is a reading skill which requires recognition of several visual forms such as word, phrase, or number. Reading for understanding, is a process that requires a visual and semantic operation, in addition, to focusing

on the text outline. Meanwhile, reading to learn does not only require outlining the text but also elaborating other various parts of information upon various groups of data (Carver, 1992).

Thus, the difficulties that students encounter in reading might be unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar content, sentence pattern, background knowledge and inappropriate or different structure patterns. There are some strategies that students should use during reading such as: re-reading, using context clues, looking up the meaning of unfamiliar words, asking questions, thinking about the authors' purpose, and paying attention to thinking while reading. Reading comprehension is concerns the ability to pay attention to written information, which can sometimes be a difficult process for readers (Carver,1992).

Students should follow elaboration that helps them take in information and understand the main ideas from the text. This will help their retention and understanding of the text. So, sooner or later, students will gradually read and analyze the text with the purpose of solving the problem encountered. For example the readers are given a simple text to read at first then gradually given a complex one to comprehend by themselves. Consequently, they can try out the strategies of perfect reading that solve their problems. Harmer (2010) said "Any exposure to English is a good thing for language students. At the very least, some of the language sticks in the minds as part of language acquisition, and if the reading text

is especially interesting and engaging, the acquisition is likely to be more successful" (p.68).

There are many empirical and theoretical studies that concern students reading comprehension difficulties and task-based activities as students could not easily gain ideas when they read a given text. Therefore, students should be able to decode a coded word to understand what they read. Difficulties in reading comprehension may happen as result of some causes: (1) vocabulary and prior knowledge: reading comprehension includes comprehending vocabulary, seeing relationships between words and meanings with content, sorting out the ideas, and recognizing the writer's intention in the text. Many students who successfully learn to read vocabulary are unable to comprehend the text. Prior knowledge is also a significant part of successful reading as the absence of background knowledge and cultures within a subject matter have an effect on reading comprehension. (2) Decoding: it means transforming encoded word into a comprehensible language. Reading comprehension evolves once decoding is mastered, resulting in the comprehension of the words by decoding. (3) Working Memory: it impacts reading comprehension as it facilitates understanding the text. In addition, if reading fast is weak, it is hard to hold the necessary data in the working memory. Reading comprehension occurs when the reader reproduces and

integrates different kinds of data into reading, and connects new information and the known ones (Koda, 2007).

Task-based activity passes through many levels in its implementation. As well, it enables the students to gradually understand the assigned lessons step by step. Consequently, the students may improve comprehending the materials and acquire a well built up in reading comprehension.

Mulyono (2011) believed that task-based language teaching can help the students learn by giving some activities that facilitate the teaching and learning process, and this lead to developing reading comprehension. This means that task-based language teaching can encourage students to be in contact with the language used in the classroom. As a result, a rising interest in the use of task-based language activity in various realms of second and foreign language teaching has risen recently. The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties that encounter the students while through a given text, and how the students manage to overcome such difficulties by using task-based activities.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Although reading skills are taught at Jordanian public schools, still students face many challenges in comprehending texts. There are many activities to

overcome such difficulties, some of which are related to the use of task-based activity that affects reading comprehension. It is worthy to investigate the difficulties and whether or not task-based activities might leave an effect on reading comprehension classes.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims at:

1- Investigating the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students encounter in English reading comprehension.

2- Exploring the effects of employing task-based activities to overcome such possible difficulties.

1.3. Questions of the Study

1- What are the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students at public schools encounter in English reading comprehension?

2- What are the effects of employing task-based activities in overcoming such difficulties?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Even though Jordan has a high-profile image globally, little research has been conducted in terms of dealing with difficulties of reading

comprehension. This study presents a task-based activity for such difficulties and may fill a gap or add to the literature in the respected field. The findings may help to explain some reasons behind students' weaknesses in reading comprehension, and the researcher will be able to work on finding solutions for such weaknesses.

1.5.   Limitations of the Study

The researcher can not generalize the findings of this study to all students in Jordan, as it is only limited to a certain level of learners of the English language, presented by nine-grade Jordanian students. The material was the "Action Pack" unit 5 from their English book, and the period of teaching the students. The results of this study are restricted to Jordan a public school only.

1.6.   Limits of the Study

This study was conducted in one school in Amman-Jordan, during three weeks in the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019.

1.7. Definitions of Terms

Reading Comprehension: according to Klingler,.et al (2007) it is "the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word, and world knowledge and fluency" (P.2). Reading comprehension is a complicated operation in which many other expertise and skills are utilized (Cain,. et al, 2004). It is defined operationally that the researcher in this study intended to focus on reading comprehension as presented in texts, and rendered meanings from English into Arabic.

Task: Theoretically: the definition of the task according to Ellis (2003) is divided into many different dimensions such as, the domain of s task, linguistic skills needed to fulfill a task, the perspective from which a task is represented, and the result of that task. The task is defined operationally as giving someone a certain activity to do. It is the activity that the students do to improve their performance.

Task-based language activity: it is defined theoretically by Nunan (2004) as teaching method whose major function is to teach pedagogical materials in order to structure and develop language teaching in addition to language learning. It is defined operationally as a task designed to help students participate in communication in order to achieve the task aim and improve it.

Differences: it is defined theoretically by Oxford Dictionary it is "A point or way people or things are dissimilar" Oxford Dictionary, (1994, P. 55). Differences is defined operationally change to distinguish things.

Integration: it is defined theoretically by Oxford Dictionary it is a "Form or coordinate to find the integral of something" Oxford Dictionary, (1994, P. 89). Integration is defined operationally how to merge something with another to get an integrated format.

Experimental Group: it is defined theoretically by Ellis, (2009) it refers to the set

of participants who are exposed to the independent variable. These participants

exposed to the treatment variable. Experimental group is defined operationally a

group of people were exposed to a particular application to resolve the problem or

difficulty.

Control Group: it is defined theoretically by Carver, (1996) a set that renders as

the control in a scientific experiment. Control Group is defined operationally a

group or individual is used to find comprehension with other group.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.0. Introduction

This chapter consists of both theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical literature investigates the difficulties in reading comprehension of which task-based activity might be an example. As for the empirical part, the researcher presented some studies that had been investigated and highlighted in the area of reading comprehension in the English language. These parts review empirical and the theoretical literature regarding the relationship between reading activities, vocabulary, decoding, working and poor memories, prior knowledge, motivation to read, methods affecting understanding, and reading comprehension of students.

2.1 Review of Literature

2.1.1 Difficulties Related to Reading Comprehension

Linguists and theorists presented theoretical studies which deal with the difficulties in reading comprehension.

Oakhil and Elbro (2014) believe that reading comprehension is a complex process which requires the organization of prior cognitive skills and abilities. In addition, when readers are not able to understand the whole text, they will

encounter difficulties in decoding words in such text. Reading comprehension generally depends on comprehending the target language. This requires comprehending words, sentences, contexts of the text. Yet, comprehension typically requires the previous knowledge of incorporating these words and sentences within understanding of the context and the meaning of the text.

Trehearne and Doctorow (2005) explain that there are other problems that influence learners' reading comprehension skills. Such problems are: learners' reading situations, helpful teaching on comprehension style, text type, and being aware of several reading comprehension strategies.

Childs (2008) believes that focusing on wide reading materials, and depending on background knowledge and comprehension were the main two main elements that connected with thinking, which means thinking mechanism and authentic interest in reading comprehension are the best principles for learners' success and achievement. Due to the range of general knowledge and analytical skills, these lead to acquire the ability to comprehend well.

Pang, et al. (2003) think that reading is "understanding written texts" (p.6). They believe that reading includes two interrelated processes: prior knowledge and comprehension. They define prior knowledge as the process that helps learners to improve and expand their abilities of comprehension, while comprehension is the process of making the meaning of words or sentences in the text. Pang and

colleagues, also state that the readers who have background knowledge, vocabulary, and other strategies understand written texts.

Kuo, et al., (2001) believe that reading comprehension is the fastest method to heighten learners' educational level. They think that reading comprehension expands knowledge, develops organizational abilities and boosts language skills. In sum, reading comprehension is the best way to learn the English language.

Biancarosa and Snow, (2004) stress that students who encounter difficulties in reading comprehension, including those with learning disabilities (LD) who have been identified as having problems with English language skills and background knowledge, may be exposed to problems in reading words or sentences. They may fail to comprehend what they read, they may lose the reading fluency needed to facilitate understanding or they may be misusing or achieving strategies to aid them in comprehending the core of a text, and to understand main ideas.

Pearson,. et al (1987) state that reading comprehension includes a wide variety of skills and abilities. The main element of which is to increase reader's ability to get the core or main ideas from the text. Without these abilities, learners will encounter difficulties in understanding the given texts.

Cain,. et al. (2000) believe that students struggle with reading comprehension, and fail in the automatic recognition of words, sentences as a result of poor

memory, and loss of strategies related to reading comprehension or ideas in the text. Such students may suffer from (limited reading comprehension strategies). Thus, of these reasons lead to reading failure.

Kamil et al., (2008) believe that reading comprehension strategy instruction is considered one of the most important activities in classroom intervention. This aims to improve the reading comprehension for readers and improve their level in analyzing and thinking while reading any text. They think that teaching depends on teacher modeling through an explanation of the strategies that are related to reading comprehension and adds variety practices in a classroom. Comprehension strategies include procedures that readers use to understand the texts, such as summarizing, identifying the main ideas, paraphrasing, and analyzing data.

Swanson and Ashbaker (2000) suggest that working memory leads to reading comprehension, word recognition and the ability to analyze the main idea in the text. They agree that these variables are secondary. Reading comprehension depends on three important and basic variables: prior knowledge, vocabulary, and reading strategies. These elements allow the readers to decode words and have access to the main content to comprehend the text. They also believe that the motivation to read must be for the purpose of understanding rather than the purpose of just reading. This depends on concentrating while reading, but comprehension is the major goal of reading.

Feez (1998) believes that extensive reading and reading comprehension are cooperation between the teacher and the students. The students show need for more activities, information, and scientific methods of reading comprehension, while the teachers come in suggests some activities and scientific methods in classroom to assist the students need. He thinks that extensive reading supports students to learn more vocabulary, especially if it is with concentration to understand the text.

Betty and Adams (2009) suppose that comprehension is an intellectual process the goals of which is to extract the meaning or main ideas from the texts' sources. Comprehension is one of the main intellect processes where it is used while reading silently and listening. When it is used in reading, it means that the perfect reader activities mental schemes on the subject and builds hypotheses about the content, then she/ he reads to demonstrate, modify, or change those expectations where she/he employs this ability to identify words, rules of sentences structure, general culture and other language knowledge. Comprehension is a process that cannot be fully mastered, because it depends on several things, including ability to read the text, explication, analysis, and editing it through the use of perception and attention. So, the reader should make use of all of his/her comprehensive operations and skills for all different types of texts. (Neff & et al 1995).

Chen (2009) believes that decoding language is considered one of the helping skills in the formation of reading comprehension. When students exert effort to identify the meaning of words, main ideas from the text and analyze it, this will facilitate the process of comprehension for them. In other words, teachers should participate in reinforcing the initial skills to have students engaged in language symbols decoding process for the target of comprehension. Teacher's inabilities to build basic reading skills and knowledge will make the students suffer from weakness or weakness in learning throughout the school period (Harb & Jamal, 2004).

Hegde (2003) uses the term "extensive reading" to refer to scanning the text before reading to get the main ideas or difficult vocabulary from it. It can be compared with intensive reading (creative reading), which means reading in detail with goals to identify the contents of the text. He believes that this term varies according to the readers encountering difficulties in reading. He also thinks that extensive reading helps in improving reading ability to acquire more knowledge and general culture which leads to a faster comprehension of the text.

Haller (2000) suggests that a number of activities which help the reader to overcome problems of reading comprehension might be: through the use of matching activities which can be often confusion for beginners, cutting-up sentences, and comprehension question, can be often confusing for beginners. He

suggests the use of paper strips at the beginning when reading the text where the readers are given the strip and asked to match, for example, a word with its correspondent. Later they can develop this method. A cut-up sentence uses sentences from the specific text and helps learners acquire confidence by manipulating the text in different methods.

Vacca (2002) thinks that for any learner reading comprehension is the core skill in learning the English language. He believes that most of the difficulties that encounter learners do not have essential skills in reading comprehension such as: the ability to analyze, summarize, understand the content, find main ideas from the texts, and encounter some reading difficulties owing to sagging confidence in their grasp ability. He also mentions that reading comprehension depends on tiredness, construction, and attention. Hence, excellence in reading with comprehending leads to acquire and expand knowledge and understand what the text means. Thus, he believes that the educational environment is reflected on the student. Therefore, learners who are not able read comprehensibly well will face serious difficulties throughout the period.

Mclaughlin and Allen (2002) argue that many good readers use some methods to facilitate the understanding of a text. These methods include scanning, skimming, summarizing, predicting, evaluating, self-questioning, and knowing

vocabulary in the context. They think that using such methods lead to avoid difficulties and barriers when reading for comprehension.

Rashid (2012) thinks that reading comprehension does not only depend on the comprehension of individual words, but also on the active connection with the content to create a mental representation. Effective and successful comprehension needs assortment of skills at many standards to build the meaning of the text. The standards of difficulty related to reading comprehension of content depend on the complexity of the language utilized. There are some difficulties that encounter many readers such as, different groups of words, and more complex grammatical structures. (Westbly, 2012)

Hollowell (2013) believes that the problems related to the medical issue such as weakness in reading comprehension skill may be associated with medical difficulty like: attention deficit disorder, listening problems and losing concentration. So, he advises to utilizing some activities like class discussions to help leaner's improve and develop their reading comprehension.

Palincsar and Brown (1984) and Samuels (1983) reckon that there are numerous problems that influence the reading comprehension operation. These problems are attached to the text, context, understanding the meaning, and the reader. (Snow, 2002). Vocabulary as well as one of the major problems which influence reading comprehension, (Nagy, 1998 as cited in Baumann, 2009).

Laufer (1989) investigates the revelation of how much quantity of vocabulary is needful for reading comprehension. She draws that (95%) of the text should be known to the readers to understand the complete text. Carver (1992) thinks that reading speed is an important part in the understanding of texts and in developing reading comprehension through various grades and age levels.

Floyd and Carrell (1987) believe that word recognition, prior knowledge, background culture, and understanding aid in reading speed. Carrell & Wise, (1998) explain that students who lack general cultural knowledge may develop their reading comprehension by learning more new information and learn more vocabulary. Students can achieve the best performance if background knowledge is higher than students who have lower background knowledge.

Dennis (2008) thinks that reading comprehension is a complicated orientation between identifying decodes symbols and analysis of the meaning of the symbols. Some problems involve reading comprehension skills such as complex text, environmental impacts, and worry during reading comprehension, decoding, idea recognition speed and medical issue. He believes that a lot of background culture and vocabulary help learners in explaining the meanings and ideas of the text. The second difficulty is linked to environmental cases that affect the learners who seek to read a text. Readers may have a lot of difficulties to comprehend a text in an unorganized environment than those who read in a quiet and controlled place. If

reading occurs in a chaotic place around, learners encounter problems concentrating on their reading such as radio or TV. When they are in quite environments such as study zone like a library, their reading comprehension capacity will better. The third difficulty is related to worry, during reading comprehension; learners suffer from worry due to inability to comprehend the instructions, and this leads to a weakness in the reading function. The fourth difficulty is motivation. Dennis thinks that motivation is very significant in improving reading comprehension skill, by providing interesting reading articles in class. So, poor motivation leads to a lot of difficulties in concentration on their understanding. The fifth difficulty is associated with decoding or idea of recognition speed. Learners who have difficulties in decoding and understanding the main ideas, the meanings of a word or vocabulary, encounter more problems in reading comprehension than persons who have enough words; they clarify the meaning faster than those who have difficulties in understanding.

2.1.2. Studies in Literature Related to Methods Improving Reading Comprehension through Using "Task-Based Language Activities (TBLA)"

Theoretical studies have previously indicated that some students have weaknesses and difficulties when comprehending the written text. The views of researchers and experts have varied when determining the reasons for such difficulties with reading

comprehension. Some of them believe that the reasons are related to the students' abilities or to the teaching methods of teachers. Studies have confirmed that the use of task-based activities gives the students an opportunity to acquire absorption skills. So, reading comprehension does not happen on its own but requires use of various activities to develop it.

Linguists and theorists presented theoretical studies and methods to dominate difficulties of reading comprehension.

Nicholson (1998) thinks that reading comprehension is one of the major processes of cognitive science. So, the learners need to use some methods to comprehend the content in a text. Reading comprehension is a complex and active skill involving many operations and activities that should be implemented in classroom (Taylor, I. and Taylor, M. M. 1990). Text comprehension is a complex cognitive skill in which the learners should build on the ideas of the text by using methods that help to understand the meaning.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), task-based language teaching is a main part used in language teaching to solve reading comprehension problems that face students. Students who are being treated through task-based teaching better comprehend the text more than those who use traditional methods. Through this method who can find an interactional effect in comprehending texts that lead to the improvement of language understanding (Klapper, 2003).

2.2. Empirical Studies

2.2.1. Studies that Deal with the Difficulties of Reading Comprehension

This part deals with the experimental studies that focused on students who encountered reading comprehension difficulties in the English language:

Linguists and theorists presented empirical studies deal with the difficulties of reading comprehension.

Hansen (1981) conducted a study that aimed to utilize two procedures to evolve inferential reading comprehension at school in ST. Paul, Minnesota. One procedure concentrated on a pre-reading strategy in which students used prior experiences to predict cases in the upcoming story. The second procedure supplied practice in answering questions that demanded inferences between text and past knowledge. The sample was chosen by the researcher and included second-grade students. The result of the study was one of the students had used comprehension ability of these two procedures and much better than the normal sets.

Carrell (1983) believes that children had a particular reading comprehension complex. The researchers revealed that students vary in their comprehension ability to analyze, integrate data in text, comprehend text structure and decode word. The researcher selected a sample that consisted of two groups of children whose ages were between 7-8 and 8-9 years. The result of the study showed that,

not only children had understanding difficulties in the absence of word recognition difficulties, but they also had various skills in word recognition and contrast in understanding.

Oakhill (1993). The study investigated the problems experienced by children who had certain comprehension barriers: Those who had suitable word recognition skills but who, also, had obstacles comprehending text. The rendering of a set of skilled persons was compared with that of a less-skilled set. The first set of studies showed that the weak persons had problems in integrating data in a text and in analyzing the main ideas. The researcher figured out that the comprehension of the less-skilled children could be improved by sets of short training lectures that stress understanding the main ideas and integrating data in the text.

Ghaith and Abd El-Malak (2004) conducted a research paper aimed to clarify the effect of the cooperative Jigsaw II method on improving literal and higher order reading comprehension in English as a foreign language (EFL). The researchers' selected (48) students of (EFL) at Princess University College cooperated. Pre-test post-test and control set empirical design was used. The result of the study showed no statistically important differences between the control and empirical set on the subordinate variables of total reading comprehension and the literal one. But, the result also showed statistically important difference in favor of the empirical set on the variable of higher order comprehension.

Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) conducted a study that aimed to scout the nature of reading comprehension difficulties among early adolescent language minority learners and native English speakers in urban school. Sixth- grade students (399 LM learners, 182 native English speakers) used a united measure of reading comprehension. Of those, 262 students (201 LM learners and 61 native English speakers) which mean, 60% LM learners have encountered difficulties in understanding compared to 40% LM learners more than their analogue were categorized as struggling readers (60% vs. 40%). The researchers figured out that there was a need to identify the appropriate teaching methods and materials for each in order to reach a solution to those difficulties, given the wide variation among the students.

Wutthisngchai (2011) conducted a study that aimed to verify English reading comprehension difficulties as recognized by Mathayom 5 students, reading the academic texts utilized in the English program at Thai Christian School in Bangkok, and to articulate if those Mathayom 5 students from various English programs had the same difficulties in reading comprehension. The students in the study were forty-eight Mathayom 5 students from various English programs at Thai Christian School in the academic year of 2010. A 20-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was utilized to gather information. Descriptive statistics was utilized to resolve the information. There were mean, percentage, frequency, and

standard deviation. According to the statistical information, the total outcome showed that most of the students were not sure whether they had difficulties in reading comprehension. Furthermore, on average, the students totally understood that motivation might be the first barrier affecting reading comprehension. Prior knowledge and lack of reading strategies were perceived as the second and third barriers respectively. Though, Mathayom (5) students from various the English programs perceived difficulties of reading comprehension similarly. Chinese Language- Social Science students demonstrated to be more aware of language difficulties and some culturally varied than the other sets.

Nezam (2012) conducted a study that aimed to identify the main difficulties nine-grade students encounter in comprehending English reading skills which were done at Najran University in Saudi Arabia. This study aimed to find out reading problems inside classrooms faced by Arab learners in general. The researcher conducted a survey including students of the preparatory year (boys) and community college (boys), and a survey of (36) questions in total. The study came with the wide categories of difficulties such as poor knowledge of vocabulary, incompetence in skinning and scanning of the reading material, lacking of vocabulary knowledge, poor reading skills and losing focus.

AL-Yousef (2015) investigated the areas of difficulties in six categories: Automatic recognition skills, vocabulary, and structural knowledge, formal

discourse structure knowledge, synthesis and evaluation skills, strategies, meta-cognitive knowledge and skills monitoring and content or world background knowledge. The researcher selected a random sample of six grader students. The result of the study should lack of adequate knowledge of vocabulary, no memory, and no fluency, and not getting and understanding the text and the point.

AL-Bdour (2015) conducted a study that aimed to identify the main difficulties affecting the students in the area of reading comprehension skills at Al-Karak Departments of Education. It also aimed to measure the differences in English language teachers' attitudes towards such difficulties. The researcher used a descriptive method because it was suitable for the purposes of his study. The sample was chosen included (85) male and female students. The findings of this study came up with the following: The students were not able to read effectively. They lack focus, and no notes were taken.

Iqbal, et al. (2015) conducted a research paper aimed to reveal factors responsible for weak English reading comprehension at secondary school level students in Pakistan. The aim of the study was to explore those factors and to suggest remedies of how to strengthen the English reading comprehension of the students. The researchers selected (60) tenth-grade students. The researchers conducted selected a test and interviews to collect the needed data. The result of the study showed that different factors such as poor command of vocabulary, habit

of cramming, and no interest to learn creativity in reading played a role in comprehension. The researchers recommended giving students more motivation to develop understanding by using discussion among students and teachers and by increasing activities in the classroom.

Gilakjan and Sabouri (2016) believed that reading comprehension is an important skill that supported the evolution of readers' different functions. It assisted them in decoding a text, expressing their ideas about the text. A basic objective of reading comprehension is to help students improve skill and comprehension of the text if they want to be perfect readers. The researchers clarified the term reading comprehension and the case factors affecting it. They explained the active factors and strategies for reading comprehension. The result of the study specified that adequate reading strategies play an important role in developing EFL learners' reading comprehension skill.

Qarez and Abo-Rashid (2017) conducted a study that aimed at investigating reading comprehension difficulties encountered by (EFL) students at a university in Jordan. Information was collected through questionnaires which were distributed at (200) students at AL-Yarmouk University. The questionnaires included two parts: the first part comprises demographic and the second part includes two sections: the students' preferences and the reading problems. The researchers figured out that the students were motivated to learn as they were in

terrible need for acquiring English. Yet, they encountered several barriers in the reading process, such as ambiguous words, uncommon vocabulary, and specific time to cognitively process the text.

2.2.2. **Studies that Deal with Methods of Improving Reading Comprehension through Using 'Task-Based Activity'**

Linguist and theorist presented empirical studies using Task-Based Language Activities

Nahavandi (2011) conducted a study that investigated the effect of task-based activities on EFL learners' reading comprehension. The researcher selected (60) participants and divided them into empirical and control groups from the private institutions such as (Jehad-e-Daneshgahi) in Tabriz. The empirical group was taught according to the use of task-based activities, while the control group was taught according to traditional methods. Through statistical analysis after pre-test and post-test, the result showed a statistical difference between the two groups, as the empirical group was able to improve the level of reading comprehension through using the task-based activities test.

Chalak (2015) conducted a study that aimed to concentrate on better reading comprehension ability through task-based activity. The researcher selected (135)

Iranian female students from several grades. The persons were divided into four sets, two control and two empirical. They drew a pre-test and post-test. The persons in empirical sets were taught by task-based activity, while the control sets were exposed to a traditional way. The result revealed that students of the empirical sets outperformed the students at control one. As a result, he suggested using interactive and flexible task activities in the classroom to perfect and improve reading comprehension ability of Iranian students.

Mesbah (2016) conducted a study that aimed to determine the impact of used task-based language activities on reading comprehension skill of medical students. It also aimed to show whether gender had an effect in this regard. The researcher randomly selected (60) students, divided into (30) male and (30) female empirical set studying at the Guilan University of medical science. The (30) empirical set received task-based instruction, while the control sets were taught using the conventional method. The result of the study showed that TBLA was helpful in improving the students' reading comprehension. This result led to the utility of tasks to develop reading comprehension as useful tools in the comprehension of medical terms by the students.

Mezhgan and Seyed (2017) conducted a study that aimed to detect the effect of Task-Based Language Activities on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement. The researchers randomly selected (70) students to the experimental

and control sets. They gave the two sets the same texts, but various task patterns and activities. The students' reading achievement results were compared by using a reading post-test for both sets. The acquired data were analyzed using t-test to survey the impact of autonomous variable, namely, the way of teaching reading task-based activities vs. conventional reading comprehension. The students' reading achievement was used as a subordinate variable. The result was that (TBLA) had a significantly more favorable impact on students' reading achievement compared to the conventional reading comprehension instruction, such as ability to take notes, and the ability to start effective discussions.

Lap and Trang (2017) conducted a study that aimed to show the use of task-based activities and their impact on self-learning for English learners regarding reading comprehension. The researcher selected sixty-nine tenth-grade students from a high school in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, who didn't use modern teaching methods relevant to English language teaching. The students were divided into two groups: control and an empirical one. A questionnaire and two reading tests were utilized to gather quantitative data about students' motivation for reading comprehension. Interviews were used to try to know their opinion when using task-based activities in reading and explain text for them. The result of the study showed that students' motivation in the empirical group increased, and showed an obvious improvement in reading comprehension through addressed

challenges in learning reading comprehension with modern activities. That led to aid students to promote their reading comprehension, and to help teachers in explaining texts and rules through using these activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study distinguishes in knowing the impact of using Task-Based Activities on students' performance and understanding of information in teaching the English language among ninth-grade students.

In addition that, the present study is different from other studies with respect to the sample of study and the environment used during the application of the activities. The researcher obtained knowledge and a lot of ideas and from in all the previous theoretical and empirical studies that shed light at the important information, procedures, and types of the methods should the researcher use.

Chapter Three
Methods and Procedures

3.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology approach used in this study. It demonstrates how the data were collected through the study's instrument (Test and Interview), and clarifies how each instrument was designed.

3.1. Methods of the Study

The methodological approach for this study was a mixed one (quantitative and qualititative). The test showed the quantitative data which dealt with the first question of the study, whilst the semi-structured interviews contributed to both the questions of the study provided extra information around the difficulties that faced students and the effects of task-based activities on improving reading comprehension from the teachers' and supervisors' perspectives.

3.2. Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consisted of ninth-grade students from public schools affiliated to the (Qweismeh) Directorate. The sample of the study was ninth-grade students from a public school (Al-Yadoudah), Amman, Jordan. The sample was (**110**) previously divided into two groups: experimental and control groups. Each

group contained (**55)** participant who have been studying English as a foreign language since the first-grade at the time of the study.

3.3. Instruments of the Study

The researcher used two instruments for data collection:

Test (Pre-Test and Post-Test) for students, in addition to semi-structured interviews with teachers and supervisors.

3.3.1. Test of the Study

The researcher designed a test to discover the difficulties that the students faced in reading comprehension and to collect the data required to answer the first question of this study. The test was prepared from two different texts of the book for ninth-grade of **2019** (second semester). Such texts were not taught by the designated teacher of the course. The texts consisted of: "A Miser's Final Wish and The Red Crescent", each contained different questions. The first text included **(13)** multiple choices, each item consisted of four choices all of which were wrong except one. The second text, on the other hand, included seven short-answer questions. The test was adopted and evaluated by the Experts from Ministry of Education and Experts from Universities. In each text, the researcher used different questions to measure the problems in every question. The researcher used the test instrument to assess and to improve reading

comprehension through task-based activity to facilitate finding the main ideas and meanings of the texts.

The tests consisted of pre-test and a post-test for each of the two groups, (experimental and control). The test was out of **(25)** marks. The test was given for (**40**) minutes to answer it.

3.3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used this instrument, as it is considered one of the most significant techniques in collecting qualitative data. The main feature of the interviews is to allow the researcher to get new and more ideas than the test may present. They could give reliable data. The researcher introduced herself and clarified the aim of the interviews in order to gain their trust and elicit valid information.

The researcher started to collect data by interviewing three teachers and two supervisors through asking them two questions so as to form clear and new ideas about the teachers of English and the supervisor's views on the application of a task-based activity. The questions aimed to get their views on the existing difficulties that encounter the students in reading comprehension and the effects of using the task-based activity to improve reading comprehension, and these activities can be generalized in the Jordanian schools. The interview questions were also verified by the same panel of experts who validated the test.

3.4. The Educational Program "Task-Based Activity"

The program (Task-Based Activity) included some topics from grade nine's book; one unit from the textbook is entitled (Action Pack of the ninth-grade). The material was prepared as follows:

A- One unit was selected from the textbook, module **(5)** "Money doesn't bring happiness"; this module includes two texts "A Miser's Final Wish", "The Red Crescent", and "Project A Charitable Campaign". The skill discussed with students were, Grammar, Language Skills Focus, Communication Workshop, Language Development. In addition to using an external text "Why the Moon Changes".

B- The sample of the research was divided into two groups: the experimental, in which the students were taught by using the task-based activities, and the control group, in which they were taught through using traditional methods.

C- The researcher of this study used the traditional methods to teach the control group in teaching unit **(5)** of the book by reading and answering the questions in the text. This method is teacher oriented, however the teacher's role was limited to suggesting ideas and showing instructions about the reading text by using just the whiteboard.

- To determine the problems and difficulties that encounter the students during reading comprehension session, the researcher used of task-based activity which consisted of three parts:

1- Pre-Activity Stage: the teacher should do is to help the learners to define the topic area, in this stage, the teacher introduce the subject, the students will recall and activate their knowledge of the subjects and do lots of brainstorming activities. The teacher has to highlight helpful words and phrases to help students better understand task. In this pre-activity stage should be given to encourage the students to integrate topic-related words and phrases they know already. In addition, the students' should be engaged in the activities because the goal of pre-activity stage is to create the students' interest in the topic. The teacher can start with showing a picture for prediction, by asking them to guess what they are going to read about or by having they look at headlines or captions before they read the whole thing.

2- Task- Grouping: the second stage in the task-based teaching is the grouping. The task-grouping is a good opportunity for all learners to open their mouth to communicate, working in small groups to realize the aims of the task, the teacher's role as director and facilitator at this stage. In task-based teaching most of the emphasis is on learners doing the task, guided by the teacher.

The teacher is setting out tasks, ensuring that the students can understand the teacher's instruction. Although, learners complete task independently, the teacher still has overall control and the power to stop everything if necessary. The teacher is no longer the giver of knowledge, but rather a facilitator for the students to rely on. Throughout the task grouping, the emphasis has been on students' understanding and expressing meaning in order to achieve the outcomes and report their results.

3- Evaluation: represented by the assignments the students are asking to do during this stage. Each group is applying as follows: (1) identifying difficult vocabularies and using lexicons, (2) answering the teacher's questions related to reading comprehension and analysis, (3) summarizing the texts, (4) writing new titles, (5) discussing the writer's ideas, and linking new knowledge with prior knowledge. The tools the researcher used in this study include, worksheets, creative projects, competitions (do they accept the challenge), and home activities. The researcher used these three parts to achieve the desired educational objectives.

3.5. Validity of the Test and Instruments

After preparing the test and the interview questions, the researcher gave them to a panel of experts to find out whether such questions examine what they were intended for. The experts were asked to comment, modify or delete any irrelevant questions of the interview questions. Eventually, their recommendations were taken into consideration.

The tests and the interviews were commended to appropriately identify the difficulties faced by students in reading comprehension and influenced the employment of the task-based activities to improve students' comprehension. A few minor modifications and recommendations were mentioned to develop the test. Consequently, such recommendations were considered accordingly.

3.6. Reliability of the Test

To achieve a high degree of reliability of the instrument, the researcher randomly selected and applied the test on **(20)** ninth-grade students, who did not belong to the sample. The reliability was checked by means of test-retest, then calculated common grounds between the two tests. Two types of reliability methods were used to check the reading comprehension test; Cronbach-alpha and Test-retest method. After two weeks, the test was administrated on the same sample.

Cronbach-alpha co-efficient and the correlation between the scores in different occasions have been calculated for each part of the test and for the total score, as shown in table **(1)** below.

Table **(1)**: reliability co-efficient of the test

Part of the test	No of items	Cronbach-alpha	Test-retest
Part one	13	0.783	0.755
Part two	7	0.770	0.741
Whole test	20	0.826	0.801

3.7. Design of the Study and Statistical Analysis

This study employed the test method. A quantitative approach using pre-test and post-test to collect data from a sample of **(110)** participants including experimental and control groups from a public school(Al-Yadoudah) in Amman, Jordan. The tests sought to find the main difficulties that encounter the students and how to solve them. The qualitative approach was applied by conducting semi- structured interviews with English language teachers and supervisors to explore their attitudes

and views about the difficulties and the effects of employing task-based activities to overcome such difficulties.

After the results of the two tests (pre-test and post-test) were recorded and analyzed, the researcher used tables to pinpoint the differences before and after using the activity in reading comprehension. The researcher relied on simple arithmetical procedures, such as statistical means, in analyzing and interpreting the data. Moreover, each table was followed by a commentary that shed light on the important aspects of the results. Table **(2)** shows the study design.

Table **(2):** the study design

Experimental. **Group**	**O1**	**X**	**O2**
Control **Group**	O1	…..	O2

Note: O1= pre-test, O2= post-test, X= independent variable

Study Variables

1- Independent variable: the activities given to the participants in the experimental group

2- Dependent variable: reading comprehension measured by the test developed by the researcher

Statistical Data Analysis

- Cronbach-alpha; to calculate internal consistency and reliability of the test

- Pearson's Correlation; to calculate test-retest reliability coefficient

- The arithmetic mean and standard Deviation for all scores of the experimental and control groups

- ANCOVA, to examine the statistical significance of the difference in post-test total score means between experimental and control groups controlling the effect of the pre-test scores

- MANCOVA, to examine the statistical significance of the difference in post-test sub- score means between experimental and control groups controlling the effect of the pre-test scores

3.8. Procedures for Applying Task-Based Activities

 In conducting the study, the researcher followed steps:

1- Collecting theoretical and empirical studies that are related to the topic

2- Determining the relevant objectives and questions of the study

3- Administrating a problem-solving test

4- Checking the validity of the test by submitting it to a panel of academic experts.

5- Checking reliability of the test by means of test-retest

6- Dividing the sample into two groups: the experimental and the control

7- Conducting pre-post-test

8- Conducting interviews

9- Analyzing the data

10- Preparing recommendations for further research

11- Drawing out results and conclusions

12- Listing the references according to APA style

13- Adding appendices where possible

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presented the results of the study pertaining to its questions. Quantitative data were gathered to answer the first question of the study to discover the relationship between task-based language activities and the difficulties of reading comprehension. While qualitative data were collected to illustrate the results of the test from the interviewees' perspective and answer the second question of the study.

4.1. Results of the Test Related to the First Question

1- What are the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students at public school encounter in English reading comprehension?

To answer the first and second questions of the study, the results received were analyzed by calculating the means and the level of deviation of the two categories (task-based language activity and difficulties of reading comprehension) in an attempt to find whether there was a relationship between the students' level and their capacity to resolve the difficulties in reading comprehension.

Table (3): Mean and standard deviation for the score of the experimental and control groups in pre-test and post-test.

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Experimental Gr.	55	6.67	3.42	17.38	2.23
Control Gr.	55	7.73	3.66	14.38	4.15

Table **(3)** shows that there are apparent differences between score means of the two groups: experimental and control after the application of the activities; the arithmetic means of the experimental group totaled **(17.38)** with a standard deviation of **(2.23),** and for the control one **(14.38)** with a standard deviation of **(4.15).** To verify the statistical function of the difference between the means of experimental and control groups in the total score of the post-test and after checking the difference between the two means of the pre-test **ANCOVA** was used. Table **(4)** illustrates results of the analysis.

Table (4): Output of one-way ANCOVA in the marginal mean of the post-test total scores between experimental and control groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squares
Pre-total	101.80	1	101.80	9.96	.002	.090
Group	276.57	1	276.57	27.05	.000	.211
Error	1032.82	101	10.23			
Corrected Total	1368.62	103				

Table **(4)** shows that the value of **(F)** for the variable expressing the independent one (activities) equals **(27.05)** which is a statistical function at the level **(a<_ 0.005).** This means that the difference of the arithmetic marginal mean for the total score of reading comprehension test between the two groups, the experimental and the control, was statistically significant. This difference was in favor of the experimental group; the value of the arithmetic grand mean of the experimental group was **(17.53)** more than that of the control one which was **(14.24)** as shown in table **(5)** below.

Marginal Means for post total scores:

To determine whether or not there were differences between members of the two groups, the experimental and the control, in the sub scores of the English reading comprehension test, the arithmetic means (methods) for the pre-and post sub scores was calculated for both groups as shown in table **(6)** below.

Table (5): Mean standard deviation for sub scores of the experimental and control groups in pre and post-tests.

Sub-Score	Group	N	Pre-test		Post-Test	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Part 1	Exp.Gr.	55	3.50	1.80	8.85	1.43
	Cont.Gr.		4.35	1.92	7.02	2.24
Part 2	Exp.Gr.	55	3.17	2.00	8.54	1.60
	Cont.Gr.		3.38	2.29	7.37	2.33

Table **(6)** shows that there are apparent differences in the means of post-test sub-score of reading comprehension between the two groups, the experimental and control. The arithmetic mean of the first part of the test for the experimental group was (**8.85**) with a standard deviation (**1.43**) and for

the second part (**8.54**) with a standard deviation (**1.60**); while the arithmetic mean of the first part for the control group was (**7.02**) with a standard deviation (**2.24**) and for the second part (**7.37**) with a standard deviation (**2.33**). To verify the statistical function of the differences between the means of the two groups, the experimental and the control, of the sub-scores in post application, after checking the differences between pre-application means **MANCOVA** was used. Table (**7**) illustrates that.

Table (6): Output of MANCOVA in the marginal mean of the post-test sub scores between experimental and control groups

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Pre Test 1	Post Test 1	63.16	1	63.16	21.41	.000
	Post Test 2	13.11	1	13.11	3.50	.064
Pre Test2	Post Test 1	11.78	1	11.78	3.99	.048
	Post Test 2	2.52	1	2.52	.67	.414
Group	Post Test 1	120.57	1	120.57	40.87	.000
	Post Test 2	47.23	1	47.23	12.61	.001
Error	post Test 1	295.04	100	2.95		
	Post Test 2	374.72	100	3.75		
Corrected	Post Test 1	446.53	103			
Total	Post Test 2	442.76	103			

Wilks' Lambda value= .707, p= .000

It is clear from Table **(7)** that **(F)** value sub-scores were (**47.23), (12.61)** successively, and all were statistically significant at the level of (**a< 0.05**). This means that the differences of the marginal arithmetic means of the Sub-scores between the two groups, the experimental and the control, were statically significant. These differences were in favor of the experimental group. The marginal arithmetic means of the experimental group were higher than those of the control one. Table **(8)** illustrates that.

Table (7): Marginal Mean for post-sub-scores of reading comprehension test

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Error
Post Test 1	**Experimental Gr.**	**9.04**	**.24**
	Control Gr.	**6.82**	**.24**
Post Test 2	**Experimental Gr.**	**8.65**	**.27**
	Control Gr.	**7.26**	**.27**

4.2. Results of the Interviews

To answer the questions of the study, interviews were conducted with three ninth-grade English teachers and two English language supervisors from the Directorate of Qweismeh District Amman- Jordan.

4.2.1. Results to the Interview Questions

1- What are the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students encounter in English reading comprehension?

2- What are the effects of employing task-based activities to overcome such difficulties?

Two English Language Supervisors' Answers

The first interviewee, (Ms. Arayaf Mohammad), has (9 years) experience in teaching English and holds a (MA) in English literature and teaching English at the Directorate of Qweismeh District. She believed that some main problems which she encountered through teaching reading included the difficulty in attracting students' attention toward texts which have different types and goals. Another major problem was the difficulty students face in understanding the text in general. They did not have the skill to analyze and read critically. On the other hand, students thought that reading was just to understand the meaning of the words. She

approved of using the task-based activity, but believed that it did not depend on the level of the students and not on the way the teacher carries out the task.

The second interviewee, (Dr. Khalid Johdah), has (10) years experience in teaching English and holds a ph.d in English literature and teaching English at the Directorate of Qweismeh District. He believed that some difficulties that he faced through teaching reading are time constraints and that teaching reading needs a lot of concentration. He agreed that the task-based activity is a very useful method in teaching He also stated that our way of teaching English requires students to complete and do some tasks to learn the language. In the end, he thought it would be of great use to include such an activity in our method of teaching.

Three English Language Teachers' Answers

The first interviewee, Mariam Baker has (18) years experience in teaching English and holds a MA in English literatures and teaching English to grade nine students at Al-Yadoudah School in Amman-Jordan. She believed that the major problems in teaching reading comprehension were lack of vocabulary, lack of analysis, lack of focus and absence of background knowledge. She agreed to apply the task-based activity when the teacher starts with the main idea of the text and then let students do the most of the exercises and explanations in team work.

The second interviewee, Khitam AL- Junaidi has (30) years experience in teaching English and holds a BA in English literature and teaching English to grade nine students at Al-Yadoudah School in Amman-Jordan. She mentioned some main problems she encountered while teaching reading. The main difficulties were time constrictions, lack of prior knowledge, lack of understanding the content of the text, and students in ability to find meanings of the new vocabulary. She agreed to apply the task-based activity in the classroom, as it would encourage students to be able to analyze and discuss in team work.

The third interviewee, Amenah Al-Saleh has (20) years experience in teaching English and holds a BA in English literature and teaching English to grade nine students at Al-Yadoudah School in Amman-Jordan indicated that some difficulties were absence of focus in the classroom, and, inability to analyze the ideas and find meanings. She said "The students depend on the teacher, who does not have cultural background to make ideas clearer". She agreed to apply the task-based activity, as it leads to develop reading comprehension and to allow the students to demonstrate their skills in discussions through team work. She believes that this activity requires groups and prior work experience. She also suggested that the teacher should be silent, just give some instructions and pieces of advice.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

5.0. Introduction

This study aims to verify the impacts of task-based language activities on reading comprehension, and how helpful such activities are in figuring out the difficulties encountered in teaching this skill. This chapter provides a summary of the results for the two questions. It also explains the results in light of the reviewed literature consisting of theoretical and empirical approaches. Additionally, it suggests recommendations for further studies.

5.1. Discussion of the Findings of the First Question

What are the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students encounter in English reading comprehension?

Generally, the performance of the two groups, which consisted of both control and experimental group, was not well when conducting the pre-test. The researcher found the following main difficulties facing students understanding of the text, difficulty in finding the main ideas, the problem with getting the meaning of words

in the text, difficulty in answering comprehension questions. The subjective questions reflect the students' difficulty in understanding ideas and concepts implied in the text, whether through WH-or multiple choice questions, in addition to a lack of prior knowledge of the text. The quantitative data indicated the level of difficulties that the students faced while learning reading comprehension as that left a significant impact on the overall performance of students. The experimental group was generally better than the control one. Table (3) (p. 43) shows the results in which the performance of the control group was lower them lack of the experimental one. The major reasons and factors behind the difficulties that encountered the students, while answering the questions, were problems in identifying the meaning of words and understanding the content of the text, in addition to a lack of concentration.

The findings of this study comply with those of the following scholars: Oakhil & Elbro (2014), Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant (2000), Vacca, (2002), Rashid, (2012), Westby (2012), Hellowell (2013), Palincsar & Brown, (1984), Dennis, (2008) who all agree that reading comprehension is a complex process. Consequently, students who are not equipped with a stock of vocabulary may for sure encounter difficulties in understanding a reading comprehension text.

5.2. Discussion of the Findings of the Second Question

1- What are the effects of employing task-based activities to overcome such difficulties?

Preparing students successfully to learn in the classroom has always been important. However, teachers encounter a lot of problems in teaching English language skills. One of the main problems is students' reluctance to take part in classroom due to their inability to comprehend the main ideas of it. They do not use power of thinking while answering the questions. Reading comprehension is impacted by the degree of overlap between prior knowledge and content of the text (Abd- Alatif & AL-Haddad 2004). This is confirmed as Duke, N. & Person, D (2001) believed that the capable reader is forming expectations about the content of the text. According to AL-Haddad, A (2013), students produce the texts by clarifying the main ideas and objectives. Therefore, the students need some methods that help them to be a producer of the text such as using (Task-Based Activity).

Task-based activity provides the teaching process with the following skills: prescription ideas and opinions, and development of the necessary skills through group-work manifested in presenting skills, discussion skills and study skills. (TBA) also helps and supports to minimize communication problems among

students who do not have chances to show their ability to participate in the classroom.

So, the effects of using task-based activity are to provide a range of methods that such as: understanding, analyzing, and finding the main ideas, in addition to increasing the challenge among students. According to the teachers and supervisors, who agreed to apply the task-based activity in their school curricula.TBA would allow the students to interact more with the lesson, thus increase their understanding each time they use a different task.

The findings of this study, with regard to question number two, comply with those of the following researchers: Lap and Trang (2017), Madhkhan, Mozhgan and Mousavi (2017), Mesbah (2016), Nahavandi (2011) who all agree that the task-based activity helps overcome such difficulties elaborate. The results showed that the task-based activities help in improving, developing, and promoting students' reading comprehension. In addition, they help teachers in explaining lessons through using these activities. The results also showed the statistical differences between the two groups, as the experimental group was much better than the control group.

5.3. Conclusions

Results obtained from the post-test, after applying the task-based language activities, had a direct impact on improving the student's skill in reading comprehension. The students who were in the experimental group obtained higher results than those of the control one. Thus, the use of complex comprehension passages created more difficulties for the students in learning the English language.

Results of the interviews with teachers and supervisors indicated that school curricula may be modified to suit the students' needs through using various activities in teaching reading comprehension. This may help the students understand the content of the text, main idea, and vocabulary.

5.4. Recommendations

On the footing of the results, the researcher recommends the following:

1- Teachers and supervisors must be familiar with the relationship between the student's level in reading comprehension and the effects of task-based activities.

2- Teachers and supervisors have to get adequate knowledge to modify the curriculum to convert the student's need to achieve the required goals.

3- The Employment of Task-Based Language Activities is as advantageous as it helps students interact and gain knowledge which would improve the low-level students and minimize the difficulties they face in reading comprehension.

4- Teachers should be given training courses on task-based activities and methodology by the Ministry of Education.

5- Teachers need to enhance student interaction both with the text and content by using different activities to explaining how the students can understand the meaning of words, plan to ingrate newly learned vocabulary items into future lectures through readings on regarding subject, or through quizzes, and maintain a running of new vocabulary items and divide it at regular intervals. The list should be a combination of the new vocabulary in addition to prior vocabulary.

6- The current study presented the relationship between the task-based activities and the difficulties in reading comprehension. Future studies may depend on the results of this research and go further. Besides, the researcher recommends conducting further studies on modern activities that can be added to the curriculum to facilitate learning.

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وزارة التربية والتعليم
مديرية التربية والتعليم للواء القويسمة

الرقم ....
التاريخ ....
الموافق ٢٢٧٦.١١/٧

٥ رجب ١٤٤٠   مديري المدارس ومديراتها
٢٠١٩/٠٣/١٢

الموضوع : البحث التربوي وتسهيل المهمة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إشارة لكتاب معالي وزير التربية والتعليم رقم ١٤٣٥٠/١٠/٣ الموافق ٢٠١٩/٣/١٢ .

فأرجو العلم بأن الطالبة " ابتسام جميل محمود حسن " تقوم بإجراء دراسة عنوانها " توظيف النشاط القائم على المهام في تدريس فهم القراءة لحل الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلاب الصف التاسع في مدارس عمان الحكومية " وذلك استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في تخصص اللغة الانجليزية من جامعة الشرق الأوسط ، ويحتاج ذلك إلى إجراء مقابلات مع عينه من المشرفين التربويين و معلمي مدارسكم ، بالإضافة إلى تطبيق اختبار على عينه من طلبتكم

راجياً تسهيل مهمة الطالبة المذكورة وتقديم المساعدة الممكنة لها ، على أن يتم مطابقة الأدوات المرفقة مع الأدوات المطبقة ، شريطة ألا تستخدم البيانات والمعلومات المتحصلة إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي .

وأقبلوا الاحترام

مدير التربية والتعليم

نسخة / مدير التدريب والتأهيل والإشراف التربوي
نسخة / رئيس قسم التدريب والتأهيل والإشراف التربوي
نسخة / عضو قسم التدريب والتأهيل والإشراف التربوي
نسخة / الملف العام

مدير التربية والتعليم
د. شاكر عارف العلاوين

تلفون (٤١٦٦٢٠-٤-١)   فاكس (٤١٦٠٣٠٥)   ص.ب (٦٦٧٤)

Appendix (B)

The Interviews Questions

Ladies and Gentlemen…

I am Ibtisam Jamil Hassan, an M.A student at Middle East University. I am presently working on my thesis titled "The Employment of Task-Based Activity in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Resolve the Difficulties by Jordanian Ninth-Grade Students".

Based on in your knowledge and experience in the domain of Education Teaching English, I would like you to ask to kindly answer the following questions which are your view on the application of the Task-Based Activity in Teaching, and its impact on enhancing reading comprehension for students. Your time, opinion, help, and cooperation in answer the following questions are highly appreciated.

Middle East University

Please add the personal information:

- **Name:…………………………….**
- **Place at the work…………………………….**
- **Specialization………………………………….**
- **Work experience………………………………**

- Please answer the following questions:

1- What are the possible difficulties that nine-grade Jordanian students encounter in English reading comprehension?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

2- What are the effects of employing task-based activities to overcome such difficulties?

....

....

Appendix (C)

Panel Experts

Name	Work Experience	Place of Work	Years of Experience
1- Ms. Amnah. Al-Saleeh	English/ teacher	Al-Yadoudah School	20 years
2- Ms. Mariam Baker	English/ teacher	Al-Yadoudah School	18 years
3- Ms. Khitam Al- Junaidi	English/ teacher	Al-Yadoudah School	30 years
4- Dr. Khalied Joudeh	English/ Supervisor	the Directorate of Qweismeh district	10 years
5- Ms. Aryaf Mohammad	English/ Supervisor	the Directorate of Qweismeh district	9 years

Appendix (D)

The validation Letter

Dear Professor…

I am Ibtisam Jamil Hassan, an M.A student at Middle East University. I am presently working on my thesis titled "The Employment of Task-Based Activity in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Resolve the Difficulties by Jordanian Ninth-Grade Students".

With your expertise, I am humbly asking to validate the suitability of the texts which are going to be used uncover the difficulties that encounter some students in schools.

Your time, opinion, help, and cooperation in answer the following questions are highly appreciated.

Middle East University

Ibtisamalnajar@gmail.com

00962799646806

Please add the personal information:

1- **Name:…………………………….**
2- **Place at the work…………………………….**
3- **Specialization………………………………….**
4- **Work experience………………………………**

Appendix (E)

The Validation Committee

Name	Specialization	Academic Rank	Place of Work	Years of Experience
Dr. Nisreen Yousuf	English Contemporary American Literature	Assistant professor	Middle East University	2 years
Dr. Majed Abd-Alteef	Linguistics and translation	Co- professor	Middle East University	10 years
Dr. khaled Al-najjar	English literature	Assistant professor	Isra University	4 years
Dr. Majed Abd-Alkreem	English literature	Assistant professor	Isra University	10 years
Dr. Ibrahim Abu- Shihab	Applied Linguistics	Co-professor	Al-Zaytona University	10 years
Dr. Sahar Al-Tikriti	Linguistics/Pragmatics	Assistant professor	Al-Zaytona University	10 years
Dr. Mohamed Al-Salman	Linguistics	Professor	Al-Zaytona University	10 years

Appendix (F)

Test and Answer Questions

Question One:

What do these relative pronouns refer to?

1- **Who (line 1):**

   a) Soldiers   b) ambulances   c) medics.

2- **that (line 8):**

   a) Members   b) organization   c) 97 million.

3- **that (line11):**

   a) Traditions   b) organization   c) guidelines.

- **Question Two:**

Read the text and answer the questions.

1- What is the most important objective that the Red Crescent has which distinguishes it

   from other organizations?

2- Name other organizations that you know of in Jordan, which help people in need, what

   do they do?

3- What qualities do you think one should have to volunteer with the Red Crescent?

   Mention two qualities?

Test

A miser's final wish

Choice the correct answer:

1- Do you think Mr. Lin is too stingy?

a) Yes   b) no   c) neutral   d) sometimes

2- How many hours did Mr. Lin work?

a) 8 hours   b) 12 hours   c) 7 hours   d) 9 hours

3- What is Mr. Lin's main goal?

a) To make a lot of money   b) work only c) to build house d) to collect money for travel

4- Where was Mr. Lin outing his money?

a) In bank   b) in house   c) in shoe boxes   d) in his jacket

5- What did he every night?

a) Watching TV   b) sitting and looking at his money c) eating and sleeping d) talking with his wife

6- What did he want of his wife after his death?

a) Sell the house   b) take all of his money and place it inside his coffin d) take all of his money   c) donate in his money

7- What are the qualities of Ms. Lin?

a) **Good wife   b) bad wife   c) selfish wife   d) smart wife**

8- Was she a loyal wife?

a) **Yes   b) no   c) foxy   d) smart**

9- Do you support Ms. Lin?

a) **Yes   b) no   c) neutral   d) none of them**

10- The main idea of the text
a) **No one takes anything after death**
b) **Man should not be stingy**
c) **The wife must help her husband**
d) **None of the above**

11- Where did the wife put his money?

a) **In bank   b) in coffin   c) with her friend   d) all of the above**

12- Give an appropriate title for the text

a) **Money doesn't last   b) Money is everything   c) Work and money d) None of the above**

13- Are you a supporter of Mr. Lin?
a) **agree   b) disagree   c) neutral   d) none of the above**

Answer the Questions

Test-A

Q1:

C) Medics

b) Organization

c) Guidelines

Q2:

The most important aims are responding to disasters such as: earthquakes or fires, providing help to developing countries, and work to prevent suffering for everybody, regardless of nationality, race, religion or gender.

Q3:

Name 1- United Nations international children's emergency fund (UNICEF)

What do you do?

1- Help children by offering them free education

2- Help children by providing food and medicine

Test-B

Q1:

1- **a) yes**
2- **b) 12 hours**
3- **a) to make a lot of money**
4- **c) in shoe boxes**
5- **b) sitting and looking at his money**
6- **b) take all of his money and place it inside his coffin**

7- d) smart wife

8- a) yes

9- a) yes

10- a) no one takes anything's after death

11- a) in bank

12- a) money does not last

13- a) agree

Appendix (G)

Worksheets

1- Do you agree with Mr. Lin, when he said to himself? "To make a lot of money, and to spend as little of it as possible" If your answer is yes or no tell me the reasons?

2- Did Mr. Lin put his money in the bank? If your answer yes or no, tell me reason And if your answer no, tell me where Mr. Lin was put his money

3- What did he want from his wife after he died to do

4- Describe the qualities of Mrs. Lin

5- What did Mrs. Lin do to her husband after his death?

6- What did Mrs. Lin do in fact?

7- Is she considered smart or not?

8- Find the following from the text

   Noun: Preposition:

Pronoun: Auxiliary verb:

   Word denotes quantity: Verb:

Worksheet (1)

Explain- Grammar

Many, Some, How much, How many, A few, and a little

Where do we use Few/A Few?

- We use **Few** Countable (plural) is used names 'less' means. A negative meaning.

- We use **A Few** Countable (plural) is used names 'less' but 'enough' means. A positive meaning.

Few / A Few and Little / A Little Extra Examples

- She has few apples in the refrigerator. (She doesn't have enough apples).

- She has a few apples in the refrigerator. (She has a small quantity of apples)
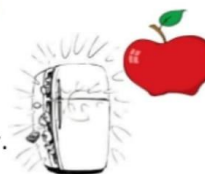
- A few friends came to my party. (This is a positive idea, I'm happy a few people came.)

- Few friends came to my party. (This is a negative idea, I'm not happy because not many people came.)

Where do we use Little/A Little?

- We use Little Uncountable (singular) is used names 'less' means. A negative meaning.

- We use A Little Uncountable (singular) is used names 'less' but 'enough' means. A positive meaning.

- I have few books in my book case.
(Kitaplığımda az kitap var.)
Cümleyi söyleyene göre kitap vardır fakat yok gibidir. Yani var sayılmaz.

- I have a few books in my bookcase.
(Kitaplığımda birkaç kitap var.)
Cümleyi söyleyene göre birkaç kitap vardır ve sayısı azdır.

Where do we use Few/A Few?

- We use Few Countable (plural) is used names 'less' means. A negative meaning.

- We use A Few Countable (plural) is used names 'less' but 'enough' means. A positive meaning.

QUESTION

Use "any" in negative sentences and questions :

Negative sentences:
- He doesn't need <u>any</u> stamps.

Questions:
- Do you have <u>any</u> friends in Chicago?
- Is there <u>any</u> pollution in your city?

In general

we use   something/anything
        somebody/anybody
            somewhere/anywhere
In the same way as (some/any):

- I can't see <u>anybody</u> coming.
- He lives <u>somewhere</u> near here.

How to use "some" and "any":

Use "some" in *positive sentences*:

- The children have <u>some</u> books.
- They have <u>some</u> money.

Some and *Any*:
usually determines both plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

- **Examples:**
- I draw some (*pictures*).
- There isn't any (*milk*) in the refrigerator.

- (pictures) ⟶ plural countable noun
- (milk) ⟶ plural uncountable noun

Grammar

Worksheet 2

A- Circle the correct word, some, any, how many, or how much

1- Can you buy some/ any milk?

2- She has some/ any bad mark.

3- He never does some/ any job.

4- How many/ how much banana or three? (there are 4 bananas)

5- How much/how many sugar is there? (not much)

B- Look at the pictures and describe it using some, any, a lot of, a few, a little

C- Write a short story and using these words: some, any, a lot of, a little and a few?

Worksheet (3)

The Red Crescent

1- **Explain about these associations and what they do you provide from your point of view?**

جمعية الفاروق الخيرية
Al- Farouq Society For
Orphan's Care
7275901 - 7275902

2- Remember the most important assistance provided by the Red Crescent?

A- --

B- --

C- --

D- --

Worksheet (4)

Why the Moon Changes

Cave men who roamed the earth centuries ago must have thought it was strange that the moon had many different shapes. Sometimes it appeared as a thin white curve, sometimes as a half circle, and at other times as a huge orange disc. How must they have explained the moon's curious/ nosy behavior? Today, of course, we know why our satellite appears to have many shapes.

Once a month, the moon travels in a complete circle around the earth. And as it moves in its circle, it moves in its circle it seems to change shape. This is because we on earth see only that section of the moon that catches the sun's light.

When the sun, the moon, and the earth are in a straight line___ with the moon in the middle ___ we don't see the moon at all. At this point, the moon is said to be now. We are unable to see it in this position because the side facing the earth is in shadow. As the new moon begins to circle the earth, however, we begin to see that part of its surface that catches the sun's light. After some days, it reaches the position where we can see a half moon. When it moves further around to the position where the earth is between the sun and the moon, we see the full moon. Later it again becomes a half moon, becoming smaller and smaller, until it disappears again to become the new moon. This period takes twenty-eight days, or a 'month'.

If the cave men had known these simple facts, which explain how and why the moon 'changes', they probably would have saved themselves much unhappiness. They could have

enjoyed the beauty of the moon instead of fearing it each time it 'went out' and seemed

uncertain to reappear.

I- *Choose the correct answer a, b, c, or d.*

A- 'The moon's curious behaviour' means

    a) Roaming the earth.

    b) Catching the sun's light.

    c) Travelling in a circle around the earth.

    d) Seeming to have many different shapes.

B- To the eyes of people on earth

    a) Only the moon's shape changes.

    b) Only the moon's color changes.

    c) Both the moon's shape and its color change.

    d) Neither the moon's shape nor its color changes.

C- 'a thin white cure' means

    a) The new moon.

    b) The half-moon.

    c) The full moon.

    d) The earth.

D- 'our satellite' means

    a) Curious behavior.

    b) Many shapes.

c) **The earth.**

d) **The moon.**

E- **The moon becomes bigger and bigger**

   a) **When it is full.**

   b) **Between new moon and full moon.**

   c) **Between full moon and half-moon.**

   d) **Between full moon and the time, it disappears.**

F- **Cave men were frightened when**

   a) **The moon was full.**

   b) **The moon caught the sun's light.**

   c) **The moon became bigger and bigger.**

   d) **They didn't see the moon at all.**

G- **The further the moon moves around to the position where the earth is between the sun and the moon, the …………. it becomes.**

   a) **smaller**   b) **bigger**   c) **stranger**   d) **thinner**

H- **After the full moon position, the older the moon is, the…..... it becomes**

   a) **smaller**   b) **bigger**   c) **stranger**   d) **simpler**

I- **when the moon moves in its circle, it changes its shape because:**

   a) **It travels around the earth.**

   b) **It seems to us so.**

   c) **One side of the moon is seen so.**

   d) **One side of the moon is seen to us.**

   e) **All the above.**

J- **We usually don't see the moon when:**

a) **It is not in a straight line with the sun.**

b) **When it is in a straight line with the earth and the sun.**

c) **When it is in a straight line with the earth.**

d) **When the sun is between the moon and earth.**

K- **The new moon is the one that is formed:**

a) **When the sun and the earth are in line with it.**

b) **When the sun it between the earth and the moon.**

c) **The earth is between the sun and the moon.**

d) **Non-of the above.**

L- **We can see the full moon when:**

a) **The two planets: sun and moon move around the earth.**

b) **When the earth faces the sun.**

c) **When the earth is between the sun and the moon.**

d) **Few days after the moon catches the sun's light.**

M- **The full moon is given this name because:**

a) **It moves around the sun.**

b) **It moves around the earth.**

c) **It moves fully seen by us.**

d) **It appears after twenty-eight days**

Appendix (I)

Study Plans

(A)

Study Plan Using Task-Based Activity

9th Grade Plan (B)

Date: from 10-3 to 31-3/ 3 weeks

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Unit (5): P. 49. money doesn't bring happiness (P.49) - Reading the text with students - - divide students into groups - The students are Finding meaning by using dictionary	- **Every group write the main themes of the text** - **Explain and** - **discussion the text**	- **Answer the question of the text with groups** - **Give views about the text**	**Listen and analyze Comprehensive review of the lesson in classroom**	**Unit (5) P. 50-52. A Miser's Final Wish Reading comprehension, the text with students explain the vocabulary and discussion the main ideas with the students**
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**
Working groups with students to	**Answer the worksheet with conversation**	**Comprehensive review of the lessons in**	**P. 50-52 Explain the grammar:**	**Give examples and practice**

find point their views with teacher	and analysis of students	classroom	Quantity words and expressions.	in classroom working groups and answer the worksheet
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**
Full review lesson in classroom	**The Red Crescent. P 54-55.** **Reading the text and explain the vocabulary with main ideas**	**Discussion with students about the themes and put students in groups to find their point of views**	**P. 56** **Agreeing and Disagreeing/ Communication Workshop.** **Listen and understand then analysis, and discussion with students groups**	**Answer the worksheet** **Presentation / answer the questions P. 57-58, with groups**

B

Traditional Study Plan

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
- The teacher reads the text "A miser's final wish" - The teacher gives the meaning	**Explain the text**	**Answer the questions**	**The teacher explains the grammar**	**Answer the questions**

First Week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
The teacher reads the text "The Red Crescent" And give to students the main meanings	**The students read the text**	**The teacher explains the text with the students**	**The teacher answers the questions with the students**	**The teacher answers the questions with the students**

Second Week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
The teacher explains the lesson "agreeing and disagreeing"	**The students apply this activity with the teacher**	**Complete the lesson (P.56)**	**The teacher answers the questions(p.57) with students**	**Complete the answer of questions (P. 58)**

Third Week

Traditional Classroom Activities and Task-Based Activities

Process of thinking and analyzing through using (Task-Based Activity)